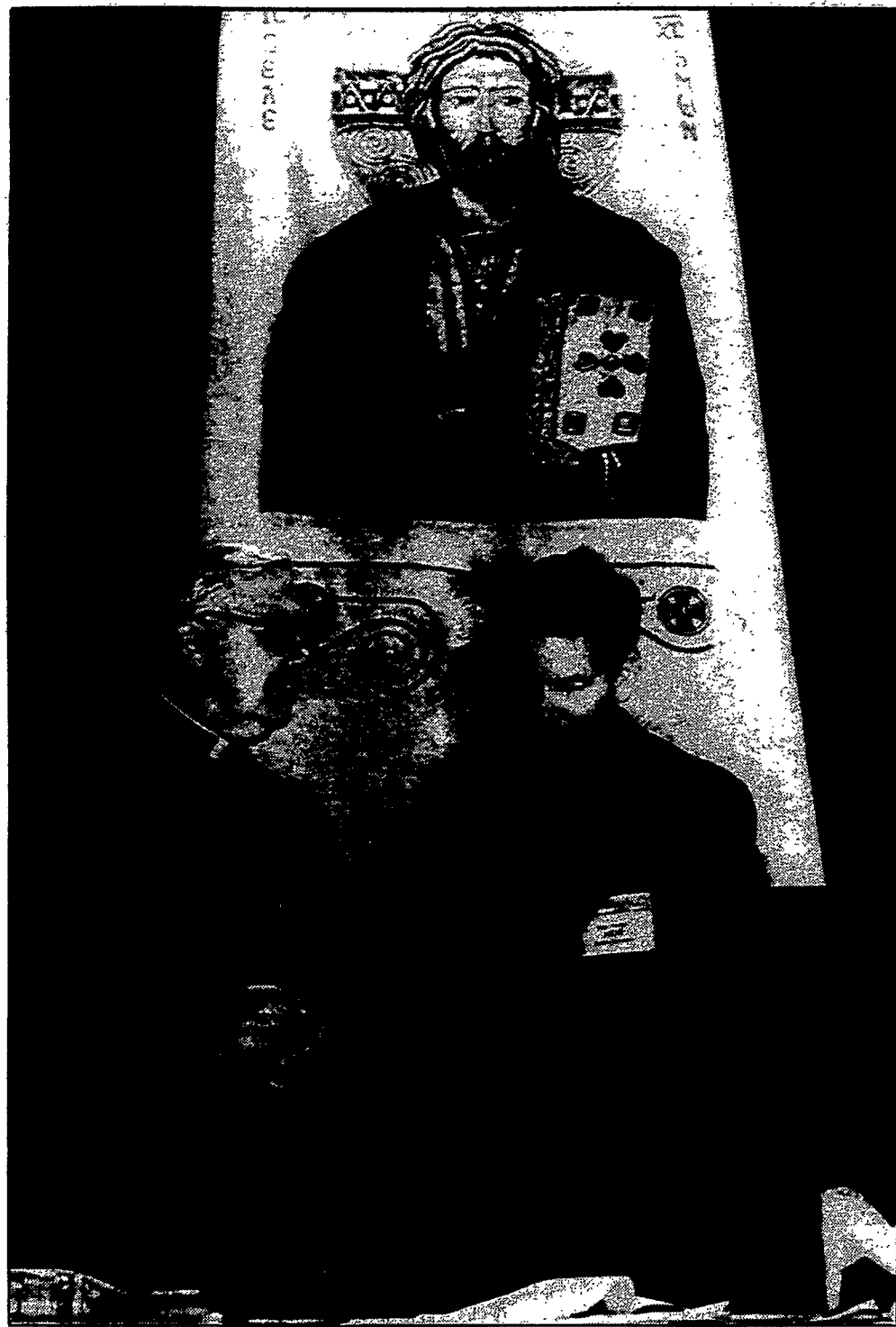


World & Nation



AP/World Wide Photos

Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis (left), president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, talks Monday, Nov. 14, with Monsignor Daniel Hoye, NCCB general secretary, during the start of the U.S. bishops' annual fall meeting in Washington.

CUA president briefs bishops on Curran case

By Stephenie Overman
 WASHINGTON (NC) — The president of The Catholic University of America told the U.S. bishops that, whatever the outcome in the case of Father Charles E. Curran, the university would "remain on trial" in the public forum.

