

## National/International Report

# Pope says confusion about laity has hurt whole Church

By John Thavis

**Vatican City (NC)** — Pope John Paul II said misinterpretations of the Second Vatican Council have created confusion and "extremist positions" concerning lay Catholicism.

Those misconceptions have hurt the vitality of the Church, he said.

The pope said the upcoming synod on the laity, scheduled for October, should evaluate the "painful concessions" made by some Catholics to a worldly mentality.

He spoke Feb. 15 in an Angelus talk at the Vatican. The same day, he condemned terrorist killings in Rome and visited a parish in the city's suburbs.

The pope said the overall picture of the laity is more positive than negative. But he said the synod should not "close its eyes to ambiguous or mistaken situations."

The council's documents, the pope said, have been met with "partial understanding, and ambiguous and fragmentary interpretations, (which are) frequently opposed to the spirit of the council." This has created "confusion about the authentic nature of the lay vocation," he said.

The pope identified what he said were "opposite extremist positions: either placing the lay role exclusively within the hierarchical structure or separating the laity's cultural and social task from religious faith." Both views, he said, have ended up by "humbling

the vitality of the entire organism of the Church."

The novelty of changes brought by the council and their "impact with formulas of long tradition" have produced what some call a "crisis of identity" in the Church, he said.

the Romans: "Do not conform yourselves to this age."

The council emphasized that the laity shares in the "priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ." Lay Catholics should "work for the sanctification of the world from within," it said. In recent years, the

he said, should take into consideration successes and errors.

During his Angelus talk, the pope also called the Feb. 14 killing of two Italian police officers a "ruthless" act of terrorism that "wounds the conscience of every civil person."

A group of gunmen believed to be Red Brigades terrorists ambushed a postal van, escaping with nearly a million dollars. Two of the van's escort police were shot dead, and a third was seriously wounded.

"Once again, violence has swept away innocent lives," the pope. He urged prayers so that "the poison of violence may not pollute consciences."

In an evening visit Feb. 15 to the parish of St. Maria della Consolazione, the pope told parishioners that their new church, built in 1983, needs to become "a church of souls" and a real "place of prayer."

"No one would be happy if the material structures were destined to remain empty, cold and without life," Pope John Paul said in a sermon. He urged parishioners to attend Mass regularly.

The pope met Feb. 14 with U.S. Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, president of the Vatican bank, on the 100th anniversary of the bank's founding.

Formally called the Institute for Religious Works, the bank's main depositors are religious orders. It grew out of an initiative of Pope Leo XIII in 1887.

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Pope John Paul II

"Particularly sharp repercussions have been seen in the understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world, with painful concessions to that spirit of the world condemned by the Lord," he said.

The pope quoted St. Paul's instruction to

pope has urged Catholics to oppose many modern trends — particularly in the West.

The pope's talk was the third in a series of presynod discourses. He said he was speaking of the difficulties and "polarizations" in lay development after discussing positive aspects the previous week. The synod, too,

## Vatican names commission to review situation in Archdiocese of Seattle

By Jerry Filteau

**Washington (NC)** — The Holy See has formed a commission of two U.S. cardinals and an archbishop "to assess the current situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle."

Last year Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle was instructed by the Vatican to give up his authority in several key areas. The action provoked wide controversy, and the U.S. bishops last November offered to mediate the dispute.

The members of the new commission are Cardinals Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago and John J. O'Connor of New York and Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco.

Archbishop Pio Laghi, papal pronuncio to the United States, announced formation of the commission with a brief written statement Feb. 9.

He said Archbishop Hunthausen "has expressed his concurrence" with the decision. He gave no other details.

A spokesman for Archbishop Hunthausen said Seattle authorities would have no comment, and all questions were being directed to Archbishop Laghi.

Archbishop Laghi and his secretary were traveling and could not be reached immediately for comment.

In late 1985 the Holy See announced completion of a three-year investigation of Archbishop Hunthausen's leadership in Seattle, and shortly afterward it appointed Bishop Donald Wuerl as his auxiliary.

In September 1986 Archbishop Hunthausen announced that, following instructions from the Holy See, he was delegating

full, final authority to Bishop Wuerl in areas of liturgy, seminarians, clergy formation, the archdiocesan tribunal, and several other areas of church discipline and teaching.

