

U.S. Bishops Support Church in Nicaragua, But Not U.S. Policies

By Jerry Filteau
 Washington (NC) — The U.S. bishops support the Catholic Church in Nicaragua against government harassment there, but they do not back "counterproductive" U.S. policies in Central America, Archbishop John R. Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis said Dec. 30.

In a 700-word statement released in Washington by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the former NCCB president reported on his visit to Nicaragua last August. He went there as an NCCB representative at the request of the conference's current president, Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio.

Archbishop Roach specifically criticized the Nicaraguan government's labor union policies, actions against church officials, and "patterns of (Marxist) indoctrination" in the educational system.

At the same time he warned, as other spokesmen for the U.S. bishops have, that criticism of the Nicaraguan government is not an endorsement of U.S. policy in the region.

"We also continue," he said, "to criticize those aspects of U.S. policy which we have found and continue to find counterproductive as a means of protecting human rights in Nicaragua and fostering a climate of justice and peace in Central America."

He said that his Aug. 19-22 visit, coming shortly after the expulsion of 10 foreign missionaries by Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government, was "a clear statement" that the U.S. bishops have "an abiding concern" over anti-church actions in Nicaragua. The expulsions were "part of a larger pattern of harassment of the church," he said.

Archbishop Roach said that in Nicaragua he met with representatives of the Nicaraguan bishops' conference, with U.S. missionaries working there, with priests, religious and laity of the Managua Archdiocese, with labor leaders, with diplomatic officials, and with Daniel Ortega, who in November was elected president of the country.

He said that during a "cordial, substantive and useful" meeting with Ortega, the expulsion of missionaries and the issue of visas for foreign church personnel in Nicaragua were among the issues he raised.

In meetings with clergy, religious and laity of the Managua Archdiocese, he said, "I received reports on a variety of themes."

The U.S. bishops have opposed U.S. assistance to guerrillas seeking to overthrow the Sandinista government. They have urged U.S. economic assistance to Nicaragua, based on human rights criteria, and support for diplomatic efforts by Latin American countries to resolve Central American conflicts.

31 over 61

The 31 over 61 Club will hold a dance, 2-5 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 13 at the Hof. Brau Haus. Further information is available from organizer Dot Benner, 436-7032.

Liturgy Office Sets Meetings For Leaders

Meetings for parish liturgy committee chairpeople have been planned by the diocesan Liturgy Office. The meetings will be held regionally throughout the diocese.

The purpose of the gatherings is to give an opportunity to liturgy committees to share ideas, ways of operating and difficulties. Suggestions for future programs originating from the Liturgy Office will be discussed. In addition, systems of support will be established, if needed.

Meetings are scheduled as follows:

Jan. 30, St. Pius Tenth School, Rochester, Southwest Region; Feb. 26, St. John the Evangelist Parish Hall, Ridge Road, Rochester, Northwest Region; March 4, St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, Chemung-Schuylar Region; March 9, St. Mary's School, Bath, Steuben Region; March 27, St. Anne's Church, Rochester, Southeast Region; and April 16, St. Mary's School, Canandaigua, Yates-Ontario-Wayne Region.

All meetings are set for 7:30-9:30 p.m., except St. Mary's in Bath, which will run 10 a.m.-noon.

No registration is required. All parish liturgy committee chairpersons and/or members of the committees are urged to attend.

Further information is available from the Liturgy Office, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624; (716) 328-3210.

Cenacle Sets Weekend for 'Runaways'

The Cenacle Renewal Center has scheduled a "Runaway Weekend for Women," Feb. 1-3.

The program is a retreat offering both a break in the winter schedule and a respite from day-to-day obligations. The offering is \$50.

Mass, then Bash Ends Jubilee Year

More than 500 people, including civic dignitaries and leaders of other religious institutions, attended the New Year's Eve Mass of Thanksgiving and party following which marked the end of the sesquicentennial celebration for Old St. Mary's Church, the Baptist Temple and the City of Rochester.

Father James Lawlor, pastor of St. Mary's, encouraged his listeners to heed the call of scripture to "make all things new."

He also encouraged them to strengthen bonds of unity with people of other beliefs and to engage in civic endeavors.

The congregation of some 560 included Mayor and Mrs. Thomas Ryan, County Executive and Mrs. Lucien Morin, members of the City Council and representatives of the Baptist Temple and the First Baptist Church of Chili.

GAMM Joins National Association

Genesee Area Music Ministries (GAMM) the ecumenical group promoted by the diocesan Office of Liturgy, has become a temporary chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, it was announced last week.

The national group is an organization of more than 8,500 musicians, clergy and congregational staff members, the purpose of which is to foster the art of musical liturgy.

