

World & Nation

Anglican communion moves toward ordination of women

By Robert Nowell

London (NC) — The Church of England's general synod, composed of bishops, priests and laity, voted July 5 to propose ordaining women, but the church's spiritual leader said he believes the measure will fail when it comes up for a final vote in the next few years.

The synod debate included a reminder that the Catholic Church would consider the ordination of women as Anglican priests to be an ecumenical roadblock.

The Anglican body approved the proposed ordination legislation by a small margin of 57 percent of the bishops and clergy and 58 percent of the lay members. In 1987, 80 percent of the bishops, 66 percent of the clergy and 70 percent of the laity voted to prepare the legislation.

Participants in the July 4-6 synod also voted general approval for financial compensation to clergy who left the ministry in opposition to women's ordination.

The worldwide Anglican Communion is composed of autonomous national and regional churches. Some, including the Episcopal Church in the United States and the Anglican Churches of Canada and Hong Kong, already ordain women.

Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury, England, spiritual leader of the communion, told synod members that while he believes there is no theological barrier to bringing women into the priesthood, he feared that endorsing the proposal would divide the church. He also said there is probably insufficient support for final approval.

"The proposals before us do seem to me to be a kind of legislative schism," he told the delegates prior to the vote. Debate within the church on the legislation which has "such uncertain prospect of success will not serve

the cause of women's ordination or the spiritual health of the church," Archbishop Runcie said.

He said he also opposed provisions in the proposal to allow dioceses and parishes to opt to bar women priests from service in their jurisdictions.

Bishop Mark Santer of Birmingham urged the church body to "listen very carefully" to Pope John Paul II on the issue.

Bishop Santer, who co-chairs the Catholic-Anglican ecumenical dialogue called ARCIC II, said, "If we are serious, and I know we are, about Christian unity, then we must listen very carefully if the bishop of Rome, precisely in virtue of his special care for Christian unity, tells us that actions we propose to take are a threat to deeper unity."

He urged the synod to wait until there is greater internal Anglican unity on ordination.

Forcing the matter would produce "nothing less than institutional schism," Bishop Santer said.

But Bishop David Jenkins of Burham called on the synod to "press on to ordain women as soon as possible."

Archbishop John Habgood of York, supporting approval of the draft legislation, said there would be "deep hurt and frustration" if the synod voted the proposal down, preventing the church at large from debating its merits.

He said a report prepared by the Anglican bishops on the theological questions relating to women's ordination showed starkly that theological arguments against it are weak.

Arguing that the leadership of the church is reserved to males slips "into some form of the question of the inferiority of women," he said. Arguing that only a male can represent Christ in the priesthood leads "into quite extraordinary and untenable beliefs about the nature of God," the bishop added.

The draft legislation now goes to a revision committee elected by the synod. It will then be referred to the church's 44 dioceses, provincial groupings of the bishops and clergy houses of the synod and the synod's lay house before being sent back to the whole synod for a vote.

