

World & Nation

C-J Capsules

Bishop establishes trust fund

Wichita, Kan. (NC) — Bishop Eugene J. Gerber of Wichita has set up a trust fund to help a 3-year-old girl fathered by a religious-order priest who once worked in the diocese.

In a published statement, Bishop Gerber told Peggy Cameron, the child's mother, "I think you should know that we intend to back up our words of assistance for you with all actions we can muster on your behalf from within the Catholic community."

The diocese became involved in a lawsuit involving Cameron's situation when a Sedwick County court issued a garnishment order to withhold a portion of Redemptorist Father Paul Ziegler's salary in order to pay child support. Father Ziegler worked in the diocese for a month and a half in 1982 to fill in for vacationing priests.

Condoms one, religion zero

(NC) — A Glasgow, Scotland, archdiocesan journal has called for a change in a British law that allows condom ads to appear on television but bans religious advertising.

Acknowledging that broadcast laws concerning condoms had been changed as part of the government's anti-AIDS campaign, the journal *Flourish* stated: "However benign the reasons behind the Independent Broadcasting Authority's decision, it must be noted that in a society where private enterprise and profit is revered, the cynic could be excused for suggesting that a certain commercial lobby is not losing out."

Order criticizes decision

Washington (NC) — American Franciscans expressed concern and criticism over a Vatican decision barring brothers from holding governing offices in the order.

Father Flavian Walsh, vicar provincial of the order's New York-based Holy Name Province called the Vatican decision "baffling and contradictory."

"We are essentially a fraternity, a brotherhood ... not a clerical institute," he said.

The Vatican Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes has said it is open to further study on the issue.

Mission to open in Russia?

Moscow (NC) — Mother Teresa of Calcutta said she hoped the Soviet government would let her establish a mission in the Soviet Union near the site of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Arriving in Moscow August 20, the Nobel Prize winner said she was told there were people in the Soviet Union who could use the "tender love and care" of her Missionaries of Charity.

Mother Teresa said she had no commitments from the Soviet government. Soviet law bars religious organizations from charity work.

Archbishop named to panel

Newark, N.J. (NC) — Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick of Newark has been appointed an observer to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe for an upcoming commission trip to Romania and Poland.

The commission, headed by Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., oversees compliance with the Helsinki accords on human rights. Among its members are almost two dozen congressmen.

Bishop Wuerl OKs seminaries

Pittsburgh (NC) — U.S. seminaries are "on the right track" in efforts to prepare priests for the Church of the 21st century, said Bishop Donald Wuerl, is nearly finished with a six-year-long Vatican-commissioned study of the seminaries.

The study, begun in 1981, is virtually complete, according to the bishop who is awaiting reassignment since the termination this May of his duties as Seattle's auxiliary bishop with special governing powers.

Haitian youths continuing hunger strike

By Anne d'Adesky

Port-au-Prince, Haiti (NC) — Catholic youths are continuing a hunger strike at St. John Bosco Cathedral in Port-au-Prince, in an effort to push for greater social action by the church in Haiti, although one of their demands has been met.

Catholic officials have said they will allow Salesian Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a well-known social activist and self-described liberation theologian, to remain in the inner-city cathedral parish to which the striking youths belong. The youths had sought the priest's return after he was transferred to a northern suburb. They said the transfer was politically motivated.

The youths also want the Haitian bishops' conference to oppose the provisional government and to begin an investigation into a slaying of peasants during a land reform dispute in Jean Rabel, Haiti, in July.

One of the original seven hunger strikers was reported to be in poor condition at a Port-au-Prince hospital Aug. 19.

The strikers had received only water since they began their action Aug. 14. They were being closely supervised by doctors and more than 100 supporters, who camped out in the aisles to sleep and guard the strikers at night. The strikers rested on straw mats on the stone floor near the altar.

One of the strikers' supporters said Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Lafontant of Port-au-Prince visited the cathedral Aug. 15. "He promised us that he would do what he could, but so far he has not contacted us again," the supporter said.

A spokesman for the bishops' conference said Bishop Lafontant was unavailable for comment but was aware of the situation.

Father Aristide has a wide following in Haiti, where he has advocated social change and condemned the provisional national government. His supporters say the priest has been a powerful force in organizing poor and rural Haitians to demand greater justice and equality in their lives.

"We support Father Aristide because he is fighting for change in this country," said Emmanuel Fritz, one of the supporters at the cathedral. "We want the Catholic Church to be engaged on the side of the people, not on the side of the government."

