

Debates of 1985

Continued from Page 1

the summer and fall, bishops formed diocesan committees or task forces and held local hearings to gather women's views.

The national farm crisis, threatening the viability of thousands of family farms, drew bishops in farm states to new activism and much greater visibility. In February the economy pastoral's drafting committee held a special hearing on food and agriculture issues, and in May it added a new section on that topic to the first draft of the pastoral. In November the nation's bishops called for emergency and long-term legislation to reverse the trend away from family farms toward agribusiness.

One of 1985's most-discussed concerns was the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS. Some people have begun calling it the "leprosy of the '80s" because of the fear many people have of even the slightest contact with a victim. Cardinal John O'Connor of New York found out last summer how deep the fears are when local parish protests forced him to reverse plans to turn a convent into a residence for AIDS victims. The cardinal committed the archdiocese to providing "total care" to AIDS victims.

Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco opened an AIDS hospice in August.

Although medical authorities said there is no evidence that anyone has contracted AIDS through use of a common Communion cup, at least two parishes in Ohio halted the practice because of fears by parishioners. But the U.S. bishops' liturgy committee said that parishes need not stop making the common cup available for Communion because of fear of AIDS or other communicable diseases.

A decision by the U.S. Supreme Court last July, striking down publicly funded remedial aid to students in parochial-school classrooms, drew some of the strongest expressions of episcopal wrath the court had heard since its abortion ruling in 1973. At issue were federal funds for remedial education programs, which had been available to all children in need of them, whether they attended public or private schools.

Amid calls at their November meeting for a sustained nationwide protest, the bishops declared themselves "outraged" at the court's "unjust, discriminatory and narrow decision."

Abortion continued as a major national concern in 1985. The film "Silent Scream," filming an actual abortion by sonogram, was used to promote opposition to abortion. Bombers of several abortion clinics were tried and convicted, and abortion-rights groups used publicity about the bombings to gain support for their cause.

Abortion also figured strongly in the year-long battle between Vatican officials and some 24 nuns who signed a 1984 advertisement in The New York Times saying there is more than one "legitimate" Catholic teaching on abortion. Vatican officials demanded that the nuns adequately demonstrate their acceptance of Church teaching on abortion or face expulsion from their religious orders. At least six of the nuns were cleared.

U.S. Church-state conflicts in 1985 included a face-off between the government and sanctuary workers — Christians who use Churches to harbor Central American refugees considered illegal aliens by the government. Several priests, nuns and lay workers were arrested and some convicted of illegal activities, but many Church leaders blamed government policy for refusing to let the Central Americans enter legally under provisions for asylum.

On immigration reform proposals before Congress, the U.S. bishops also pressed for legalization of many long-term illegal aliens.

In some other nations, Church-state conflicts were far more severe. While the leftist government of Nicaragua drew a papal rebuke for growing infringements on religious rights, the government of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines faced new difficulties as some Church leaders urged a united opposition to defeat him in elections next February.

Poland made daily headlines last January and February as the state tried and convicted four police officers for their role the previous October in kidnapping and murdering Father Jerzy Popieluzsko, a Warsaw priest who was an active supporter of the outlawed trade union, Solidarity.

South African strife intensified as black protests mounted and the government continued to resist the breakup of apartheid, a policy of strict racial separation under which the nation's black majority is denied any voice in the government. While many U.S. religious leaders demonstrated at the South African Embassy in Washington or urged the U.S. government to exert stronger pressure for change, religious leaders in South Africa

were among the leading voices for peaceful change.

Northern Ireland, torn by sectarian strife since 1969, saw a possible glimmer of peace in an Anglo-Irish accord adopted Nov. 15. Under the pact, Britain retains sovereignty over Northern Ireland, but the Republic of Ireland can "put forward views and proposals" on Northern Ireland through an intergovernmental conference. The compromise effort was rejected by extremists from both sides.

Terrorism in the Middle East often bore religious overtones, especially in Lebanon, the last outpost of full freedom for Christians in the Arab world.