Jesuit Father William J. Byron briefed the bishops at their November 14-17 meeting in Washington on "your university — that's how I think of it."

Father Byron told the bishops that the suit filed by Father Curran in District of Columbia Superior Court seeking reinstatement at Catholic University will be taken up in December. Father Curran was suspended by the university after teaching there for 20 years.

Father Curran claims the university violated his rights by accepting the Vatican's 1986 declaration that he was not suitable to teach Catholic theology because of his dissent from some Church teachings, Father Byron said. Father Curran is teaching this year at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Joshua

was very much aware of how I was writing it." In fact, he had a canon lawyer read it three times, "the first time as a reader, the second time as a theologian, the third time as a lawyer." The canon lawyer found nothing objectionable in it, the priest said.

Meanwhile, people have found in his story something they like so well that the book has sold far better than the priest had even dreamed.

"It seems to hit something in people," he said. "A Jesus that makes sense. That's the key. People say it's what Jesus always thought Jesus was like. People can identify with the personality of Jesus in the book and the way religion should be."

Father Girzone is currently completing a sequel to the book in which Joshua appears in Northern Ireland in the midst of the conflict

"Whatever the outcome" of the case, Father Byron said, "your university will remain on trial" in the eyes of public opinion.

Therefore, he said, it is important to explain the role of a pontifical institution and that "academic freedom is never absolute in any university."

Father Byron also reported that even though the university's endowment has increased substantially to \$35 million, "there are a number of Catholic colleges in the United States with far greater endowments" than the bishops' own pontifical institution.

"The level (of the endowment) simply must rise," he said, asking the bishops to help attract donors to the school.

The Catholic University president reported that there are now 881 students in the freshman class, the largest number in the history of the university. He said the university is building eight new residence halls that will form a "centennial village."

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of Caldwell Hall, the first building.

there. The priest has also begun planning a book in which a bishop uses Joshua's ideas to run his diocese. That book, he predicted, will provide a blueprint for restructuring the Church.

The priest also acknowledged he deliberately portrayed the Church authorities in *Joshua* as stereotypes in order to help him make his point, and noted that many Church leaders — including the Diocese of Rochester's Bishop Matthew H. Clark — are sincerely seeking ways to balance freedom with the proper use of authority.

"It's a long, involved process," Father Girzone said. "The Church has been growing for centuries. It's been dealing for centuries with issues of freedom."

He added that the pace of change has quickened since the Second Vatican Council and that the Church is evolving a new understanding of its authority.

"There's a lot of change now," Father Girzone concluded. "It's coming."

Bishops ask Rome to redraft text on bishops' conferences

WASHINGTON (NC) — The U.S. bishops approved more than a half dozen reports and statements during their November 14-17 general meeting, including a document urging the Vatican to throw out its first draft of a statement on the theological and legal competence of national bishops' conferences.

The report to the Vatican challenging its draft statement on bishops' conferences, approved by the bishops 205-59, drew the most discussion of all the documents voted on during the meeting in Washington. Other documents approved by the bishops included:

- new guidelines for lay preaching which outline circumstances when lay people can and cannot preach at liturgical services.
- a statement opposing government sanctions levied against employers who hire illegal aliens.
- a report on food and agriculture urging increased attention by the church to such issues.
- a statement urging greater religious freedom behind the Iron Curtain.
- a resolution marking the 10th anniversary of their 1978 pastoral statement on the handicapped.
- a report reaffirming their commitment to their nearly 20-year-old domestic anti-poverty program, the Campaign for Human Development.

The bishops put off voting on two documents which had been on their agenda: a statement on Vietnam and a document on bishop-theologian relations, the latter after last-minute Vatican objections.

They also elected a Miami archdiocesan priest, Father Robert N. Lynch, as the new general secretary of their National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and elected Bishop William H. Keeler of Harrisburg, Pa., as NCCB secretary, making him one of the four top NCCB officers.

The bishops' report to the Vatican on national bishops' conferences such as the NCCB was written by a panel of ex-presidents of the NCCB, and said the Vatican draft issued earlier this year was not "suitable as a basis for discussion." The Vatican draft takes a negative view of the teaching authority of bishops' conferences and says they exist more for practical reasons than theological ones.

Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis, NCCB president, said news reports characterizing the proposed report as a struggle between the bishops and the Vatican were "simply false." He said bishops in Canada and Latin America also had objections to the document.

