

# World & Nation

## Ortega addresses friction; cardinal responds cautiously

Managua, Nicaragua (NC) — Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega took steps in late-September toward addressing friction between the Nicaraguan government and Church hierarchy, and Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo of Managua responded with cautious optimism.

On the heels of his decision to allow two exiled priests to return home, Ortega announced Sept. 22 that Radio Catolica, the Managua Archdiocese radio station, was free to resume broadcasting.

Ortega also lifted the ban on publication of the opposition newspaper, La Prensa, and said the government was calling for a unilateral cease-fire in Nicaragua's guerrilla war zones.

Cardinal Obando Bravo described lifting the ban on the station and on publication of the opposition newspaper as "very important steps," and said the priests' chance to return made many Catholics happy.

However, in referring to the priests' return he added, "peace is not made of this alone." "We hope to see concrete measures," the cardinal said.

In the United States meanwhile, debate on the Nicaraguan situation continued.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Phyllis Oakley said allowing one newspaper and one radio station to reopen "does not constitute the advent of freedom of the press in Nicaragua."

And while the Reagan administration voiced skepticism at Ortega's efforts, Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit told a Brooklyn audience Sept. 20 that Catholic social teaching — not Marxism-Leninism — is the foundation for many actions of Nicaragua's Sandinista government such as land reform and aid to the poor. He said he was told, however, that Nicaraguan officials are "influenced by" Marxist thought.

The announcement about Radio Catolica

came after Ortega met for three hours with members of a National Reconciliation Commission established under a new Central American peace plan and chaired by Cardinal Obando Bravo.

Opponents of the Nicaraguan government had seen the priests' forced exile and closing of the archdiocesan radio station as proof of government persecution of the church.

The exiled priests — Monsignor Bismarck Carballo, director of communications for the Archdiocese of Managua, and Father Benito Petito, an Italian who worked as a parish priest — were greeted at Managua's airport by a cheering crowd Sept. 12.

Monsignor Carballo, an outspoken critic of the Nicaraguan government, was barred from re-entering his country June 28, 1986, as he was returning from a Paris conference aimed at reconciling Nicaragua's contending factions. During his exile, he worked with Hispanic Catholics at St. Mark's Parish in Hyattsville, Md., a suburb of Washington.

Father Petito was one of 10 foreign priests expelled from Nicaragua in July 1984. At that time Nicaraguan immigration authorities issued a statement saying the men "violated the laws of the country and were carrying out labors against the government and taking part in plans to provoke a confrontation between the Church and the state."

Radio Catolica was begun in 1961 by Capuchins who ran it until 1977, when the Nicaraguan bishops' conference transferred it to the Managua Archdiocese. Monsignor Carballo was appointed director by then-Archbishop Obando Bravo.

Forced to close 19 months ago, the archdiocesan radio station is in need of "some spare parts which cost some \$22,000, and we will now have to look for someone to donate the money," Cardinal-Obando Bravo said Sept. 22.

On Jan. 2, 1986, the government closed



**STAUNCH SUPPORT** — Fans were sparse in Cleveland Stadium with the Indians in last place 34 games out in late September. But three Sisters of the Holy Spirit from Garfield Heights, Ohio, turned out to cheer their favorites. Sister Mary Assumpta roots for Mel Hall, Sister Margaret Mary for Joe Carter and Sister Mary Loretta for Cory Snyder. The sisters' support was rewarded when they saw the Indians defeat Cleveland, 6-3.

UPI/NC News

Radio Catolica for failing to comply with a Nicaraguan communications rule requiring radio stations to broadcast Ortega's New Year message.

When Ortega lifted the ban on the Catholic radio station, he said "Radio Catolica can go back on the air and bring its pastoral, religious and spiritual message to the Nicaraguans."

Cardinal Obando Bravo responded that while the radio station's message is primarily religious, "sometimes that can have political connotations."

Recently the cardinal protested his government's formation of local peace commissions in the country as an attempt to force anti-Sandinista rebels to surrender.

The formation of these peace com-

missions, he said, is at odds with the regional peace pact.

But one of the nation's nine bishops, Bishop Pedro Lisimaco Vilchez Vilchez of Jinotega Prelature, is serving on a local peace commission, which has fueled press speculation of a rift in the Nicaraguan hierarchy.

The local commissions "do not constitute an authentic effort for a total cease-fire to be agreed to by the belligerent parties," the cardinal was quoted as saying in reports reaching Mexico City. "It would seem that what is being sought is simply the surrender and the disarming of isolated individuals."

On the other hand, Ortega and President Jose Napoleon Duarte of El Salvador say the Guatemala accord does not require them to hold dialogues with rebels operating in their countries.

## A Letter In Support of Life

Each August I think of a woman I have never met and what she must be feeling at this time of year.

It was in August, twenty-six years ago that my wife and I adopted a baby, a girl who became the light of our lives.

If I could speak to that woman, the biological mother of our adopted child, I would tell her what a wonderful human being that child has become. She is a professional woman, a lady in every sense of the word, beautiful, with great warmth, personality and character. She is an individual who will make a great contribution to her profession and society.

My heartfelt thanks go to that unknown woman for having that baby. We should all thank her. Certainly an abortion would have been an easy way out; but it would have deprived the world of a truly magnificent person. What a terrible tragedy that would have been.

**Her dad.**



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