

World & Nation

Vatican posts 1987 deficit; reserve funds are exhausted

By John Thavis

Vatican City (NC) — The Vatican announced a \$63.8 million deficit for 1987, predicted a similar shortfall for 1988 and called for greater contributions from the pew.

An October statement said generous contributions worldwide to Peter's Pence, the pope's discretionary fund, helped defray about \$50 million of the 1987 deficit. The remainder was made up by dipping into reserve funds established for that purpose, which are now exhausted, the Vatican said.

A top Vatican official said that meant the Vatican would have to begin cutting directly into its investments and real estate holdings to meet any future shortfalls.

The statement was issued by a permanent council of cardinals at the end of a three-day meeting on the Vatican's precarious financial situation.

It noted that Peter's Pence contributions are up so far this year by about 3 percent over 1987. But according to figures released by the council, it would take a 20 percent increase to cover the expected 1988 gap. If the 3 percent increase holds, the Vatican would wind up about \$6 million short.

The statement estimated the Vatican's 1988 shortfall at about 77 billion lire, which at current exchange rates would equal about \$57 million.

The council therefore addressed "another pressing appeal to dioceses, to religious orders, congregations, and to the faithful in the whole world, above all in countries of greater means, to increase their spirit of cooperation with the Holy See so it can carry out adequately its pastoral mission."

At the same time, the cardinals thanked the worldwide Church for its generosity in 1987.

The Vatican statement, which included a breakdown of income and expenses, considered the budget of the Vatican City State separately. The Vatican City State covers administration of the 108-acre state in which the Holy See is located. In 1987, it had a \$7.1 million surplus, most of which was put into a fund for severance pay, the Vatican said.

The Holy See's budget includes the financing of Curia offices, diplomatic posts around the world, Vatican Radio and papal trips, among other things. As in previous years, salaries and benefits to Holy See employees — \$72 million — accounted for more than half of total expenses.

The 1987 shortfall was some \$4.5 million more than the Vatican had predicted in the spring.

The Vatican measured its deficit in dollars using an end-of-the-year exchange rate. A measure averaging exchange rates, which fluctuate over the year, would give a \$58 million deficit in 1987.

The reserve fund used to help close the deficit gap had been drawn from part of the Vatican's investments.

Although the reserve is now gone, the Vatican indicated it does not intend to set up another one. "From now on, we would have to remove from the patrimony itself,"

Cardinal Giuseppe Caprio, a top Vatican economic official, said October 17. That would probably mean direct sales of stocks, bonds and investment properties.

"We hope that in 1988 we can cover the whole deficit" without attacking the patrimony, said Cardinal Caprio, head of the Prefecture for Economic Affairs. Documents showed that in 1985 the Vatican had assets of \$485 million and liabilities of \$261 million for a total net worth of \$224 million.

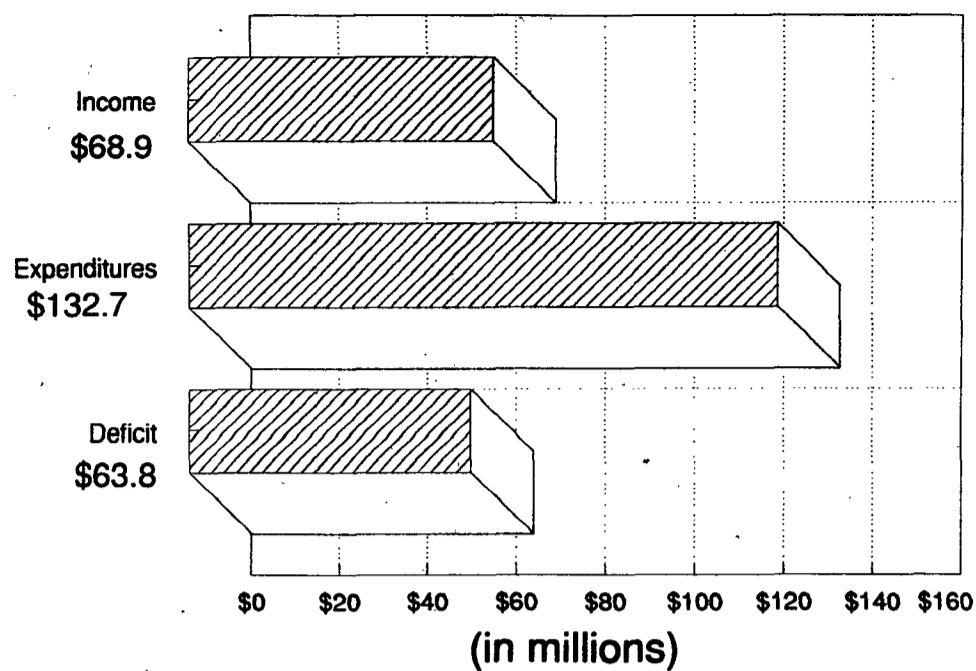
Meeting the annual budget shortfall has been a painful process for the Vatican since the late 1970s, when expenses began to vastly outstrip income. But the rate of increase in the deficit has been slowed dramatically since 1986.