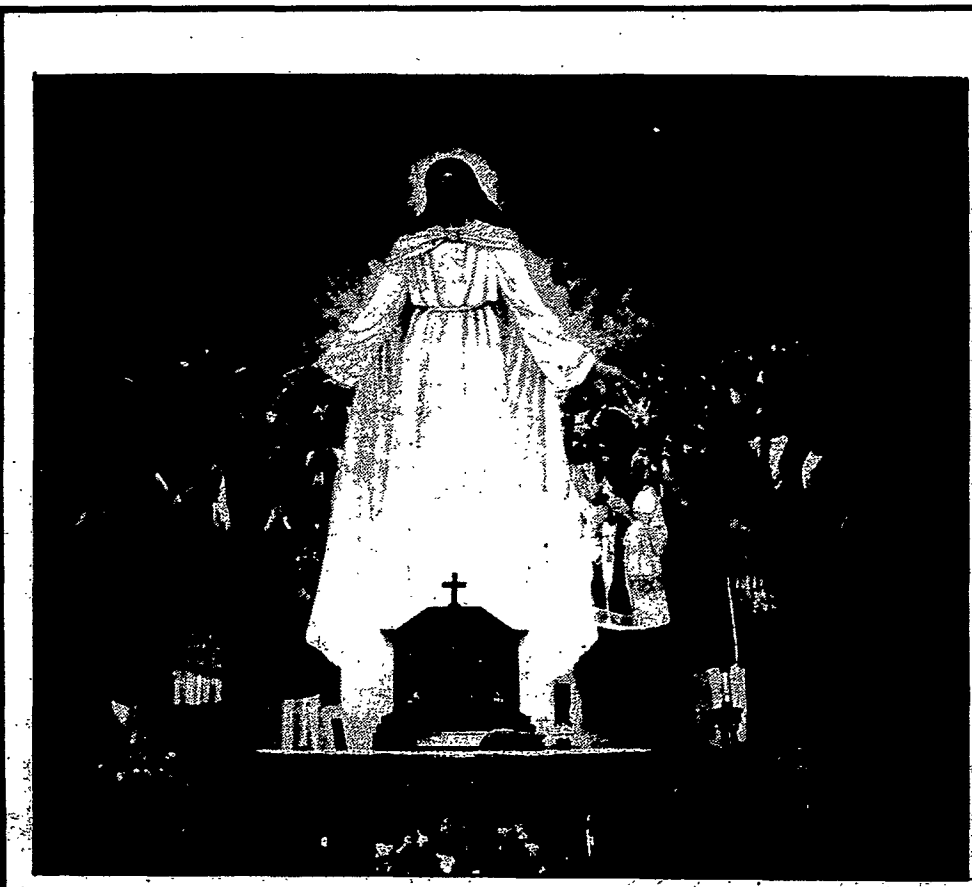
At that point, the proposal will need the support of two-thirds of each house for final approval.

Benefit golf tournament set

The Third Annual Holy Childhood Ladies' Golf Tournament is scheduled Monday, July 18, at the Green Hills Golf Club.

Funds raised by the tournament will benefit the Children's Program at the School of the Holy Childhood. The school serves mentally handicapped children and adults who reside throughout the Rochester area.

The tournament uses a team format. For registration information, call Holy Childhood's Development Office at (716)359-3710.



Ann M. Aughterton/Arlington Catholic Herald/NC News
MURAL FOR MARTYRS — A multitude of Vietnamese martyrs are united with Christ in a mural behind the altar at Vietnamese Martyrs Parish in Arlington, Va. Pope John Paul II canonized 117 Vietnamese martyrs June 19 during ceremonies at the Vatican.

Dependency program slates weekend for family members

Park Ridge Chemical Dependency will offer an awareness weekend for adult family members and close friends of chemically dependent people. The program will take place on Friday, July 8, from 8 to 10 p.m., and Saturday, July

9, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Park Ridge Chemical Dependency, 1794 Penfield Road, Penfield. Lecture presentations, films and small-group discussions will be used throughout the weekend. Registration is \$40. For registration or information, call (716)381-5520.

Sobol to lecture at Nazareth

Thomas Sobol, president of the University of the State of New York and commissioner of education, will deliver the 14th annual Alice L. Foley Lecture Series at Nazareth College on Thursday, July 14. Sobel's topic will be "Who Lost the Chalk: Notes Toward an Accountable Profession of Teaching."

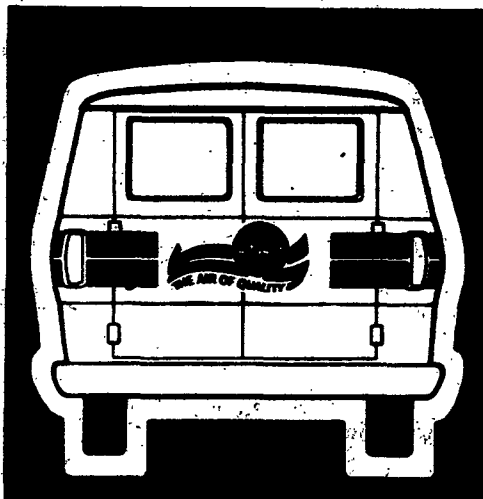
The lecture, which is free and open to the public, will begin at 10 a.m. in the forum of the Otto A. Shults Community Center.

Correction

In an article about Deacon John Holmes ("Deacon continues quest for recognition of black Catholics," C-J, June 30) the first black permanent deacon in the Diocese of Rochester was mistakenly identified as Daryl Mercadel. Deacon Mercadel's first name is Anthony. The *Courier-Journal* regrets the error.

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