In January, Servite Father Lawrence Martin Jenco, an American and director of CRS operations in Lebanon, was kidnapped by Islamic fundamentalists. As the year was drawing to a close, efforts by Anglican layman Terry Waite, an aide to the archbishop of Canterbury, provided hopes for a negotiated release of Father Jenco and other Americans held in Lebanon.

U.S. Catholic pilgrims and American and Israeli Jews were among victims of air and sea hijackings by Lebanese or Palestinian terrorists. Between June and October a U.S. TWA flight, an Italian cruise ship and an Egyptian plane were hijacked in the Mediterranean region.

Continuing his world travels, in January Pope John Paul made his third papal trip to South America, his first to the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) in May, his third to Africa in August, and a one-day visit to the tiny principality of Liechtenstein in September.

When the pope installed 28 new cardinals in May, among them were the heads of two key American archdioceses: New York's Cardinal O'Connor and Boston's Cardinal Bernard F. Law. A third with U.S. connections was Cardinal Myroslav Lubachivsky, who was Ukrainian-born but a naturalized U.S. citizen and former head of the Ukrainian-rite Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

In July the pope issued the fourth encyclical letter of his pontificate, on Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of the Slavs.

In September the pope met with nine Lutheran Church in America bishops and said that ecumenism was "a primary concern of mine." In conjunction with the meeting, the Vatican released an exchange of letters with LCA leader Bishop James R. Crumley Jr., in which the pope praised the "impressive" work of the U.S. Catholic-Lutheran theological dialogue.

In June, Jewish leaders protested sharply against what they saw as weaknesses in a Vatican document on promoting a better Catholic appreciation of Judaism. Catholic specialists said the critics had failed to recognize several significant advances made by the document. Later in the year, dozens of workshops, seminars, talks and other observances marked the 20th anniversary of the Vatican II document "Nostra Aetate," which repudiated anti-Semitism and called for Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

A new controversy over Catholics and Freemasonry broke out in June with the leak of a confidential report sent to the U.S. bishops by their Pastoral Research and Practices Committee. The report said Freemasonry espouses principles and beliefs that are not compatible with Catholic faith and said almost no regular U.S. lodges admit blacks.

Among internal Church controversies during 1985 were:

- The Vatican temporarily silenced Brazil's leading liberation theologian, Franciscan Father Leonardo Boff, because of questions about some aspects of his thought.

- A draft document by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education on Catholic colleges and universities provoked a storm of protest from U.S. educators and bishops. They said norms proposed in the draft document violated fundamental U.S. tenets of academic freedom and threatened the very existence of Catholic higher education in the United States.

- Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle was told in November that a two-year-old Vatican investigation in his archdiocese was closed. Archbishop Pio Laghi, papal pronuncio to the United States, praised many aspects of the Seattle archbishop's leadership but criticized others.

Other events worthy of note in the U.S. Church included:

- In November the country's bishops voted to form a committee to monitor ongoing U.S. nuclear deterrence and report back to the bishops whether it could continue to be judged morally acceptable within the limits and conditions stated by their 1983 peace pastoral.

- In August about 1,200 U.S. Hispanic Catholics met in Washington for the Third National Hispanic Pastoral Encuentro, advancing Hispanic concerns and leadership in the U.S. church.

- The 10 U.S. black bishops, who in 1984 issued their first joint pastoral letter,

Religion Highlights of 1985

January

- Servite Father Lawrence Martin Jenco, Catholic Relief Services' director in Lebanon, is kidnapped by Islamic terrorists.
- Pope John Paul II announces extraordinary world Synod of Bishops to review Church 20 years after the Second Vatican Council.
- Pope makes third visit to South America.

February

- Four Polish police officers convicted, sentenced for murder of activist priest, Father Jerzy Popieluzsko.

March

- Bishop James Malone, president of the U.S. Catholic Conference, asks Congress to oppose MX missile.
- Bishops' committee planning a pastoral on women holds first hearings; many speakers cite sexism in Church.

April

- Pope announces 23 new cardinals, among them Cardinal John O'Connor of New York and Bernard Law of Boston.

