

# Bishops to discuss changes in NCCB hiring procedures

By Sister Mary Ann Walsh  
 WASHINGTON (NC) — A proposal to give more direct power to the U.S. bishops in the hiring of their general secretary and less power to him in the hiring and firing of key staff members is to be discussed by the bishops in a closed session at their Nov. 10-13 general meeting.

The proposal comes after the controversy last summer over the hiring of Jesuit Father Michael Buckley as head of the bishops' committees on doctrine and on pastoral research and practices.

But Archbishop Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, who drafted the proposal, said the proposed changes had "absolutely nothing to do with any current event" and was considered "long before anyone knew of" the appointment of Father Buckley.

The bishops have two separate but related national organizations, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Catholic Conference. The general secretary, currently Msgr. Daniel F. Hoye, oversees the day-to-day activities of each body.

Under the proposal, the appointment of the general secretary would have to be approved by a secret, simple-majority vote of the entire conference of bishops, which has

about 300 members. Currently the general secretary is approved by a two-thirds vote of the bishops' Administrative Committee, a policy-making panel of about 40 bishops.

The proposal, a copy of which was obtained by National Catholic News Service, also would require that appointments to about 17 key staff positions at the NCCB and USCC be agreed to by the Administrative Committee. Currently the general secretary makes the appointments after consulting with the executive committee, composed of the conference's four top officers and one other elected member.

Archbishop Mahony, in an Oct. 24 telephone interview, said he wished to make the proposal now "when there is no current and immediate staffing problem."

He added that the proposal was made so that there can be discussion -- but not a vote -- at the bishops' November meeting.

He said he hoped the discussion would spark formation of a by-laws committee in the conference and said that the NCCB and USCC was the only major bishops' conference in which the whole body of bishops does not elect its general secretary.

The proposal was signed by 14 other U.S.

prelates, including Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia and Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston. It was dated Aug. 22, the same date as a letter from Msgr. Hoye confirming the appointment of Father Buckley and ending the two-month controversy.

Father Buckley's appointment to the NCCB post last May was challenged because of the priest's alleged dissent in 1977 from church teaching on the ordination of women. A special panel of bishops appointed to examine Father Buckley's views said it found no evidence that Father Buckley ever had dissented from church teaching or had been disloyal to the church.

Under current by-laws the proposed changes could not be voted on at the 1986 meeting because members must receive prior notice of such votes.

The proposal comes just months before Msgr. Hoye completes his initial five-year

term as general secretary of the conference in February.

Archbishop Mahony said that given the forthcoming visit of Pope John Paul II to the United States he expected Msgr. Hoye's term to be renewed and not discussed until next year.

Currently, the term after the initial five years is renewable annually by a two-third vote of the Administrative Committee. Under the proposed changes, renewal would require a simple majority secret vote of the entire conference.

In a letter, Archbishop Mahony said that the proposal is supportive of the general secretary by "sharing his appointment-termination role for key staff people" so that "no longer does this burden rest solely upon his shoulders." The general secretary's "full authority is maintained throughout," he wrote.

## Anti-abortion activists will attempt to close clinics during pope's visit

By Liz Schevtchuk  
 WASHINGTON (NC) — Anti-abortion activists pledged Oct. 27 to "do everything we can" to non-violently stop abortions in cities Pope John Paul II visits during his September 1987 U.S. tour.

At a Washington news conference, representatives of four pro-life groups said they have asked abortion clinics in the eight cities the pontiff is expected to visit to not perform abortions while Pope John Paul is in town.

If the request is refused, pro-lifers will surround the clinics and prevent women from obtaining abortions, the activists said in kicking off an 11-month campaign to promote their plan.

The cities tentatively on the papal itinerary are Miami; Columbia, S.C.; New Orleans; San Antonio, Texas; Phoenix, Ariz.; Los Angeles; Monterey, Calif.; and San Francisco.

The activists said they chose Oct. 27 to announce their effort to coincide with the pope's call for a worldwide cease-fire while he and other world religious leaders prayed for peace in Assisi, Italy.

