

# Churches plan action on apartheid

By Jerry Filteau

Washington (NC) — In 1986 U.S. Catholics and members of the other mainline Christian bodies can expect to see much more visible, concerted and intensified action by the U.S. churches to fight South African apartheid.

The church groups hope to help restore some kind of peace in a country that otherwise seems headed inexorably toward a bloody civil war.

Answering last December's plea from South African church leaders to quit issuing statements and start doing things instead, some 150 leaders of U.S. churches met in Washington Jan. 13 to devise a common strategy against apartheid.

They proclaimed 1986 "the year of action by U.S. churches against apartheid," and they seem ready to make good on that promise.

Economic pressure to force relatively peaceful change may be the only alternative to violence that could kill hundreds of thousands of people, they said.

They said that apartheid — South Africa's policy of segregating the races and denying the vote and other civil rights to the nation's black majority — is "an unmitigated evil, the product of sin and the work of the devil."

Among their plans for 1986, a day-long lobbying action on Capitol Hill this spring and a day of prayer, fasting and public witness June 16 are just the more obvious, public events. June 16 is the 10th anniversary of the Soweto riots — equivalent for black South Africans to the storming of the Bastille in France or the Boston Tea Party in the United States.

Key goals enunciated by the U.S. church leaders include "comprehensive economic sanctions" against South Africa by the U.S. government, getting U.S. banks to deny South Africa any renewal or rollover of short-term loans coming due this spring, and escalating the campaign to force U.S. corporations to dissociate themselves from apartheid.

The group formed an Emergency Committee on Southern Africa, made up of several heads of U.S. churches, to flesh out a two-page strategy plan and devise ways for the churches to communicate and cooperate for more effective action. Co-chairing the committee are the Rev. Avery Post, president of the United Church of Christ, and the Rev. N. Lorenzo Shepard, president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention.

Several Catholic officials attended the meeting. They included Father Rollins Lambert, African affairs specialist of the U.S. Catholic Conference; Father Joseph Witmer, ecumenical affairs officer of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, who led the meeting's closing prayer; and African Missionary Father Thomas E. Hayden, president of the board of the Washington Office on Africa.

The Catholic Church is not a member of the World Council of Churches, whose U.S.

office coordinated the Washington meeting, but participants said that they consider Catholic involvement important.

Father Lambert said afterward that if Catholic officials got involved in the actual development of interfaith strategy, "so much the better." Even if the U.S. Catholic Conference did not participate in that way, it would work on a parallel track, cooperating wherever it could with the plans, he said.

It's not that U.S. churches — including the Catholic Church — have ignored apartheid so far and are suddenly getting involved. Far from it.

In one way or another a policy of opposition to South African apartheid has been part of the institutional fabric of virtually all non-fundamentalist U.S. churches since at least the early 1970s.

But the key words in the new movement are "common strategy."

Each American church body or church agency opposing apartheid until now has generally operated at its own pace.

One might contend itself with a declaration that apartheid is evil and must be ended, while another might divest its stock portfolios of all shares in certain corporations investing in South Africa, or use those shares to introduce shareholder resolutions against apartheid. A third might focus on efforts at the national level to change U.S. foreign policy toward South Africa, while a fourth might leave it to each local church to decide what it will or will not do.

In the Catholic Church, many religious orders and a few individual dioceses have been members of the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility. Through shareholder resolutions or divestiture, they have pressured transnational corporations with investments in South Africa to leave South Africa or to adopt corporate policies there resisting apartheid.

The U.S. Catholic Conference, which represents the American Catholic bishops on public policy issues, consults closely with the South African Catholic bishops in formulating its positions. It has not yet called for corporate divestment, but in a major policy statement last September it said that investments and loans to South Africa "carry grave moral burdens and have critical impact on issues of human rights."

While the USCC has been more cautious in that area than many Protestant bodies which openly advocate divestment, it has been on essentially the same track as they are regarding U.S. government policy.

In the Sept. 11 policy statement, the USCC specifically called for congressional passage of the Anti-Apartheid Action Act, despite the fact that President Reagan had adopted many of its proposals only two days earlier by executive order in order to preempt the congressional action.

The USCC said it welcomed Reagan's executive order but still believed "a stronger and broader approach...is necessary."



## Along the Way

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

In a recent column I mentioned that I would share some of my prayers and hopes for our diocese in 1986. In the preparation for it, I have come to realize that there is not room to list them all and that if I wrote them yesterday or tomorrow they would not be exactly the same as they are today.

Among my hopes for us this year are these:

1) That we will develop our appreciation of the power of the Word of God in the life of our community. In a recent letter to our priests, I asked them to make their Sunday homily the central ministerial focus of their week. I pray that all of us who proclaim the Word will do so only after careful, prayerful preparation. I ask as well that our parish communities and especially liturgical committees work hard to ensure that the Liturgy of the Word is experienced by all of our people as life-giving and encouraging.

2) That all of us will continue to grow in our desire and capacity to be hospitable and encouraging to others. In an age in which so many feel they belong nowhere and in which life seems to have no real purpose, we have precious gifts to offer.

3) That all of us will be blessed with the kind of patience and understanding that will allow us to remain a community of love even as we struggle together to meet the difficult challenges of the day. If we pray for those gifts, questions that could cause division can become occasions of deep grace.

4) That we will never forget how to laugh in the kind spirit that keeps

human affairs in perspective and reminds us that a gracious, loving and utterly faithful God walks with us each day.