May

- "The Ratzinger Report," detailing views of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican's doctrinal congregation, is published, starting a swirl of controversy about the state of the Church today.
- Brazilian liberation theologian, Franciscan Father Leonardo Boff silenced by Vatican.
- Pope visits Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg.

June

- U.S. bishops meet in Minnesota, discussing proposed pastorals on the economy and campus ministry, the upcoming synod and their dialogue with religious orders.
- TWA plane with about 5 U.S. Catholic pilgrims to the Holy Land is hijacked; a handful of hostages held nearly three weeks in Beirut.
- Mehmet Ali Agca testifies at length in Rome trial of alleged conspirators said to have aided him in his 1981 attack on the pope.
- U.S. Supreme Court says moment of silence in school is unconstitutional if linked to prayer.
- Karen Ann Quinlan dies, ending 10-year coma.

July

- Supreme Court rules children cannot get federal remedial education aid if programs are conducted in parochial schools; U.S. bishops later issue strong protest.
- Reagan administration asks court to reverse its 1973 decision legalizing abortion.

August

- Pope makes third trip to Africa, visiting seven countries.
- U.S. Hispanic Catholics hold Third National Hispanic Pastoral Encuentro to chart plan for Hispanic ministry.
- Catholic Relief Services accused of mishandling money for Ethiopia, later cleared by a bishops' investigating committee.

September

- Major earthquakes hit Mexico City, leaving tens of thousands needy and homeless.
- Letters between pope and U.S. Lutheran bishop released; ecumenical progress praised.

October

- Second draft of economy pastoral issued.
- Four Sisters of Charity cleared in conflict with Vatican over signatures on advertisement about Catholic teaching and abortion.

November

- U.S. bishops meet, urge farm legislation, decide to monitor nuclear defense policy, approve revised funeral rite and campus ministry pastoral.
- Archbishop Hunthausen of Seattle told Vatican investigation is over; pluses and minuses in archdiocese listed.
- Extraordinary world Synod of Bishops starts.

December

- Synod ends; pastoral message and final report issued reaffirming Vatican II and calling for further implementation of it.

emerged as a growing leadership group in the U.S. hierarchy in 1985. In January seven of them joined in an anti-apartheid march at the South African Embassy in Washington. In June they held a seminar, attended by about 35 other bishops, to discuss black Catholic concerns. In November they delivered a strong condemnation of continuing racism in America to their fellow bishops. Auxiliary Bishop Eugene Marino of Washington was elected secretary of the bishops' national conferences in November, the first black to hold such a post.

When the New York Film Festival in October featured Jean-Luc Godard's "Hail Mary," a controversial modern version of the life of Mary which the pope had objected to in April, more than 2,000 Catholics converged on the Lincoln Center to protest the film.

After severely criticizing a first draft of a national pastoral letter on campus ministry in June, the U.S. bishops backed a thoroughly revised version of the document in November.

Cardinal Timothy Manning of Los Angeles retired in July at age 75 and was succeeded by Archbishop Roger M. Mahony, 49, who is best known for his work on behalf of farmworkers.

Persons of significance in the religious world who died during the year included:

- Karen Ann Quinlan, 31, in June after 10 years in a coma. In 1975 her case focused world attention on new ethical issues of life and death raised by the growing ability of medical technology to preserve life beyond its natural capacity.

- James Groppi, 54, in November, of cancer. As a young priest in the 1960s he became one of the country's best-known civil rights activists as he led demonstrations that forced Milwaukee to adopt a fair housing ordinance. He later left active ministry to marry and became a bus driver and local union leader.

- Jesuit Father Morton Hill, 68, in November, of a lung disease. He founded Morality in Media and for more than 20 years led a national crusade against pornography.

- Canadian Cardinal Maurice Roy, 80, in October, after a long illness. The former archbishop of Quebec had been first president of two post-conciliar Vatican agencies, the Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission and the Council for the Laity.

- Bishop Carroll T. Dozier, 74, in December, of a stroke. First bishop of Memphis, Tenn., he was an outspoken advocate of peace and social justice. He and top Vatican officials disagreed sharply over two penance services with general absolution that he celebrated in 1976.