"This is our proposal to the abortion providers in these eight cities: Call a cease-fire for a day. Stop the killing of unborn children; let your cities have one day without bloodshed," said Juli Loesch, a representative of the Pro-Life Non-Violent Action Project of Gaithersburg, Md., a Washington suburb.

"For our part," she added, "we pledge to do everything we can, within the discipline of non-violence, to prevent all abortion in those cities on those days."

Ms. Loesch said the activists "are asking men and women of good will to come by the hundreds and thousands to fill the sidewalks and streets around the abortion clinics on the days of the papal visit."

"We will block the access routes of death with huge numbers of peaceful people kneeling in prayer," she said.

Joining the Pro-Life Non-Violent Action Project in the appeal were the Pro-Life Direct Action League of St. Louis; the American Life League, Stafford, Va.; and the Omaha, Neb., Christian Action Council.

Ms. Loesch said the pro-lifers have informed both the Vatican and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the planned anti-abortion actions during the papal trip.

Church officials had no response to the pro-lifers' intentions, she said.

Ms. Loesch, who is employed at the NCCB's Committee for Pro-Life Activities, said the NCCB "is totally non-involved" in the project and said she is helping organize the project on her own time. NCCB officials "wanted to make it clear that I was operating as an individual and I will certainly make that clear," she said.

The activists said the project involves both Catholics and Protestants.

Betsy McDonald, of the Pro-Life Direct Action League of St. Louis, said that "it would be an outrage for the violence of abortion to be committed as thousands of Christians gather to greet the world's most respected proponent of peace and justice for the unborn."

## Seattle

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 said, included "the appointment of a coadjutor with full power, the temporary appointment of an administrator, the appointment of an auxiliary with special faculties from the Holy See."

Bishop Wuerl was given final authority over liturgy, the marriage tribunal, seminarians, clergy formation, priests leaving the ministry or already laicized, moral issues in health care institutions, and ministry to homosexuals.

The chronology said the Holy See did not require the archbishop "to make a public announcement that he had agreed to surrender any episcopal duties. This was never contemplated."

It called his announcement of that decision Sept. 4 a "surprise" and said that "regretfully" it "was interpreted as portraying this whole process as a one-sided affair."

In response to numerous complaints about vagueness or a lack of information regarding the problem areas turned over to Bishop Wuerl's care, the chronology presented a far more detailed accounting of the issues than had been made public before.

These, it said, included the following:

-- "The tribunal -- the misunderstanding and systematic misapplication of the so-called internal forum solution, and the lack of a plan to employ degree personnel in the tribunal." Internal forum refers to a non-judicial resolution of certain marriage cases which cannot be resolved in the church's courts.

-- "The liturgy -- the widespread use of general absolution on a regular basis and the practice of first Communion before first confession; repeated instances of inter-Communion, e.g., permitting non-Catholics

to receive Communion at Catholic Masses and Catholics in Protestant services.

-- "Health care -- the continued inadequate response in both teaching and practice to the directives of the Holy See and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops regarding contraceptive sterilizations in Catholic hospitals.

-- "Homosexuals -- the need to develop a ministry to homosexuals that is at once unequivocally based on the teachings of the magisterium (church teaching authority), rather than on erroneous doctrines, and which avoids affiliations with groups promoting doctrines contrary to the church's teachings.

-- "Inactive priests -- the employment of those who have left the active ministry and-or who have been laicized in teaching positions and for service in the liturgy contrary to the directives of the Holy See and the terms of their rescripts (documents) of laicization.

-- "Clergy formation -- because of concern regarding the admissions practices for candidates for the priesthood and because of concern and questions surrounding the continuing formation of the clergy, efforts must be taken to ensure that the continuing education of priests be done in ways that emphasize the bonds of the local church with the universal church, and which are firmly rooted in sound theology, especially in these areas: Christology, anthropology, the role of the magisterium, the nature of the church and priesthood and moral theology."

Archbishop Hunthausen said he knew first-hand of some of the events detailed in the chronology, but others he knew of "only by verbal report, hearsay, or even personal surmise."

"I would even have to say," he added, "that I learned of some of the judgments and conclusions only by reading the 'chronology' itself."



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