Amid the nationwide controversy that ensued over the unprecedented division of episcopal authority, Archbishop Laghi issued a "chronology" of the Seattle events in which he said the Holy See considered Archbishop Hunthausen "lacking the firmness necessary to govern the archdiocese."

In November the National Conference of Catholic Bishops debated the Hunthausen case for more than four hours behind closed doors.

The result of that meeting was a public statement by Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, outgoing NCCB president, saying the U.S. bishops had no authority to intervene in the case but stood

ready to mediate if invited by both parties to do so.

The three churchmen appointed to make up the commission are among the most influential and respected Catholic bishops in the country.

Cardinal Bernardin and Archbishop Quinn are past presidents of the NCCB. And Cardinals Bernardin and O'Connor have been noted for their national leadership and mutual support of the U.S. bishops' 1983 pastoral letter on war and peace and for their pro-life activities.

Archbishop Quinn has played a key role in recent years in trying to ease tensions between the Holy See and members of U.S. religious orders and improve relations between bishops and Religious across the country.

## Archdiocese suspends second priest-protester

**Philadelphia (NC)** — The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has suspended a second priest who had been arrested for hammering warplanes at a naval air station.

Father Dexter Lanctot was suspended by the archdiocese on January 19, the day after he was released from jail on bond. He had been assistant pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Norristown, Pa.

Father Thomas McGann of Chester, Pa., assistant pastor at Resurrection of Our Lord Parish, was suspended on January 12. The two priests belonged to a group called Epiphany Plowshares whose members were arrested January 6 at Willow Grove Naval Air Station.

Two other Plowshares members, Gregory Boertje and Lin Romano, were also arrested.

A federal complaint alleged that the four inflicted an estimated \$300,000 damage to two helicopters and an airplane at Willow Grove.

Father McGann was immediately released on bond, while the others decided to remain in jail. Father Lanctot then decided to be released on January 18. At the time of Father McGann's suspension, an archdiocesan spokeswoman said that the archdiocese planned to defer action against Father Lanctot until after his release.

The Plowshares movement began in 1980 when a group of protesters, including brothers Philip Berrigan and Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan, damaged weapons at a General Electric plant in King of Prussia, Pa.

## Syracuse nun to run 3,000 miles to benefit order's aged

By Jim Murphy

**Syracuse (NC)** — A Third Order Franciscan sister twice crippled by arthritis plans to run 3,000 miles across the United States to raise \$1 million for the sick and elderly of her order.

Sister Nicolette Vennaro, 47, a first-grade teacher at St. Daniel's Elementary School in Syracuse who holds the 50-mile national record for women in her age group, will begin her 12-state trek Sept. 1.

In an interview with the Catholic Sun, newspaper of the Diocese of Syracuse, she said she has run on several occasions for charity, so "Why not for my own?"

Sister Vennaro began running just five years ago as therapy for arthritis that has twice crippled her. Since starting, she has run more than 30 marathons in cities including Washington, Boston, Chicago, Albany, Syracuse, Utica, New York and Philadelphia.

On one occasion, she raised \$2,600 from friends for the Heart Association.

Sister Vennaro plans to approach more than just friends to reach her \$1 million goal.

She has received a monetary commitment from American Medical Joggers, an organization to which she belongs. The Nike Inc. sportswear company has

pledged 10 pairs of running shoes for use during prerun training and the run itself.

To raise funds and awareness for her cause, a local run is to take place in Syracuse.

Dubbed the "running nun" by friends, the Utica, N.Y., native will start in New York City's Long Beach and hopes to finish in late December in Long Beach, Calif.

She plans to average 30 miles a day for nearly four months.

Friends have pledged to accompany her in a van for different segments of the journey. One woman, Carol Paris, the wife of Sister Vennaro's physician, has offered to travel with the runner the entire way.

The nun said she will contact religious communities along the route to arrange for housing.

Sister Vennaro said she has no doubt she'll complete the 3,000-mile run on schedule.

"If I have a destination, I'll make it," she said.

Donations can be sent to Sisters' Retirement Fund, Third Order Franciscans, 1024 Court Street, Syracuse, N.Y. 13208.



NC photo  
**RUN FOR A MILLION** — Sister Nicolette Vennaro, foreground, approaches the finish line of last November's Marine Corps Marathon in Washington. In September, the 47-year-old Syracuse teacher plans a 3,000-mile run across the United States in an effort to raise \$1 million for the sick and elderly of her Third Order Franciscans.