The bishops' newly approved food and agriculture report, developed by a task force headed by Archbishop John R. Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis, calls for increased visibility for food and farm issues by establishing a joint subcommittee of the bishops' international and domestic policy committees.

Archbishop Roach told the bishops the nation's food and agricultural system is plagued with problems that need urgent attention.

The guidelines for lay preaching approved by the bishops tell when lay people can preach at liturgical services but do not change the centuries-old ban on lay people giving the homily after the Gospel reading at Mass. Bishops supporting the proposal said it would help them to address unique needs, such as when it would be advantageous for lay people to preach at a black Catholic

Polish bishops criticize decision decision to close Gdansk shipyard

WARSAW, POLAND (NC) — Poland's bishops sharply criticized the government's recent decision to close the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, the birthplace of Solidarity, saying the move was blocking plans for a round-table discussion of national reforms.

The bishops, in a statement issued November 15, also said the failure to honor an agreement to rehire striking workers had damaged the credibility of the Church and the government.

They said the Church did not "interfere in purely economic issues," but the closing of the shipyard needed moral evaluation.

"One should see the government's decision to close the Gdansk shipyard from this point of view: It is a political act which does not support the idea of accord," the bishops said.

"The Church calls on the state authorities to carry out economic reforms parallel to

liturgy. The guidelines still need approval of the Vatican.

In their opposition to sanctions against employers hiring illegal aliens, the bishops said the immigration reform law approved by Congress in 1986 was not generous enough to aliens already in the United States. They called for new legislation to legalize aliens arriving in the country after Jan. 1, 1982, the current legalization cutoff date.

Their statement on religious liberty in Iron Curtain countries welcomes the Soviet policy of "glasnost" but urges U.S. efforts to oppose ongoing religious persecution.

They also approved the continuation of the national Campaign for Human Development collection and made the campaign's ad hoc committee of bishops a permanent committee in the U.S. Catholic Conference.

The bishops' resolution on the handicapped, approved by voice vote November 15, notes progress since the 1978 pastoral on the handicapped and asks the church to go beyond providing physical access to buildings and services to full acceptance of the disabled.

The decision, meanwhile, to put off action on the bishops' document on bishop-theologian relations came after the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith submitted a last-minute critique which said in part that one section of the document "seems to place bishops and theologians on the same level."

Bishop Raymond W. Lessard of Savannah, Ga., chairman of the bishops' Committee on Doctrine, which had prepared the statement, said the Vatican critique came too late for his committee to consider it in time for the November meeting.

The statement on Vietnam, meanwhile, was delayed so it could be given a broader focus and could include results of a visit to the Far East by a delegation of U.S. bishops. The proposed statement had called for normalization of relations between the United States and Vietnam as a way to promote healing between the two nations.

Father Lynch, an associate general secretary of the NCCB since 1984, was elected NCCB general secretary on a 243-20 vote. He will replace Monsignor Daniel F. Hoye next Feb. 1 when Monsignor Hoye, who has been general secretary for seven years, completes his current term.

At the meeting the bishops also:

- approved a \$30.6 million budget for 1989 for the NCCB and the USCC, its public policy twin.
- approved seven separate liturgical texts or commemorations for particular U.S. feasts or anniversary occasions, including Mass texts for the bicentennial next year of the establishment of the U.S. hierarchy.

Two major documents being worked on by the bishops — a pastoral letter in response to women's concerns and a new statement on the Church's response to people suffering acquired immune deficiency syndrome — were discussed at the bishops' last general meeting in June and were not brought up for final action at the November meeting.

Archbishop Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, chairman of the committee drafting the AIDS statement, told the bishops November 15 his committee plans to have a first draft ready for the bishops' next meeting in June at Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J.

political ones so that workers are encouraged to join in their realization," the bishops said.

The closing of the shipyard, announced in October, went against a previous understanding because the government did not consult the workers involved, the bishops' statement said. The decision undervalues the proper role of workers in helping to set such policies, the bishops said.

The decision in effect blocked the round-table discussions on economic and political reforms, they said.

The talks, which were to begin in mid-October, were to include representatives of Poland's communist government, the Church and the outlawed trade union Solidarity. They were agreed upon in principle after a series of labor disputes in August, but the political climate has worsened in Poland in recent weeks, and no timetable has been set.