

National/International Report

Archbishop cites 'collegiality' as issue in Seattle controversy

By Tracy Early

New York (NC) — Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee told a predominantly Protestant audience in New York that the "deeper problem" in the controversy over Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen is "how collegiality is going to work."

He said collegiality means that Catholic bishops govern with the bishop of Rome — the pope — but "we don't have the kind of forms needed" to put that principle into practice.

Archbishop Weakland declined to discuss specifics of the Vatican action, in which Archbishop Hunthausen was instructed to delegate to newly appointed Auxiliary Bishop Donald Wuerl final authority over certain designated areas.

But the Milwaukee archbishop said that in the years when he was abbot general of the world's Benedictines, he found that such

limited-authority arrangements never worked to solve local problems.

Archbishop Weakland spoke about the Seattle case in response to a question following an address Oct. 8 on "God's Word and the American Economy." He was one of the principal speakers at a convocation co-sponsored by the interdenominational Riverside Church and Union Theological Seminary.

On another controversy, he indicated that he had come under attack for his recent criticisms of "rigid" responses by Church leaders to ferment in Catholic moral theology. His comments, published in two successive columns in his archdiocesan newspaper in September, received national publicity.

In Washington Oct. 9 the archbishop said the mail he has received on the two columns was running about 25-1 in support of his views. He said he spoke out because priests and people in his archdiocese had asked him

to address the issue.

In his address in New York, Archbishop Weakland, who chairs the bishops' committee writing a pastoral letter on the U.S. economy, said the committee's hearings and thousands of letters commenting on the preliminary drafts revealed "much generosity" in the American people. But he said they are "very nervous at this moment" and therefore act in ways that seem to show a lack of concern.

Among "negative" factors in American culture, he cited "hyper-personalism," which he also termed "me-ism" and "rugged individualism." He said this appears as "privatization" in religion. "I always get disillusioned because I find this so prevalent in the Catholic Church," he said.

Archbishop Weakland said he found this individualism even among economists who graduated from Catholic colleges.

Instead of raising economic questions about the bishops' pastoral, he said, "they question my theology" because they have privatized religion to the point of separating "morals from economic and political thinking."

The same individualistic concept of religion, Archbishop Weakland said, is found among the young. He said he required every young person desiring the sacrament of confirmation to write him a letter explaining

their reasons. He said that most of the letters show an individualistic outlook, and often make no mention of Christ or the Holy Spirit, but speak only of "me and God and that goody-goody feeling I got on retreat when the candles were burning and we held hands."

Archbishop Weakland also said Americans showed a "provincialism" that restricts the concept of neighbor to fellow Americans and that they often think of their country as a "Paradise Found," where all is perfect. He suggested people look critically at Church statements on Thanksgiving in recent years to see what he meant. "They're horrible."

Asked in the question period about power, Archbishop Weakland said this was an area where the proposed economics pastoral could justifiably be criticized. "We don't deal enough with power, and the kind of power that comes with money," he said. Multinational corporations arouse concern, he said, because their "accountability" for their power is not clear.

Asked about empowerment of women in the Church, he said, "Yes, there is a future for the empowerment of women in the Roman Catholic Church. I believe the Holy Spirit can play tricks on us, even in 1986."

Contributing to this story was Sister Mary Ann Walsh in Washington.

Vatican action caused disunity in Seattle, canon lawyer claims

By Sister Mary Ann Walsh

Washington (NC) — Vatican officials have created disunity in the Archdiocese of Seattle by interfering in a local dispute, said Father James Provost, a canon lawyer at The Catholic University of America.

Father Provost said the Vatican had acted in response to a campaign by "certain right-wing persons ... to destroy a person's reputation."

Pope John Paul II should "redress that scandal" which is "unworthy of the Catholic Church," he said.

Father Provost made his statement at an Oct. 11 press conference in Washington after he addressed about 2,500 participants at an Oct. 10-12 conference on "Women in the Church."

