

Roundup

Continued from Page 1

Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, issued the first draft of a new national pastoral letter on Catholic teaching and the U.S. economy.

The draft letter declared "a preferential option for the poor" as a major criterion for public policy as well as for private morality. It called for a "new American experiment" in which the economic rights of all and economic participation by all would attain the same status in America as political and civil liberties.

Among the draft's controversial conclusions were demands for a national policy of full employment and for a major overhaul of the "woefully inadequate" welfare system in the country.

The wide news coverage and immediate controversy provoked by the first draft of the bishops' pastoral virtually guaranteed that it will also be one of the major news stories of 1985 as it moves through second and third drafts to a planned vote by all the bishops on a final document next November.

Religious and moral issues touched closely on major news events in many other parts of the world, from continuing conflicts in Central America to the famine in Ethiopia, from a new crisis in Poland touched off by the murder of a priest to new criticisms of South African apartheid, from Pope John Paul II's pleas in Canada for worldwide justice and disarmament to new moral debates over medical practices.

The Catholic Church continued to play a prominent role in the conflicts in Central America, where El Salvador and Nicaragua remained the chief trouble spots.

In El Salvador, five Salvadoran national guardsmen were tried in May and convicted in June for the 1980

murder of four U.S. Catholic female missionaries. A major peace initiative launched in May by Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas of San Salvador led to government-guerrilla negotiations in November with the archbishop as chief mediator. President Jose Napoleon Duarte, elected in May, sought to end the massive human rights violations that had been a focus of church criticisms for years.

In Nicaragua, church-state tensions reached new highs after the leftist Sandinista government expelled 10 priests and arrested one on subversion charges in July. Nicaraguan bishops and the Vatican threatened church sanctions against Catholic priests holding high government offices if they refused to leave those posts. In December the Jesuits expelled Father Fernando Cardenal from the order because he refused to resign as Nicaraguan education minister.

Chile, however, faced new internal difficulties as President Agosto Pinochet declared a new state of siege Nov. 6, cracking down hard on rising political dissent. Chilean bishops denounced the new measures and Pope John Paul publicly expressed concern.

One of the leading religious-political controversies throughout Latin America, concerning the liberation theology movement, came to a new peak in September when the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a declaration on the topic.

The congregation said liberation is an authentic theme for Catholic reflection and action, but it devoted most of its attention to warning of errors that liberation theology may fall into, chiefly by accepting Marxist ideologies of class struggle, atheism and historical relativism or by making uncritical use of Marxist social analysis. The congregation promised a second document which would outline positive characteristics of an authentic theology of liberation.

The congregation also provoked a controversy in the United States by ordering removal of the "imprimatur," or official church permission to publish, from two books published by Paulist Press. One of the books, "Christ Among Us," had carried an imprimatur through three editions since 1967 and had sold 1.6 million copies, many for parish religious education use. Several national Catholic organizations questioned the way the congregation had approached the matter and asked for an explanation.

Famine in Ethiopia and other sub-Saharan countries threatened the lives of millions of Africans. When the growing crisis finally began to make headlines in October, Americans responded generously. By early December Catholic Relief Services had received \$6 million in contributions to bring food aid to the region.

South Africa again became a focus of world attention for its policy of apartheid, or strict racial segregation. Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu of Johannesburg received the Nobel Peace Prize in December for his long struggle against apartheid, and Catholic Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban was charged with slandering the state because he made allegations of brutality by a police agency.

Arrests of South African labor leaders in November led to demonstrations in the United States at the South African Embassy in Washington and consulates in other cities. In New York, Auxiliary Bishop Emerson Moore demonstrated at the South African consulate and became the first Catholic bishop ever to be arrested in the United States for an act of civil disobedience.

Pope John Paul II, going into the seventh year of his papacy, continued his world travels with four trips in which he visited nine countries.

