

Altar Girl Prohibition Questioned by U.S. Bishop

Washington (NC) -- The chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on the Liturgy has questioned the Holy See's prohibition against girls or women serving at the altar.

He also asked the Vatican to consider a new phase of "regulated experimentation" in adapting liturgical practice to U.S. cultural conditions.

The committee head, Bishop John S. Cummins of Oakland, Calif., did not spell out what kind of liturgical experimentation or Vatican guidelines he had in mind, but other comments he made indicated that experiments were needed for development of new liturgical texts, gestures and symbols.

His suggestions came in a

report prepared for a Vatican meeting of bishops' liturgical representatives from around the world.

On the altar girls question, Bishop Cummins reported that "most American Catholics, women and men alike, find it difficult to understand, appreciate or accept the prohibition."

He added, "Many American Catholics perceive the prohibition symbolically exhibits a discriminatory dichotomy between lay men and lay women, rather than a theologically based discipline. Attention might well be given also to the institution of women into the ministries of acolyte and reader."

Current Vatican regulations prohibit women from serving at the altar and reserve to men the formal entry into the lay ministries of reader and acolyte. In general, church law no longer applies differently to lay women than to lay men, but those cases are notable exceptions.

The Oct. 23-28 meeting attended by Bishop Cummins sought to assess progress over the past 20 years in Catholic liturgical reform and the prospects for the future. It was sponsored by the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship.

Mother Marianne Cope Seneca Falls Nominee

Mother Marianne Cope, the Syracuse-based nun who devoted more than 35 years to the care of leprosy patients in Molokai, Hawaii, at the turn of the century, has been nominated to the Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls.

The nomination was made by Russell Shaw, secretary for public affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference.

Shaw commented, "In many respects, Mother Marianne was the Mother Teresa of Calcutta of her day. Although she was largely unrecognized and unsung in her time, she spent her life serving God's outcast needy in a spirit of Christian charity. She deserves recognition as one of America's outstanding women."

Proceedings are already underway in both Rome and Honolulu directed toward the



Mother Marianne Cope

her possible beatification and canonization.

The Women's Hall of Fame honors American women of significant

achievement in their fields of endeavor.

Women already named include St. Elizabeth Seton, Marian Anderson, Emily Dickinson, Helen Hayes and Helen Keller.

She was a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Third Order Conventuals in Syracuse.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier-Journal is noon on Thursday preceding Wednesday publication. Items must be written and sent to 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14610.

THE POPE

Sexual Continence

Vatican City (NC) — Here is the Vatican text of Pope John Paul II's talk in English during his weekly general audience Oct. 24.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today I have been speaking about the virtue of continence, that capacity to dominate, control and direct our sexual drives.

This virtue, which strengthens us to resist the temptations of concupiscence, also opens us to a more profound practice of charity. In the case of married couples, continence deepens their understanding of the language of the body.

They grow in the ability to give themselves to one another as a gift. At the same time, their mutual love, respect and reciprocal understanding is purified and increased.

Although continence at times requires a real asceticism and self-discipline, it does not impoverish the couple's ability to manifest their affection for one another. Instead, their affection and love are enriched and elevated to a higher level.

Continence, then, does not bring into opposition the two meanings of the conjugal act, the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning. Rather, the virtue of continence protects the dignity of the conjugal act in its procreative meaning while it makes more profound the personal communion of husband and wife.

Business in Diocese

Elmira — Dr. John L. Keating, a 1971 graduate of Notre Dame High School here, recently completed his residency at Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego, Calif., and was named "Outstanding Resident of the Year" at the facility. He will begin a fellowship at Johns Hopkins University Hospital this spring.

Rochester — John Crowe, former chairman of the National Advisory Council of American Catholic Bishops, and chairman of the Board of Ethics of the City of Rochester, has been named chairman of the Management Committee of Mousaw, Vigdor, Reeves Heilbronner & Kroll. He has been a partner with the legal firm since 1976.

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