

World & Nation

# Panama's archbishop surprised by quick military takeover

By Bill Pritchard  
**Washington (NC)** — Panamanian Archbishop Marcos G. McGrath of Panama City said he was as surprised as most of his fellow citizens by the swiftly unfolding political drama that deposed Panama's President Eric Arturo Delvalle.

Archbishop McGrath said there has been "very little time" for him to develop a mediating role between Delvalle's supporters and those of military strongman Gen. Manuel Noriega, whom Delvalle tried to fire February 24.

The crisis followed the announcement February 12 that Noriega had been indicted by two U.S. grand juries for drug trafficking, money laundering and harboring drug lords, but there had been months of protest against the general's de facto rule of the country.

Archbishop McGrath said the Panamanian bishops' role now is to "try to establish some contacts and be of service to achieve a peaceful solution."

On February 26 Delvalle, who was installed by Noriega in 1985, and Vice Presi-

dent Roderick Esquivel were ousted by the National Legislative Assembly, which is dominated by Noriega allies. The legislature named Education Minister Manuel Solis Palma acting president. Delvalle went into hiding to avoid deportation and continues to assert he is still the legal chief executive.

Archbishop McGrath said he met with Delvalle, U.S. Ambassador Arthur Davis and Papal Nuncio Archbishop Jose Sebastian Laboa in the president's home late February 25.

Delvalle was both "determined and

frightened," Archbishop McGrath said. He said the Panamanian leader vowed to "maintain his stand ..."

The archbishop said that when he returned with the others to the president's home for a further meeting Saturday, Feb. 27, they learned Delvalle had gone into hiding.

"We really don't know where he is," Archbishop McGrath said.

He said "we were not surprised" that Delvalle tried to remove Noriega because there had been rumors for some time that the president would make the attempt.

Nor was he surprised at the opposition of the military and its allies to Delvalle's effort to fire the general.

What was surprising was "the rapidity with which the whole sequence occurred," Archbishop McGrath said.

On the day Delvalle was deposed, the archbishop said in a statement that "corruption has spread throughout the public and private sectors." He said the political events of late February "had deepened the crisis and damaged the credibility of the government and the constitutional process." The statement was read February 28 in Catholic churches throughout the country.

Archbishop McGrath said that as protests against Noriega grew during the past few months, he and other Panamanian Catholic leaders had tried "to get people together" to resolve the political tensions.

Business owners and workers opposed to Noriega held a general strike February 29-March 1.

## Gallup poll shows New Yorkers want parental consent

**Albany (NC)** — A majority of New York state residents favor laws requiring parental consent before teenage daughters can have abortions, a recent Gallup Poll indicates.

The poll, conducted in December by the New York State Catholic Conference, surveyed the views of 1,525 New York residents aged 18 and over. Results of the survey, announced February 23 in an Albany press conference, showed that 55 percent of respondents favored a parental-consent requirement, 33 percent opposed it and 12 percent were undecided.

Those polled were told that "New York legislators are now considering a law which would provide the an unmarried daughter, aged 17 or younger, have her parents' consent before

having an abortion. Do you favor or oppose such a law?"

The bill in question, co-sponsored by Rochester Assemblyman Roger Robach, would require the consent of at least one parent or — in a "judicial bypass," the consent of a family court — before a girl 17 or younger could obtain an abortion.

A report compiling poll results noted that "higher than average support" for a parental-consent requirement exists among those 35-49 years old, of whom 61 percent support such a law; married adults, of whom 58 percent are supportive; and parents of either boys or girls, of whom 60 percent and 58 percent, respectively, back the measure.

"These also probably are the people whose consent most likely would be sought under the proposed legislation," added the Gallup report.

Catholics and Protestants support such a measure by nearly equal percentages of 57 and 56 percent, respectively, the poll found.

The report stated that all activities for the poll "were undertaken independently by The Gallup Organization" and that representatives of the New York State Catholic Conference were informed of the methods used "but in no way consulted or participated in the survey process or the preparation of this report." The report did not list a margin of error for poll results.

## NCCB president hopes papal document will further concerns of women

By Jerry Filteau  
**Washington (NC)** — Delivering the John Cardinal Dearden Lecture at Catholic University last week, Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis zeroed in on the role of women as the main area he hopes will be addressed in the forthcoming final document of the 1987 world Synod of Bishops.

Archbishop May, current president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and an NCCB representative to last year's synod on the laity, pointed out that the many discussions on the topic showed that the role of women is not just a peculiarly American issue. He stressed that the synod, which closed at the end of October, 1987, is not over yet because its final document — which the delegates asked the pope to prepare on the basis of the discussions that had taken place — has not yet been written.

Archbishop May declined to predict what the document would say, but suggested that it could put flesh back on the final propositions which the synod members submitted to the pope after a majority vote.

To illustrate the synod discussions, Archbishop May summarized one synod speech given by Cardinal George Basil Hume of Westminster, England: "Cardinal Hume said, 'I had a terrible dream the other day. I was worried in Westminster about these women bringing up the cruets, women who are taking more and more part in the Church. And there are people who are very disturbed about it:'"

"He said, 'I thought I'd talk to the nuncio about this. I called up the nuncio, but she wasn't home — and I talked to her husband, and he said, 'Well, she's over in church preparing her scripture reading for next Sunday:'"

"So," he said, 'I went back to sleep, and I was terribly disturbed about what's going on. Then I woke up on a country where a woman runs the government, where a woman is leading company after company, and where a woman is doing this and this and this ...'

"And he said, 'Now you all have talked about your culture, and some of the countries of the world have said that if we grant all these rights to women, it will be against their culture, it will be very disturbing and tear up the life of the Church in their culture.'

"Well, we have a culture too," he said, "and our culture tells us different things."

Archbishop May concluded the anecdote by recalling, "The Holy Father later saw Cardinal Hume and said to him, 'Keep dreaming.' Now I don't know what he meant by that, nor does Cardinal Hume."

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