At Easter the pope closed the 1983-84 Holy Year devoted to the theme of reconciliation. In December he issued an apostolic exhortation, "Reconciliation and Penance." In it he stressed the need for individual confession and rejected theories that would deny the moral responsibility of individuals for social evils.

During the year Pope John Paul also concluded a four-year-long series of weekly talks in which he defended church teachings on marriage and sexuality. Several times the talks provoked controversy, particularly when he reaffirmed church teaching against artificial contraception.

The 1981 attempt on the pope's life remained in the news as Italian officials finished their lengthy investigation into a possible Bulgarian connection with the assassination plot. They charged several Turks and Bulgarians as co-conspirators.

On the church-state front, the Holy See and the United States established diplomatic relations in January, but many U.S. religious organizations opposed the action and in September joined Americans United for Separation of Church and State in a court suit to declare it unconstitutional.

The Holy See and Italy signed a new concordat in February that substantially reduced the church's privileges in that predominantly Catholic country. The church and government agreed in following months on a plan to phase out government subsidies for the clergy.

The Vatican avoided a potential drawn-out battle in Italian courts when it paid a \$300-million settlement to creditors of the defunct Banco Ambrosiano, which had been Italy's largest private bank before it went bankrupt. The Vatican admitted no responsibility in the Ambrosiano affair, but the settlement protected it from any future liabilities in the matter.

In Chicago the Catholic archdiocese was ordered to pay \$3.2 million to a publisher of liturgical music as compensation for years of copyright violations by Chicago parishes.

Within the U.S. church, emerging lay ministries and concern over declining numbers of priests and Religious were often in the news. In several parts of the country dioceses began appointing non-priests to head parishes, and a national task force of bishops and Religious said in December that much more attention has to be given to lay ministries if church personnel needs are to be met in coming years.

Across the country bishops began a first round of dialogue with Religious in what is meant to be a long-range program of closer collaboration between bishops and the men and women Religious in their dioceses.

The 10 black bishops of the country issued a joint pastoral letter in September declaring that racism in the U.S. church is a major obstacle to evangelization.

Medical-moral issues provoked a number of debates in 1984:

-- Efforts to establish norms for the rights of handicapped babies to medical care included court cases, federal rules and federal legislation.

-- Australians debated whether two out-of-womb frozen embryos should be saved or destroyed after their parents died in a plane crash.

-- A French court ruled that a woman whose husband died had a right to his frozen sperm.

-- In California Baby Fae lived a month with a baboon heart, drawing national attention to the ethical issues on the dividing line between therapeutic treatment and medical experimentation.

Magisterium Vs. Freedom Of Speech?

By NC News Service

When the Vatican told some U.S. Religious they could be expelled from their communities for signing an advertisement saying pluralistic views on abortion exist within the Catholic Church, the signers said the Vatican was suppressing freedom of expression.

At least 26 nuns, religious priests and brothers were among the 100 persons signing the "Catholic Statement on Pluralism and Abortion," published as an advertisement in The New York Times Oct. 17.

Archbishop Jerome Hamer, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, said Dec. 17 that he sent a letter to superiors of the Religious involved ordering that the signers either publicly retract the statement or face dismissal from religious life.

In reaction to the Vatican order, about 35 signers of the abortion statement accused the Vatican Dec. 19 of threatening free speech.

"We believe that this Vatican action is a cause for scandal to Catholics everywhere," the group said in a statement issued at a Washington news conference. "It seeks to stifle freedom of speech and public discussion in the Roman Catholic Church and create the appearance of a consensus where none exists."

The group, made up of nuns and lay people who signed the abortion statement, said the Religious have not decided whether to comply with the order to retract their views.

The abortion statement itself, prepared by an affiliate of Catholics for a Free Choice, a group backing legal abortion, said that "a diversity of opinions regarding abortion exists among committed Catholics." It added that "a large number of Catholic theologians hold that even direct abortion, though tragic, can sometimes be a moral choice."