5) That we will continue to challenge our habits and patterns of living — even those that are most comfortable — when, rather than freeing us, to be generous in our grace for others, they draw us deeper into egoism.

6) That we will meet with reasonable skill and care for others our pastoral need to adjust in the light of the shifting vocational and ministerial patterns we are experiencing. Within that context, I offer a special prayer that all of our communities will acquaint themselves with these needs before they are affected by these needs!

7) That all members of our community come to a lively sense of their dignity in Christ and of their power in Him to transform the world. We are all meant to be free, active, loving participants in the Church's mission to build up the Kingdom of Christ. When we fail to educate and encourage others about this or when we refuse to assume our responsibilities for it, our whole community is less than it is meant to be.

8) That you who read these words will grow in the knowledge and love of Christ during the months ahead. I pray that you will realize how deeply the Lord loves you in all that is routine and common in your daily living. In a special way, I pray that you will experience the compassion of the Lord, alive in His people in any suffering you may be asked to bear at this time.

Peace to all.

## Brother John Walsh pleads guilty to reduced charges in county court

On Tuesday morning, Jan. 21, Brother John D. Walsh, C.S.C., pleaded guilty to charges of coercion in the first degree and unlawful imprisonment, according to Monroe County Assistant District Attorney Terry Service. The proceeding took place in Monroe County Court.

The 43-year-old Holy Cross brother was arrested last August and charged with the second-degree kidnapping of two boys at gunpoint. Brother Walsh, a former assistant

vice principal at Cardinal Mooney High School, pleaded innocent to the kidnapping charge at his arraignment and was released on \$7,500 bond.

Both first-degree coercion and unlawful imprisonment are felonies, but of a lesser degree than the original charge. According to Service, his office made no promises regarding sentencing to Brother Walsh to obtain the guilty plea.

At Tuesday's hearing, Judge Patricia Marks agreed to continue Brother Walsh's bail at the same amount and directed the county's probation department to prepare a background report which she will use in determining a sentence.

Brother Walsh could receive a maximum sentence of seven years in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, in county court. Members of Brother Walsh's congregation declined to comment on the case.

## Conclusion nears in trial of seven accused of conspiring to kill pope

By John Thavis

Rome (NC) — An Italian court is preparing to hear final arguments in the trial of seven men accused of complicity in the 1981 shooting of Pope John Paul II.

The court scheduled prosecution arguments to begin Feb. 4 with defense summations to follow. A verdict by two judges and six civilian jurors is expected later in February.

The court also decided not to further question Francesco Pazienza, an Italian businessman jailed in New York, on his alleged role in "coaching" convicted papal assailant Mehmet Ali Agca. According to a convicted Italian gangster, Pazienza helped Italian intelligence agents convince Agca to invent the plot. Intelligence agents have denied the allegations.

The court recessed Jan. 14 after making an on-the-spot check of the apartment building where Agca said he met with his accomplices.

Agca, a 28-year-old Turk, has said three Bulgarians and five Turks helped him plan and carry out the shooting, which seriously wounded the pope. One of the Turkish

defendants has died since the trial began last May.

No concrete evidence has emerged during the trial to confirm Agca's version of events. The case has been built almost entirely on what Agca told investigators during a two-year investigation following his conviction.

Agca has changed most of the details in the alleged plot during testimony and several times has disrupted the trial, proclaiming himself to be Jesus Christ.

On Jan. 14, the court ruled against a defense motion for psychiatric testing for Agca. He has never undergone such testing in Italy.

The court visited the former apartment building of Todora Ayvazov in downtown Rome, where Agca said he met with Ayvazov and other Bulgarians to plan the shooting. During the pretrial investigation, Agca was taken to the spot to see if he could identify the building. He misidentified the building, but later corrected himself.

The visit by judges and jurors was requested by defense attorneys, who said it was impossible that Agca could have confused the two buildings if he had been there

before.

Ayvazov and another Bulgarian defendant, both of whom worked at the Bulgarian Embassy in Rome at the time of the shooting, are in Bulgaria and are being tried in absentia. Sergei Antonov, former station chief for Bulgaria's national airline in Rome, is on trial in Rome. Of Agca's three alleged Turkish accomplices, two are present for the trial and one is at large.

### McQuaid Student Nominated for Naval Academy Post

In a recent statement, U.S. Congressman Frank Horton nominated Charles S. Manzella of McQuaid Jesuit High School as a candidate for the 1990 class of the United States Naval Academy.

Manzella is among 10 candidates who will compete for three appointments for the Naval Academy's 29th Congressional District. The nominees will be evaluated by the Academy Admissions Board, based on academic record, leadership potential, aptitude, physical fitness and extra-curricular activities.

### How a Catholic may K•N•O•W that He will go to Heaven when He dies

The above is the title of a 17-page booklet by Albert H. Monacelli, a retired New York attorney and bible school graduate. There are 100,000 in print and 70,000 are circulating in 47 States, without advertising except for an announcement in a small bible school paper. The most frequent comment by readers is that it is the first such message to Catholics written in love. Send 50¢ for a sample copy postpaid or \$1 for two, to:

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### PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the annual inspection for the 1985-86 school year for the Diocese of Rochester Elementary and Secondary Schools for fire hazards which might endanger the lives of students, teachers and employees therein, has been completed and the report is available at the office of the individual school for inspection by all interested persons.