Talking to the press, Father Provost answered questions about the controversy in Seattle, where the Vatican has ordered Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen to delegate final authority over five controversial areas to his new auxiliary, Bishop Donald Wuerl.

Father Provost, who was Archbishop Hunthausen's chancellor when the archbishop was bishop of Helena, Mont., was also a target of criticism by conservative Catholics during his recent successful battle for tenure at Catholic University.

He said one-sided involvement by the Vatican in U.S. controversies recently has undermined the Vatican role as "the source and foundation of unity" for the Church.

The United States is characterized by debates inside and outside the Church, he said, and Vatican officials who "have elected to take a particular side from the start" have "exacerbated the situation."

Involvement of the Holy See in what amounts to a difference of opinion, he added, "is an inappropriate intervention."

He said that Vatican involvement in Seattle was one of several recent instances of inappropriate Vatican actions. As another example he cited Cardinal Edouard Gagnon, head of the Pontifical Council for the Family, criticizing a sex education series for use in Catholic schools which carried the imprimatur ("let it be printed") of Archbishop Daniel Kucera of Dubuque, Iowa.

In his address during the conference, Father Provost spoke on the human and legal rights of women in the Church. He praised the new Code of Canon Law for its "deliberate effort to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex" from the Church.

The main distinctions in the code now, he said, "are on the basis of ordination, rather than sex."

He urged the group to find creative solutions to problems created by exclusion of women from formal ministry. "A wide area for creative development exists in the Church," he said.

He warned, however, that he was "not advocating vigilante action, taking the law into one's own hands" but rather "developing a working consensus" on key issues.

Hundreds gather for 'feminist' prayer service at Washington conference on women, Church

By Sister Mary Ann Walsh

Washington (NC) — Several hundred women joined in an afternoon prayer service advertised as a "feminist liturgy" during a conference on "Women in the Church" in Washington Oct. 11.

Most of those at the service, however, declined a request to join in a symbolic consecration at a conference-sponsored Mass later that day.

At the close of the feminist liturgy Ruth Fitzpatrick of the Women's Ordination Conference urged participants, when they attended the Saturday evening Mass later that day, to raise their arms and put out their hands at the consecration. "Claim your power with the words of the eucharistic prayer which the priest usually reserves for his clerical-caste self," she said.

At the Mass that night, celebrated by Oblate Father David Power, who apologized that a woman could not be the celebrant, only a small number of women put out their hands at the consecration to symbolize consecration.

The afternoon feminist service was not an official part of the conference but was sponsored by a group called Women-Church. The crowd that attended overflowed

the meeting room into the hallway, although conference planners downplayed the event.

During the service, marked by a dance led by Incarnate Word Sister Martha Ann Kirk of San Antonio, Texas, participants sang feminist songs and read from literature that spoke of the pain women feel from oppression and from "the passion of women-hating."

Prayers referred to God as "she," as the leader called for all to "be open to the Holy One and her spirit."

During the eucharistic part of the service, various women offered different kinds of bread: matzo, sourdough, tortillas and nutbread — the last, said the woman who presented it, because "you have to be a little crazy to survive."

Participants, first over the bread and later over grape juice and wine, extended their hands "in power to bless," they said.

In the hall outside the conference Mass that evening, organizers of Women-Church and the Women's Ordination Conference lined up with posters protesting the Church's refusal to ordain them.

"I am ready and willing but unable," read a sign carried by Karen Schwarz of San Francisco. "My call is from God. My pain is from Rome," read another held by Melanie Williams of Arcata, Calif., and Sister of St. Joseph Joan Sobala of Rochester, N.Y.

During the Mass Father Power yielded his place as homilist to Notre Dame Sister Teresita Weind of Oak Park, Ill., who gave a reflection on women in the Church.

Sister Weind, a black, symbolically removed liturgical garb as she said that women's exclusion from the ordained ministry is an extension of slavery.

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