The statement, signed by nearly 100 scholars, Religious and clergy, also said that Catholics "who publicly dissent from hierarchical statements and explore areas of moral and legal freedom on the abortion question should not be penalized by their religious superiors, church employers or bishops."

Msgr. Daniel F. Hoye, general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said Dec. 18 that the Vatican's action was based on "the constant teaching of the church concerning the immorality of abortion" and on canon law provisions.

According to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the pertinent canons of church law permit dismissal from religious life for "pertinacious upholding or spreading of doctrines condemned by the magisterium of the church." The canons also include "due process provisions, such as formal notification of the charges, a time for reflection and the right to offer a defense," the NCCB said.

A Vatican press spokesman said the canons in this case apply only to Religious and do not cover diocesan clergy.

Russell Shaw, NCCB secretary for public affairs, said Dec. 17 that the issue is not really freedom of expression in the Catholic Church but freedom of conscience and that Catholics, especially Religious, must form their consciences in accordance with church teaching on abortion.

The NCCB Committee on Doctrine earlier rejected the abortion statement, saying it "contradicts the clear and constant teaching of the church that deliberately chosen abortion is objectively immoral."

In its Nov. 15 critique, the committee also said that "legitimate freedom of conscience requires the responsible formation of conscience in accord with the teaching of the church."

Recant

Continued from Page 1

Jeannine Gramick, who also had signed the abortion-pluralism statement.

Brother McManaman said in a telephone interview that he could not comment on the matter. Sisters Traxler and Gramick could not be reached for comment.

Shaw, at the NCCB, said the Vatican letter referred to

canon laws dealing with dismissal of Religious who "give scandal."

"The NCCB was informed of the matter," he said Dec. 17. "The (bishops') conference hopes there will be a happy resolution" of the controversy. Such a resolution will entail "public retraction" of the abortion-pluralism statement by those who signed it, he added.

"We certainly heard from the Religious involved" as well, he said, although, he added, he could not comment on their reactions.

"We can express our hopes of a happy resolution and all the rest, but it's not up to us" since it is a matter between the Religious and their superiors and the Vatican, Shaw said.

The Doctrine Committee said that "legitimate freedom of conscience requires the responsible formation of conscience in accord with the

'Blunderland' At Holy Name

The Church of the Holy Name of Jesus will host a performance of "Alice in Blunderland," 4 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 13.

The musical program will be performed by Crossroads, a local anti-nuclear-war group.

St. James Publishes Cookbook

A cookbook of favorite recipes compiled by parishioners of St. James Church has just been published.

Entitled "Sharing Recipes," it is, in the words of Mrs. William J. Monnat, "full of helpful kitchen information including menu suggestions, food preparation, freezing, safe dieting, suggestions, a time-table for cooking meats, an herb guide, ways to use leftovers, a table for serving large crowds, information on stain removal, first aid for household emergencies and of course more than 300 favorite family recipes from appetizers to desserts."

The book is available for \$7 a copy at St. James Rectory, 109 Brockley Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14609; (716) 482-9796.

truth of the Gospel message as handed on in the constant teaching of the church."

In at least one religious community, signers of the statement planned a meeting to discuss their options.

"It's sad," said the nun who had seen the Vatican's letter. "I don't mind explaining myself to anyone" but "don't like to be tried" by church authorities without knowing it. She said the order signifies a lack of freedom of expression for Religious in the church and "smacks of Galileo, or whatever, to me."

Galileo, a Renaissance scholar, was attacked by church leaders for his scientific teachings on the solar system.

Frances Kissling, executive director of Catholics for a Free Choice, Dec. 17 said her group would "be supportive" of the Religious involved in the controversy, whatever they choose to do in response.

"It's obviously a very serious matter," Ms. Kissling remarked. "I don't think at this point that people know what they are going to do."

**Entrance Exam
for 8th grade at
McQuaid Jesuit
High School
Saturday, January 5, 1985
at 8:30 A.M.**

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