GAMM will meet 7:30-9:30 p.m., Jan. 14 at the Church of the Assumption in Fairport.

A flier promoting the meeting gave the wrong date.

The topic for the meeting will be, "They Will Sing: Introducing New Music to the Congregation."

Further information is available from John Kubiniec at the liturgy office, 328-3210.

Pastor Kenneth Williams of Baptist Temple and Pastor James Braker of First Baptist offered prayers during the Mass.

St. Mary's Choir sang under the direction of Thomas Donohue.

After Mass, people were invited to write letters for inclusion in St. Mary's time capsule, scheduled to be opened in 2034.

The capsule is "a symbol of hope that there will be a people of faith who will follow us and who will receive and carry on the heritage that St. Mary's forebears have handed to us," Father Lawlor said.

The festivities concluded with a party in the church's downstairs community center.

ICP Sets Information Sessions

The Irish Children's Program, an ecumenical and non-political charity which brings children 9-12 to Rochester from Belfast each summer, will hold information nights, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 10 at the Cenacle Renewal Center; and 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 13 at St. Christopher's Church.

The ICP provides the children's transportation and insurance. Host families provide care and shelter.

Contributions to the program are tax-deductible.

Dreikurs Talk

Joan Marcello will present "Consequences, Choices, Discipline: The Road to Responsibility," 7:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 25 (with a snow date of Feb. 1), at Irondequoit High School. The program is a Dreikurs Presentation. Dreikurs is a non-profit parent support group. Further information is available by calling 225-0312.

Up Aid to Poor, Cuomo Is Asked

Albany -- Archbishop John J. O'Connor, president of the State Catholic Conference, has written Gov. Mario M. Cuomo urging an increase in the state's basic public assistance grant as part of the 1985-86 budget.

The archbishop noted that such an increase is a major legislative objective of the state's bishops for the coming year.

"Advocacy for this increase," he wrote, "is consistent with the long-standing commitment of the Church to lessen the plight of the poorest and most vulnerable of our citizens. It is in accord with the major themes articulated in the first draft of the pastoral on the economy by the bishops of the United States."

According to the State Catholic Conference, the last time there was an increase in the basic grant was July 1981. From that time, until July 1, 1985, when a grant increase would be implemented, the Consumer Price index has risen 16.3 percent. In current dollars, for a family of four, total income from public assistance is only 83 percent of the poverty level.

Aquinas Crystal Ball Jan. 26

The annual Aquinas Crystal Ball will be Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, 55 St. Paul St.

Parents of present and past students, alumni and friends of Aquinas are invited.

Tickets are \$40 per couple and reservations can be made through Agnes Schiano at 621-1874, by Jan. 18. Music will be provided by Aquinas alumnus Robert Russo and his group, "Winelights."

the Saints by Luke


FELIX WAS THE SON OF HERMIAS, A SYRIAN WHO HAD BEEN A ROMAN SOLDIER. HE WAS BORN IN NOLA, NEAR NAPLES, ITALY. ACCORDING TO EARLY ACCOUNTS, FELIX GAVE HIS INHERITANCE TO THE POOR, WAS ORDAINED BY BISHOP ST. MAXIMUS OF NOLA AND BECAME HIS ASSISTANT.

WHEN MAXIMUS FLED TO THE DESERT AT THE START OF DECIUS' PERSECUTION OF THE CHRISTIANS IN 250, FELIX WAS SEIZED IN HIS STEAD AND IMPRISONED. HE WAS REPUTEDLY RELEASED FROM PRISON BY AN ANGEL, WHO DIRECTED HIM TO THE AILING MAXIMUS, WHOM HE BROUGHT BACK TO NOLA. EVEN AFTER DECIUS' DEATH IN 251, FELIX WAS A HUNTED MAN BUT KEPT HIDDEN UNTIL THE PERSECUTION ENDED.

WHEN MAXIMUS DIED THE PEOPLE UNANIMOUSLY SELECTED FELIX AS THEIR BISHOP. BUT HE DECLINED THE HONOR IN FAVOR OF QUINTUS, A SENIOR PRIEST.

FELIX SPENT THE REST OF HIS LIFE ON A SMALL PIECE OF LAND SHARING WHAT HE HAD WITH THE POOR AND DIED THERE JAN. 14, ABOUT THE YEAR 260. WHEN ST. PAULINUS BECAME BISHOP OF NOLA OVER A CENTURY LATER, HE WROTE ABOUT HIS PREDECESSOR AND IS THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT HIM. THE FEAST OF ST. FELIX IS JAN. 14.

ST. FELIX OF NOLA



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