In fact, measured in Italian lire, the 1987 deficit was slightly less than that of 1986.

A U.S. member of the cardinals' council, Cardinal John Krol, said he was pleased with the overall evolution of the Vatican's financial situation.

"As I look at the total picture, this year compared to five years ago, I'm encouraged," said Cardinal Krol, retired archbishop of Philadelphia.

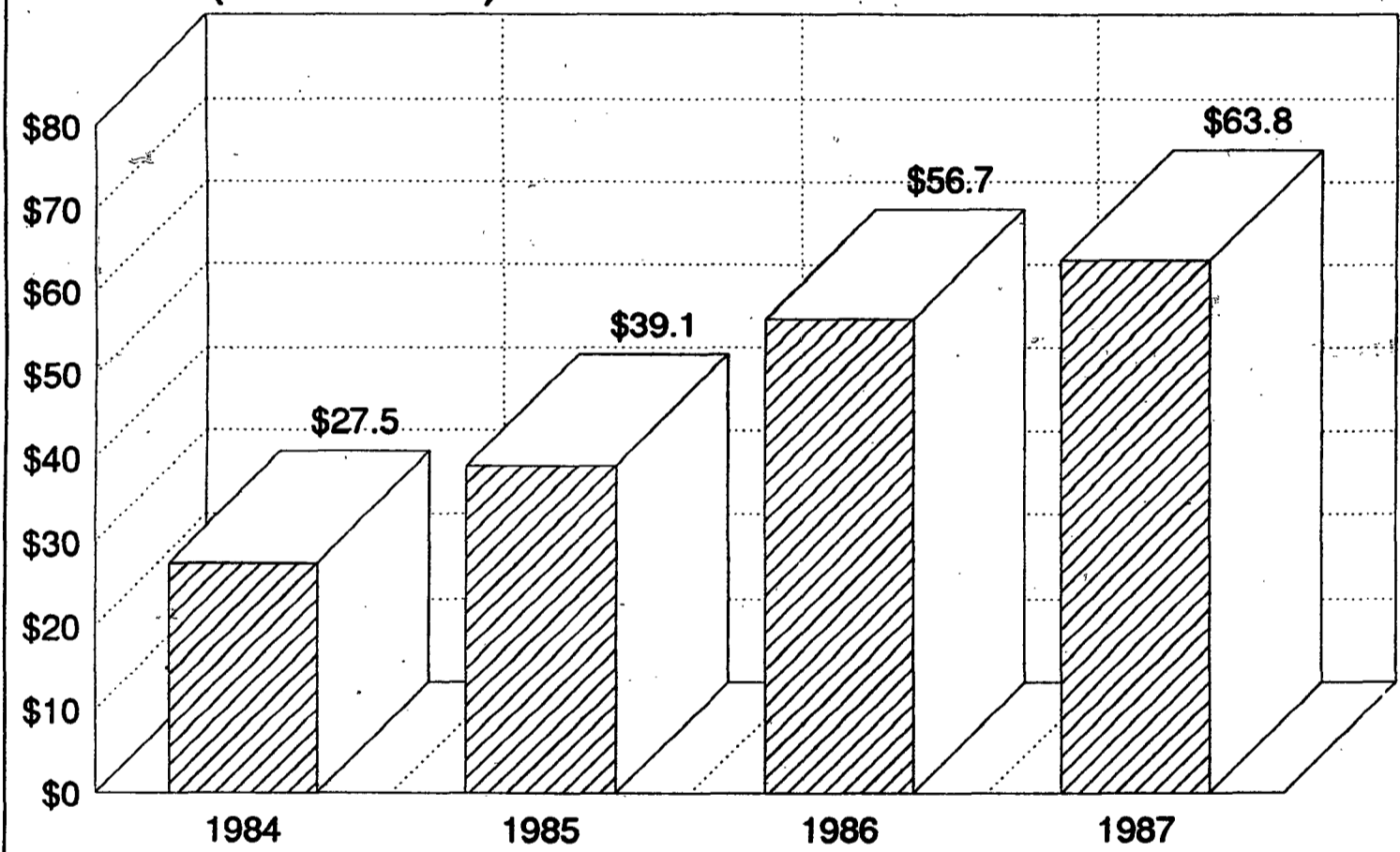
1987 Vatican Financial Statement



NC News
In its 1987 financial statement, the Vatican reported income of \$68.9 million, expenditures of \$132.7 million and a deficit of \$63.8 million.

