World & Nation

UPI-Reuter/NC News

PRIEST ARRESTED — Consolata Father Lorenzo Zorza, suspected of involvement in international Mafia drug smuggling, is escorted to by an Italian policeman after the priest's April 6 arrest in Bologna. On April 1, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the FBI announced conspiracy charges against the priest, a naturalized U.S. citizen who had been living in New York. Father Zorza was one of 233 people named as suspects in the Sicilian drug ring. The U.S. government is planning extradition proceedings against the priest. According to Consolata Father Mario Barbero, U.S. superior of the Consolata Society for Foreign Missions, Father Zorza has not formally left the order, but is not in contact with his superiors and has not had an assignment from them in 10 years. Father Zorza had served three years of probation after being convicted in 1982 of smuggling art works into the United States. In August 1987, he was arrested by New York police after he and three other men allegedly tried to sell stolen tickets for the Broadway hit musical "Les Miserables." The charges were later dropped.

Superior court denies motion to dismiss Fr. Curran's suit

By Jerry Filteau

Washington (NC) — The Superior Court of the District of Columbia April 5 denied a motion by The Catholic University of America to dismiss a law suit brought by Father Charles E. Curran, a moral theologian seeking to remain a professor at the school.

The university sought to remove Father Curran from his post in the CUA department of theology after a 1986 Vatican ruling that he is not eligible to teach as a Catholic theologian because of his dissent from certain Church teachings.

Father Curran has charged the university with breach of contract for suspending him from teaching last year.

Previously confidential papers disclosed in the civil court battle also revealed that the university's faculty and trustees were at loggerheads over whether the priest could be removed from his current position without first being offered a comparable position elsewhere in the university.

According to the papers:

• A special faculty committee of the university's Academic Senate, formed to review an administration decision to dismiss Father Curran, concluded last October 9 that the Church's mandate to teach theology can be taken away from the priest only if he is allowed to retain his tenure and continue teaching theology or ethics at Catholic University.

• The university's board of trustees rejected the committee's decision on January 27.

• The faculty committee, responding to the trustees February 16, reaffirmed its original decision.

The conflict between the committee and the board of trustees set the stage for a final decision on Father Curran by the trustees, who were scheduled to meet again April 12.

Archbishop James A. Hickey of Washington, chancellor of Catholic University, moved to dismiss Father Curran from the university's theology faculty after the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ruled in August, 1986, that Father Curran was not fit to teach as a Catholic theologian.

The Vatican agency ruled against Father Curran because of his dissent from Church teachings regarding the indissolubility of marriage and certain questions of sexual morality, among them artificial birth control.

Education secretary, mayor address NCEA

New York (NC) — The 85th-annual convention of the National Catholic Educational Association examined the financial health of Catholic schools, the emotional health of their most-vulnerable students and the moral health of the society they serve.

Among other prominent speakers, U.S. Education Secretary William J. Bennett and New York Mayor Edward Koch addressed the convention on church-state issues. The theme of the April 4-7 New York City gathering was "Catholic Education: A Gift to the Nation."

Bennett told the educators to pioneer a "new frontier" by taking on the task of educating the nation's worst students. "Announce loudly and clearly that you are going back into your communities and taking the worst cases," he said. "Give them an education. And then, once these kids are ready to graduate, ask your local town or community for half the price, or two-thirds or whatever, of what it would have cost to educate those kids in a public school."

The education secretary said he believes local and state governments would be receptive "to constitutionally sound efforts to pay for the education of these students." If not, the private sector "would surely want to support this worthwhile endeavor."

Bennett praised Catholic schools for frequently excelling with less funds and fewer resources than those available to their public counterparts. But, noting the closing of many schools, said, "I do not think good Catholic schools have been marketing themselves as well as they could. Let's face the facts. You can't wait around for tax credits or tuition vouchers or other forms of new government funding."

Koch, meanwhile, told Catholic educators that New York City's corporation counsel was considering a new court suit on the issue of letting teachers paid by federal funds give remedial instruction in parochial schools.

He called the Supreme Court decision requiring that parochial school students be sent to neutral sites for the instruction "ludicrous, ludicrous."

Mercy parents producing 'Adventures in Wonderland'

The Parent's Association of Mercy High School will present its children's theater production of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* Thursday, April 14, at 7 p.m. and Friday, April 15, at 9:30 a.m. and noon. The play, which is suitable for children ages five to 10, will be performed in the Mercy auditorium, 1437 Blossom Road.

Admission is $2 per person, payable at the door. Advanced reservations, required for school groups, may be made by calling the school at (716)288-7120 or Ellen Fitzgerald at 381-4441.

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