

# National/International Report



**ART FROM BRICK** — Holding her hard hat, sculptor Paula Collins of Denton, Texas, poses at the Acme Brick plant with her "Wheat and Grapes" sculpture, which she carved for the altar of the new St. Mary's Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The work is one of two brick sculptures she has created for the church. The artist believes she is one of only five sculptors in the United States who work with bricks.

## Catholics express anger, confusion over Vatican action in Seattle

Seattle (NC) — Three weeks after the announcement of a Vatican-mandated division of responsibilities between Seattle's two active bishops, Catholics inside and outside the archdiocese expressed confusion and anger over the Holy See's decision.

Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen and his auxiliary, Bishop Donald Wuerl, at a daylong closed meeting Sept. 26 with about 250 of Seattle's priests and other archdiocesan leaders, said they would ask Rome to help sort out the confusion resulting from the Vatican instructions.

The meeting — which some sources termed "explosive" — ended with an appeal by Archbishop Hunthausen to remain "prayerful, reflective, but most of all loving."

It was one of the latest developments in the controversy that began Sept. 4 with the revelation that Archbishop Hunthausen, acting on Vatican instructions, was delegating to Bishop Wuerl his full authority over some archdiocesan matters. These included liturgy, priestly formation and continuing education, marriage tribunal practices and staffing, and some areas of moral teaching.

The areas in which Bishop Wuerl was given final authority were those cited by the Vatican as problems in the archdiocese at the conclusion of a two-year investigation of Archbishop Hunthausen from 1983 to 1985. Bishop Wuerl was named an auxiliary of Seattle in December 1985, just days after the investigation was formally closed.

Reaction to the Vatican-ordered division of authority has been widespread and largely sympathetic toward both the archbishop and his auxiliary. Among the responses were:

- One Sept. 22, the 17 Catholic bishops of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington — the five states forming Region XII of the National Conference of

Catholic Bishops — issued a declaration that they "unanimously support" the two bishops in their efforts to deal with the controversy.

- Archbishop Pio Laghi, papal nuncio to the United States, told reporters Sept. 22 in Portland, Ore., that the action against Archbishop Hunthausen "is not to be interpreted as a slap in the face." He said the church allows "diversity" but had to "contain all those energies (in the Seattle Archdiocese) in a straight line."

- Western Washington Catholics by Sept. 22 had gathered more than 12,000 signatures on a petition urging Rome to restore Archbishop Hunthausen's authority.

- Archbishop Francis Hurley of Anchorage, Alaska, writing in his archdiocesan newspaper, said the Vatican action was widely viewed "as a public criticism" of Archbishop Hunthausen. But he said that the "generic nature" of the problem areas cited by the Holy See left people wondering whether an itemization of specifics would reveal some fundamental flaws in Archbishop Hunthausen; would they appear trivial and, therefore, provide feeble basis for the extreme action taken?

- Bishop Sylvester Treinen of Boise, Idaho, wrote that after 24 years of friendship and collaboration with the archbishop, "I love him and know him better than my blood brother. He is indeed a holy, prayerful and learned man ... I will remain faithful and loyal to the Church and to the two Seattle prelates. I must allow prayer and time to resolve the matter, as I continue to struggle with the mystery."

- America, a Jesuit-run national weekly, in its Sept. 27 issue, asked people concerned about the case to draw on Archbishop Hunthausen's response as their example.

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## Pope emphasizes spiritual role of priests, signals end of post-conciliar identity crisis

By Agostino Bono

Ars-en-Dombes, France (NC) — Pope John Paul II emphasized the spiritual role of priests and signaled the end of a post-Vatican II identity crisis among Catholic clergy. During a talk to 5,800 French priests and seminarians on retreat, the pope also criticized clerics who use "ideologies foreign to the Christian and priestly spirit" and who have a "spirit of systematic defiance toward Rome."

"All this has a price," he said Oct. 6, in the tiny town of Ars, home of St. John Vianney, a 19th-century priest popularly as the Cure of Ars and regarded by Pope John Paul as a model for priests.

The pope said priests must remember that they are not primarily responsible for solving the problems of the temporal world.

A priest is given "the power to guide his priestly people," Pope John Paul said. "The specific identity of the priest thus seems clear. Moreover, after the debate of the last 20 years, this is now discussed less and less."

"But the limited number of priests and priestly ordinations in many countries could bring many faithful and even priests to resign themselves to this shortage under the pretext that it is better that the role of the laity is rediscovered and put into practice," he said.

Papal press spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said the pope was saying in his talk that the priestly identity crisis that hit the post-Vatican II church is over. The priest's identity is clearly different from that of the laity, and the distinction must be maintained if the priest is to be effective, said Navarro-Valls.

The French church was deeply affected by the post-conciliar identity crisis among priests, a situation that caused many to leave the active ministry.

In 1965, France had 40,994 diocesan priests. The number had dropped to 28,629 by 1985.

The number of annual ordinations also

dropped steadily until it reached a low of 95 in 1983. Since then, it has risen slowly, and totaled 116 in 1985.

Priests also must be ready to face the problems created by societies that are either repressive or try to create an atmosphere unfavorable to religious values, the pope said in his talk.

He told the French clergymen that they must strengthen their interior lives so that they can better tend to the needs of France's Catholics, especially persuading people to go to Mass and confession.

About 80 percent of the French population professes Catholicism, but only about 10 percent attends Mass weekly.

The pope asked priests to take inspiration from the Cure of Ars as an aid in overcoming "the notable lack of religious practice" in France.

"He is known in the entire world as the person who heard confessions for 10, 15 hours, and even more per day," the pope said.

Prior to the papal trip, a group of priests from the Lyons Archdiocese criticized the pope for using the Cure of Ars as a model for the contemporary priesthood. The critics said the problems of rural 19th-century France are too different from those of the modern world.

Navarro-Valls said the pope was not asking present-day priests to do the same things that the Cure of Ars did, but to be inspired by his ability to overcome the problems of his day to bring people to the sacraments.

"Priests must remember that they are primarily dispensers of God's mysteries," the pope said.

He told priests to strengthen their identity by being faithful to their promises of poverty, chastity and obedience. He reiterated the need for priestly celibacy, calling it "the sign of our unlimited availability to Christ and others."

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