Reported Vatican Deficits

(in millions)



The Vatican has reported deficits for the years 1984-87.

U.S. Canon Law Society votes to draft petition asking for married priests

By Gerard A. Perseghin

Baltimore (NC) — U.S. Catholic canon lawyers gathered in Baltimore last month took a first step toward asking for married priests in the United States.

At a business session of the Canon Law Society of America, members voted to establish a task force that will petition for "the ordination of qualified married men to the priesthood for the Latin Church in the United States."

The task force, to be named later, was asked to back the petition with reasons and historical precedents for the request. Society members asked that the document be brought for consideration to its 1990 convention.

In an interview with *The Catholic Review*,

Baltimore archdiocesan newspaper, the society's executive coordinator, Father Edward G. Pfnausch, said: "We have a long tradition of ordaining married men in the first millennium of the Church, and continuing in the Eastern church today. It is not very controversial except here in the U.S."

The society marked its 50th anniversary with the Baltimore convention, which drew 550 members from the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Ghana and several European countries.

At a special 50th-anniversary observance October 12, Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, urged the society to pay special attention to three emerging issues in the life of the Church: "the challenge of education, the concept of collaborative

ministry, and forms for administrative justice."

In another address, Archbishop Jan Schotte, general secretary of the world Synod of Bishops, spoke about the 1987 synod on the role of the laity in the Church. "The new movement (of increased lay involvement) is a response to the needs of our times," he said.

Bishop Malone, a former president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, praised the society's 50 years of "service to the national and local churches," and highlighted the role its members played in shaping the new Code of Canon Law issued in 1983. The new code, he said, "is a dynamic instrument" helping the Church do its work.

He also called attention to the role the society played in an interdisciplinary study on the relations of bishops and theologians. The study was used as the basis for a document on the topic which the U.S. bishops are to discuss and vote on during their fall meeting in November.

Bishop Malone said canon lawyers must help to develop the growing concept of "collaborative ministry. Our geographics and demographics leave us with little choice," he said.

With many parishes closing or merging and projections of sharp declines in the number of priests, the bishop urged that interdisciplinary work on forms of col-

laborative ministry be done. "Theologians show us what should be done," he said. "Canon lawyers show us how to do it."

The Youngstown bishop urged canon lawyers to develop Church courts to deal with alleged violations of rights in administrative acts of Church officials. The Canon Law Society of America had taken a leading role in drafting such legislation for the new Code of Canon Law. Pope John Paul II deleted the proposed legislation from the final draft before publishing it as the new code.

Archbishop Schotte told the Church lawyers that concern at the synod of "Western-world bishops" to admit women to non-ordained ministries was not shared in some other regions. Some African bishops, he said, feared that such a move would lead to a Church dominated by women. He emphasized that the synod has to approach issues from a universal perspective. "The African bishops have radically different concerns from the First World bishops," he said.

At the meeting, Vincentian Father Paul Golden of Chicago, society vice president for the past year, succeeded Monsignor Leonard G. Scott of Cherry Hill, N.J., as president of the society. Members elected Monsignor Sidney J. Marceaux of Beaumont, Texas, as vice president for the coming year and president the year after.

Teenagers sentenced in Buffalo priest murders

Buffalo, N.Y. (NC) — Two young men were sentenced to from 25 years to life in prison November 3 for the murder of two Buffalo priests in their rectories.

The body of Father A. Joseph Bissonette, 55, was found February 24, 1987, in the rectory of St. Bartholomew Church, where he was pastor. Father Bissonette was central city vicar of the Buffalo diocese. The body of Monsignor David P. Herlihy, 74, was found March 8, 1987, in the rectory of St. Matthew Church, where he lived. Each had been tied

to a chair and stabbed to death.

Defendants Theodore Simmons, 19, and Milton Jones, 18, were given the maximum sentence by State Supreme Court Justice Frederick M. Marshall — two consecutive 25 years-to-life terms, which means they will be eligible for parole after 48-and-a-half years.

Marshall said the sentences were meant to "voice the outrage and disgust of the community" and said he wished he could have imposed the death penalty, which was abolished in New York in 1965.