

Carmelite Upset

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within the order. About 80 percent of the nuns wanted constitutions based on experimental declarations approved by Pope Paul VI. Some 20 percent, primarily located in Spain, wanted a rule based on the 1581 rule of St. Teresa of Avila, who founded the Discalced Carmelite nuns.

The Vatican has ordered the congregation to base the new constitutions on the 1581 document.

Copies of the two letters were obtained by National Catholic News Service.

Neither Vatican nor Carmelite officials would

comment on the dispute.

The Carmelite head said that he had hoped for "some words of serenity and confidence, of unity and fraternity" for the order from the Holy See. He said he instead received a document which "leaves the reader with an impression of harshness" and which "can cause polemical responses and reactions" because of its questionable statements regarding history and Teresian thinking.

"Permit me, Your Holiness, to express my surprise for the complete silence of the letter about the declarations (as the experimental constitutions are known),

which are only alluded to with the generic phrase of 'experimental legislation.'"

Father Sainz de Baranda also noted that according to Vatican procedure the convents had been consulted as to which constitution they wanted and that the majority voted for the rule developed after Vatican II.

"I can guess that it will be very painful for these communities to see that in the letter of the secretariat of state their opinion and numerical majority are not valued and they are not given a few words of thanks for their sincere and correct comportment," he wrote. "I assure Your Holiness,"

Father Sainz de Baranda added, "that, with the exception of a certain number of convents, the rest accepted the declarations with a spirit of obedience, aware that they were dealing with a law approved by the Holy See and which they practiced with their entire fidelity and generosity."

He wrote that the majority want "legislation loyal to the Teresian charism and to the documents of Vatican II which offer them a secure orientation in a chosen vocation as demanding as is that of the Discalced-Carmelites."

Three days later, Father Sainz de Baranda wrote to the more than 13,000 re-

ligious women affected by the Vatican decision and asked them to accept the decision "despite the judgment which we may think the dispositions of the pope and the letter of the secretariat of state may merit."

He charged, however, that the question of unity should have been faced earlier by the pope when a small group of convents opposing the post-Vatican II declarations asked the pope for approval of their own text for a constitution.

"From this moment," he explained, "it was really the pope who should have resolved the really fundamental issue of the unity or plurality of constitutional texts for the Discalced Carmelites" and the ensuing problem of unity.

Cardinal Casaroli emphasized the cloistered life and cited a 1980 instruction from the pope to the congregation on "the usefulness of a due severity in the observance of cloister."

Cardinal Casaroli said that those who cannot accept the constitution designed by the congregation can find "other forms of consecrated life."

But he expressed certainty that the sisters would receive the document "heartily, with a joyful spirit of faith," since they "will be able to follow a legislation which comes directly from the Holy See and which assures their fidelity to the charism of their holy mother foundress."

Mercy Wins Bowling League

The Our Lady of Mercy High School varsity bowling team clinched first place in the Private-Parochial League with a 2-1 win over Bishop Kearney High School Thursday, Feb. 28, at North Park Lanes.

Senior Beth Michaels' 195 game and junior Kris Zambuto's 177 led the Monarchs in the first game, 789-616.

Mercy lost the second game, 796-736, but won the match on overall pin count.

For winning the league, the school received a trophy and a wall plaque. Individual trophies were also given to the team.

Advice on Pastoral

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Religious Women, Las Hermanas, and the Women's Ordination Conference.

Mrs. Leckey, representing the bishops' laity secretariat, who was the only speaker not representing a national membership organization of women.

Las Hermanas representative Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz said the members of her group gave each bishop a stone at the end of their testimony, to symbolize their feeling that Hispanic women have been begging for bread from the church but have been given stones.

"We talked about the repentance the church should have for sexism in the church.... We talked about how the church has failed to fulfill the spiritual, social or material needs of the Hispanic woman," said Ms. Isasi-Diaz. "The church in many ways has no respect for our roots and our culture."

She said the group asked the bishops to place the stones they received on their altars at Mass "if they are serious" about healing the wounds of alienated Hispanics, especially Hispanic women.

Representatives of the Women's Ordination Conference opened their testimony with a "story" of a sacred temple with deaf high priests. They used the parable to argue that the church's all-male hierarchy has suppressed an openness to women's leadership that existed in early Christianity, and that today the hierarchy is turning women away by its unwillingness to hear their voices and recognize their calls to ministry.

After the opening parable, the WOC representatives split up into smaller groups with the bishops and committee consul-

ants, placing each bishop in a one-on-one discussion with a woman who wants to be ordained.

From comments to journalists afterwards, it appeared that the Leadership Conference of Women Religious presented the committee with one of the sharpest critiques of patriarchal structures and attitudes in both church and society. LCWR representatives argued that patriarchy -- an attitude that what is male is superior or normative -- is pervasive and alienates women in almost every area of existence.

The LCWR, whose members are the superiors of most of the nation's 120,000 women Religious, urged an indefinite delay in writing the pastoral on grounds that the church does not have a body of theological reflection on women which is needed as a basis for a teaching document.

Auxiliary Bishop William Levada of Los Angeles, a member of the writing committee, said in an interview that he was "sympathetic" to the LCWR argument because "we don't have an articulated theological tradition" on women comparable to the traditions on issues such as peace or social justice.

Mary Ann Schwab, president of the National Council of Catholic Women, said of her testimony, "Our message was basically that we welcome the pastoral." The NCCW hopes the pastoral will help "identify and motivate the formation of ministries for women that will respond to modern needs," she said.

She cited women as the primary resources for pastoral care and ministry to other women, especially those who are alienated, and said that such ministry should be encouraged.

She lauded the church for recent actions to open up more administrative and decision-making positions to women, but said that "in faith we (the NCCW) affirm the position of the teaching church that ordination is not open to women."

Sarah Child



All in the Family

Why Do We Tear Down Our Heroes?

A little of this and some of that:

• Every once in a while a commercial appears which makes me see red. One appeared some time ago in which the makers of a computer -- I can't remember which one -- suggested that unless a youngster had access to one by the time he was two years old he would be forever doomed to lag behind his peers.

Now, Nancy Marchand, a fine actress with a commanding voice and an authoritative manner, is hawking Wonder Bread in a commercial that belittles the merits of whole wheat bread as opposed to her over-refined product. In a world fraught with so many serious problems, the matter of which kind of bread we eat may seem relatively unimportant. But when a medium can reach millions and influence choices, truth-telling is a commodity not to be regarded lightly no matter what the product.

• Which brings us to the matter of athletes and how they are treated by some in the sports media.

If it weren't for the jocks at our house, I wouldn't know Doug Flutie from Alex Karras.

But even I couldn't help but get caught up in the hoopla surrounding the Boston College quarterback -- the lionizing, the fawning, the gushing that went on when he was electrifying crowds at the end of the season, his selection as the Heisman Trophy winner, his signing by the New Jersey Generals. Flutie could do no wrong.

The headline after his first game in the big time didn't surprise me. "Flutie Less Than Brilliant in His Pro Debut," it read, the underlying message being that now that he had been puffed up as much as humanly possible, it was time to tear him down.

It is an old story with public figures. Blow 'em up, then prick the bubble. Few are immune from it. Gary Hart learned his lesson in the last campaign. Being dead doesn't save you either. The same day that the Flutie headline ran in the local papers, the New York Times reviewed a book titled "The Life of Jane Austen."

The author, John Halperin, describes Jane as miffed, querulous, snarling, competitive and disillusioned. I see it as Jane's own fault. She should have known better than to have given pleasure to millions for more than 150 years. Excellence invites destruction.



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