

World & Nation

Cardinal struggles to reclaim Christian millennium of 'Rus'

By Agostino Bono

Rome (NC) — Two blocks from the Roman Colosseum, a place of Christian martyrdom, lives white-bearded Cardinal Myroslav Lubachivsky, a man worried about modern-day religious persecution. His latest concern is that the Soviet government and the Russian Orthodox Church are usurping an event that belongs to his Ukrainian Catholic Church. That event is next year's 1,000th anniversary of the establishment of Christianity in a region now encompassed by the Soviet Union.

The 73-year-old Ukrainian-born cardinal lives in Rome, but is head of the Eastern-rite Ukrainian church. Today, an estimated 4.5 million people in the Ukraine still belong to the Catholic Church, which is forced to exist clandestinely. The Church has been illegal since 1946, when the Soviet government gave Ukrainian Catholics the choice of joining the Russian Orthodox Church or facing persecution.

Cardinal Lubachivsky — spiritual leader of these Catholics and of 2 million more who live outside the Soviet Union — argues that the establishment of Christianity occurred in the Ukraine prior to the 11th-century East/West split that gave rise to the Russian Orthodox Church. In 988 St. Vladimir, ruler of the Kiev-

Rus empire, declared himself a Catholic and ordered that all of his subjects accept Christianity as the official state religion.

According to Cardinal Lubachivsky, the name "Rus" is not a contraction of "Russia" but a derivative of "Ruotsi," the name inhabitants gave to Viking invaders centuries before Vladimir's reign. Nevertheless, he is not surprised that the Soviet government and the Russian Orthodox Church are working together to claim the millennium. He sees the move as part of an historical process by which czarist and, later, communist governments have used the Russian Orthodox Church to bring other ethnic and national groups under Russian control.

"The patriarchate of Moscow is using the 1,000th anniversary of the baptism of Kievan Rus as an occasion to present, both internally and externally, the Christian culture of Eastern Europe as the exclusive heritage of the Russian people," the cardinal says.

He claims, moreover, that the millennium is being used to present an image of religious freedom in the Soviet Union under the government's new "glasnost" (openness) policy. But Cardinal Lubachivsky strongly doubts that religious freedom is possible until the communist government is driven from power.

International women's group seeks equitable synod role for lay women

By Robert Nowell

London (NC) — An international Catholic women's assembly has called for greater focus on lay issues by bishops' conferences and an "equitable number of women" among lay people invited to this fall's world Synod of Bishops on the laity.

In a July 14-23 general assembly in London, the group, the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, also dealt with a range of other issues from prostitution to property rights.

In a message to the October 1-30 synod, the assembly said there is an urgent need for a forum within bishops' conferences "where the faith of lay people and their particular way of living the faith can be articulated and used as a valid base for discernment in the Church."

The assembly also said that there should be "an equitable number of women" among lay people invited to take a part in the synod's work and that the world union should be represented.

The union, which numbers 111 member

organizations in 12 countries, said it hoped the bishops would affirm that "through laity, women as well as men, the Church can be led to new insights into the meaning of the Gospel, of revelation, and to new forms of ministry."

In its resolutions, the assembly dealt with such issues as prostitution, discriminatory laws, polygamy, wife-beating, and denial of property rights. The resolutions also covered the need for education, development and support of the family.

A resolution on the Vatican's 1987 "Instruction on Respect for Human Life" — which called "in vitro" fertilization, surrogate motherhood and human embryo experimentation "morally illicit" — urged the membership to promote the document for "study and discussion."

In a message to the assembly, Vatican's secretary of state Cardinal Agostino Casaroli said "the most valuable contribution that women can make to the human family is precisely a heightening of the sense of life's meaning."

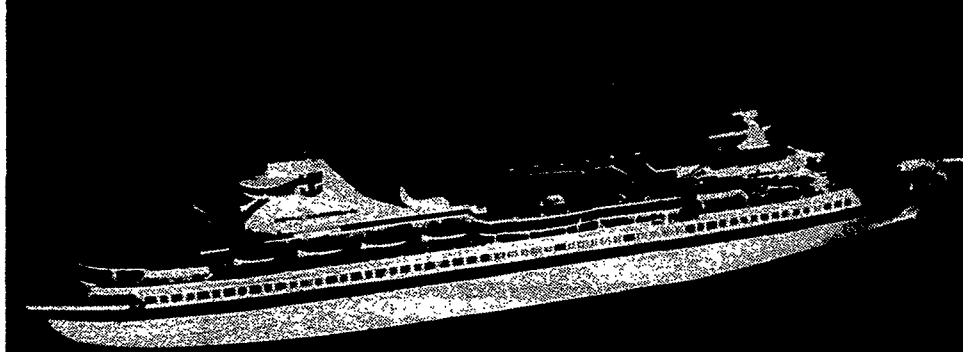


Wide World/NC News

Mountain hike

Wearing a white windbreaker over his cassock, Pope John Paul II hikes past a cloud-shrouded peak in the Italian Alps. The pontiff embarked on the six-mile mountain trek during the first day of his summer vacation. Vatican officials had carefully planned details of the Holy Father's vacation, as if it were one of John Paul II's many official voyages.

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