Since the ouster of former Haitian President Jean-Claude Duvalier in February 1986, priests and religious have worked with rural Haitians to educate them about their rights as citizens.

"It is my role as a priest to give guidance and to help people who are suffering from hunger, sickness and inequality," said a young Catholic priest who declined to be identified. "That is the message Father Aristide has promoted. It is the philosophy of human liberation and justice that is spelled out in the Bible and in the Scriptures."

Father Aristide, who describes himself as a



UPI-Reuters/NC News
Salesian Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide (center) is surrounded by supporters as he enters a Port-au-Prince press conference to denounce Haiti's upcoming presidential elections. The activist priest, who recently was transferred to a suburban parish, has been given permission to remain in the inner-city cathedral parish so that he can minister to a group of youths who are on a hunger strike, pressing for greater social action by the Church.

liberation theologian, cites Scripture passages about justice and tyranny which his supporters have interpreted as a blueprint for social revolution, for a popular movement by the peasants.

The government has accused the priest of being a communist and meddling in politics.

"Father Aristide is a fanatic, a dangerous man," said one government official. "He is manipulating the Bible to get across his political message."

In Washington, Fritz Longchamp, executive director of Washington Office on Haiti, said it was unclear who had ordered Father Aristide's transfer and who had reversed the

decision. "Even people within the church structure in Haiti are not clear," he said Aug. 20.

Longchamp said that last year, after Duvalier fled the country, the Salesians asked Father Aristide to stop making political statements. He said they asked the priest to be silent on such issues for two years or said they would send him to Rome.

The belief at that time was that the Haitian government, the papal nuncio and the U.S. Embassy wanted him out of the country, Longchamp said.

He said that at that time youths of the parish also staged a similar strike to protest.

League blasts resolution regarding Vatican-Israel ties

Milwaukee (NC) — The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights has criticized a proposed U.S. House of Representatives resolution urging the Vatican to establish formal diplomatic relations with Israel as a "flagrant violation of separation of church and state."

In a letter to all members of the House, the Milwaukee-based league also said the resolution could be seen as interfering in the foreign policy of the Holy See as a sovereign state.

It accused two congressmen of using "misinformation and propaganda" to gain support for the resolution. The league said Rep. Jim Slattery, D-Kan., and Rep. Edward Feighan, D-Ohio, each sent letters to fellow representatives in July urging adoption of the resolution, which was introduced last February by Feighan and co-sponsored by more than 40 representatives.

Neither Slattery nor Feighan, who are Catholics, could be reached for comment.

The resolution urges establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Israel as "a positive step toward peace and stability in the Middle East."

Kevin Long, the league's director of public affairs, wrote that the league "has no formal position for or against the recognition of Israel" and noted the league's "respect for the good intentions of the 48 representatives who co-sponsored the resolution."

But, Long said the league had serious reservations about both the resolution and what he called the "inflammatory rhetoric" Slattery and Feighan used in their letters.

If the resolution is addressed to Pope John

Paul II as the head of the Catholic Church, Long wrote, "it is a flagrant violation of separation of church and state and excessively entangles the legislative branch of the federal government in the internal policies of a religious body."

And if the pope is addressed as head of the Holy See, "the resolution is an attempt to direct the foreign policy of a sovereign state," Long said.

According to the league, Feighan in his letter referred to the recent controversy over the pope's meeting at the Vatican with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, who has been accused of Nazi war crimes. The league said such a reference was a "propaganda weapon against the Vatican."

Long said Slattery commented in his letter

NCCB president releases papal letter on Jews

Washington (NC) — Throughout his pontificate, Pope John Paul II has sought to develop and deepen relationships with Jews, the pope said in a letter to the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The NCCB released the letter August 19.

The next day, Catholic and Jewish sources in the United States announced that the pope plans to meet with Jewish officials for about 90 minutes Sept. 1 in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, his summer residence.

In the letter, the pope said sufferings the Jewish people endured are "a motive of sincere sorrow" for the Catholic Church, especially in terms of the "indifference and sometimes resentment" which he said have

divided Jews and Christians. "Indeed this evokes in us still firmer resolutions to cooperate for justice and true peace," he said in the letter to Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis, NCCB president.

The letter was released in the midst of the controversy surrounding the pope's June 25 meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim. Following the pope-Waldheim meeting, some U.S. Jewish leaders threatened to pull out of a planned papal meeting Sept. 11 in Miami unless a more substantive meeting also was held.

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