

World & Nation



UPI-Reuters/NC News

CHILEAN DEMONSTRATIONS — Demonstrators in Santiago, Chile, flee police firing fire with tear gas and water canons near the presidential palace after anti-government protesters began blocking traffic. More than 30,000 people attended the September 4 demonstration, the largest in 15 years of military rule. Cardinal Juan Francisco Fresno Larrain of Santiago has called on Gen. Augusto Pinochet to respect the will of the Chilean people in the October 5 plebiscite.

Pope affirms male priests, equal dignity for women

By Agostino Bono

Rome (NC) — Pope John Paul has reaffirmed an all-male Catholic priesthood, and rejected arguments that Jesus Christ chose only men as priests at the Last Supper to conform to the culture of the time which kept women subservient.

"He did it in a way which was totally free and sovereign," said the pope in an apostolic letter titled "The Dignity of Women."

Christ "did it with the same freedom in which all his actions made evident the dignity and vocation of women without adapting himself to the dominant usages and traditions endorsed by the legislation of his times," said the pope.

Because of this, the priestly ministry "is exercised by men," the pope said.

He also said men and women have equal dignity in society and that a later document would deal more specifically with women's role.

The pope's letter was dated August 15, and was scheduled for release by the Vatican in early October in several languages, including English. However, copies of the text began leaking to news media more than a week before the release date.

A Spanish text of the letter was made available to National Catholic News Service September 23.

"If Christ, in instituting the Eucharist, united it in such an explicit way to the priestly service of the Apostles, it is valid to think that in this way he wished to express the relationship between men and women, between that which is 'feminine' and that which is 'masculine', as desired by God in the creation and in the Redemption," the pope said.

The document noted that Christ often contradicted the culture of his times in showing and teaching that women and men have an equal dignity before God.

The pope called the apostolic letter a meditation on women and promised another document which will discuss the pastoral implications of the role of women in Church and society.

The future document will be a postsynod exhortation based on the recommendations submitted to the pope by the 1987 Synod of Bishops on the laity, the pope said in the letter.

At the same time, the apostolic letter supported equal dignity for men and women in marriage and society.

Marriage is a "reciprocal submission" by both spouses, said the pope.

The Church opposes in society "all those situations in which women are at a disadvantage or discriminated against by the fact of being women," Pope John Paul said.

But the pope also warned against a "masculinization" of women in the effort to achieve equality.

Women "cannot attempt to appropriate masculine characteristics which go against their very feminine originality," the pope said.

"The personal riches of femininity are certainly no less than the riches of masculinity; they are only different," he added.

The pope made a special plea for society to help single mothers, pregnant women who have been abandoned by their mates, and women pressured to have abortions.

The pope said the Church has always recognized "feminine genius" and encourages women as mothers and consecrated religious to contribute to social and Church development. But it always has recognized that consecrated virginity is a superior state of life, the pope said.

The document is titled "Mulieris Dignitatem," Latin for "The Dignity of Women" and is subtitled "On the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year."

The Marian year ended August 15, the feast of the Assumption of Mary.

Most of the 125-page Spanish text is a biblical reflection on the dignity and role of women as it has evolved through the Old and New Testaments.

The Church's prohibition of women priests has often been restated by the pope as a teaching of Christ which cannot be changed. The position has sparked criticism from some women's groups within the Church and provoked calls for theological re-examination of the position.

One of the arguments has been that Christ chose men, not because he opposed women priests, but because of the cultural and social conditions of the times in which women were denied leadership positions.

This argument was clearly rejected by the pope.

"The hypothesis that he called only men as Apostles following the prevalent mentality of his times, does not fully reflect the way Christ operated," he said in the letter.

information, call Joan Henry at (716)266-4657 or Marcy Gabello at 338-1564.

Penny social scheduled for school in Brockport

The annual penny social, sponsored by the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, is planned for Sunday, Oct. 9, from 1 to 4 p.m.

The gala will take place at Nativity School, at the corner of Utica Street and Erie Street in Brockport. Free refreshments will be served. All are welcome.

Living rosary for life set for St. Thomas the Apostle

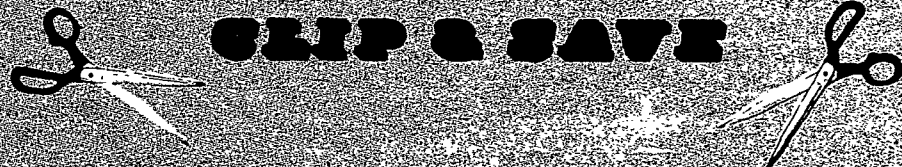
To celebrate Respect Life Sunday on October 2, St. Thomas the Apostle Pro-Life Group will host a special evening outdoor prayer service, "The Living Rosary for Life," on the front grounds of the church, 4536 St. Paul Blvd., at 7 p.m.

All in attendance will comprise the human rosary with each participant standing next to a luminary candle.

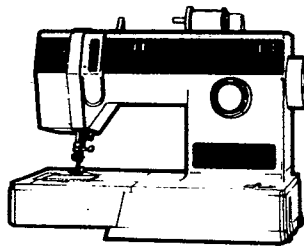
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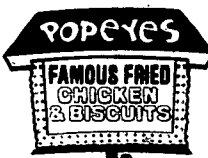
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