

World & Nation

Vatican shows smaller losses, reserves gone

By Jerry Filteau

WASHINGTON (NC) — The Holy See is still showing huge yearly deficits, but its just-issued 1987 financial report shows improvement in some areas.

The Vatican covered most of a \$63.8 million deficit with a record \$50.3 million in Catholic contributions to Peter's Pence, a discretionary fund for the pope.

But for the remaining \$13.5 million it had to use up the last of reserves left over from Peter's Pence contributions of earlier years. Those reserves "have now been completely exhausted," the report says.

On the other hand, Vatican publishing and broadcasting activities, which account for about one-third of the deficit, lost a little less money in 1987 than in 1986.

The new report, covering the Holy See's income and expenses in 1987, was sent to the world's bishops in January and was released by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington Jan. 16.

One of the most significant 1987 numbers was the \$50.3 million collected in a single year for Peter's Pence, a fund made up of voluntary contributions to the pope by Catholic people and institutions around the world.

In 1986 the Peter's Pence collection brought in only \$32 million. Ten years earlier the figure was less than \$10 million. The largest contribution to Peter's Pence comes from the United States, where most Catholic parishes take up a special collection for the pope on the last Sunday of June or first Sunday of July.

The bottom-line figures of the 1987 financial statement — a deficit of \$63.8 million on expenses of \$132.7 million and income of only \$68.9 million — were released by the Vatican press office last October.

But the full report, permitting comparative analysis of specific budget areas over recent years, was not available at that time.

The 1987 report shows personnel costs were still the largest expense at \$71.7 million, up from \$45.3 million in 1985 and \$57.9 million in 1986.

The personnel cost increases were not as dramatic when figured in Italian lire, the currency used by the Vatican to pay the bulk of its salaries and fringe benefits. From 1985 to 1987 the value of the dollar against lire dropped more than 30 percent, so the actual increase in lire during that time was barely more than 10 percent — from 76 billion to 83.9 billion lire.

Communications operations — radio and publishing together — were the second-largest cost item with combined expenditures of nearly \$22 million.

Administrative expenses were \$12 million, partially offset by fees and other reimbursements which brought in about \$7.2 million.

The report noted that Vatican efforts to maintain the "international nature" of the church's central administration include frequent international communications and paying expenses of poorer bishops when they travel to Rome for Vatican meetings.

The Holy See's administrative costs in 1987 included nearly \$1.8 million for travel of diocesan bishops and Vatican personnel, \$1.7 million for mail and telecommunications, and \$830,000 for printing and publishing, the report said.

The cost of utilities for the Holy See rose from \$2.1 million in 1986 to \$2.6 million in 1987.

Vatican Radio, which broadcasts locally and worldwide on several different frequencies, is run by the Jesuits but funded by the Vatican. It cost \$3.7 million to run in 1985, \$3.9 million in 1986, and \$4.8 million in 1987.

In lire the radio station's operating costs actually declined — from 6.3 billion lire in 1985 to 5.6 billion in 1987. The numbers did not include personnel and administrative costs, however. They were included in the general personnel and administrative figures.

In addition to operating expenses, the Vatican invested nearly \$10 million in new radio equipment in two years: \$6.5 million in 1986 and \$3.2 million in 1987.

The report said that when administrative and personnel costs for Vatican Radio were added to its other costs, the total 1987 deficit for the broadcasting operation was \$17.8 million.

Operating costs for publishing activities — consisting of the Vatican Polyglot Press, the

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Members of a poor family in New Delhi, India, warm themselves around a roadside fireplace by burning waste papers. At least 24 Indian people have died of exposure to the cold in the past four days. AP-Wide World Photos

Vatican newspaper warns against hospitals' 'rebellion'

By Greg Erlanson

VATICAN CITY (NC) — The continued practice of in-vitro fertilizations by some Catholic hospitals is "most serious rebellion" against the teaching authority of the church, a Vatican newspaper article warned.

The strongly worded article reiterated the church's ban on all forms of in-vitro fertilization as stated in the Vatican document, "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on Dignity of Procreation."

The position of some Catholic hospitals that such procedures for creating human life in the laboratory may be licit in certain cases is "doctrinal dissent," the *L'Osservatore Romano* article said, concluding that Catholics must obey "in judgment and practice" the church's moral teaching.

The Dec. 24 article was released in advance through the Vatican press office.

The unsigned article concluded with three asterisks, meaning it was reviewed by the Secretariat of State before publication and was written by an "authoritative" source, usually a Vatican official.

The 1987 instruction, issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, rejected as morally illicit any form of conception outside the body, even "homologous" fertilization involving only the reproductive cells of the married couple utilizing it.

Afterward, the rector of the Catholic University of Lille, France, said his university would continue to practice the procedure, calling it a "duty of evangelical charity to come to the aid of couples who badly wish to have children."

Last January representatives of four European Catholic universities whose research hospitals were defying the church ban on in-vitro fertilization met with top Vatican officials.

The rectors of Lille, the University of Nijmegen, Netherlands, the University of Louvain and the University of Leuven in Belgium said in a statement afterward that "the importance of research in the Catholic universities" and the importance of the principles raised in the instruction were discussed.

The Vatican did not issue a statement at that time.

The *L'Osservatore Romano* article, titled "On the Doctrinal Authority of the Instruction 'Donum Vitae,'" said the instruction has met "tenacious resistance" from those who cannot understand why a technology that is possible cannot be used.

The debate has also created "vacillation and discord in the Catholic field," it admitted.

"Above all the gravity of the decision by some Catholic university clinics to continue" certain forms of in-vitro fertilization "cannot be undervalued," it said.

"After the clear condemnation contained" in the doctrinal congregation's instruction, "such a decision, from the moment it was made public, also became a challenge."

The article said those responsible for this "most serious rebellion" explain that they do not have "that certainty of conscience" regarding the illicitness of homologous in-vitro fertilizations necessary for them to stop using the technique.

Libya's release of airman's body is peace gesture, intermediary says

By Agostino Bono and Greg Erlanson

VATICAN CITY (NC) — Libya's return of the corpse of a U.S. airman shot down in a 1986 air raid was a gesture of reconciliation and peace toward the United States, not an "opportunistic" ploy, said the bishop who was the Vatican's intermediary in the transfer of the body.

Libya chose the Vatican as intermediary because the Vatican "enjoys a special appreciation" in Libya and among Arabs for its efforts on behalf of world peace, said Bishop Giovanni Martinelli, head of the Vicariate of Tripoli, Libya.

The Vatican accepted the role of intermediary because it wanted "to support this will and this desire for peace" by Libya, he said in a Jan. 14 Vatican Radio interview.

Bishop Martinelli said he was happy to be chosen as the Vatican representative in the transfer because it showed that the church in Libya also supported the reconciliation move.

Libya gave the body to Bishop Martinelli in Tripoli Jan. 13. The bishop accompanied the remains on a flight to Rome where it was handed over to U.S. officials on the same day.

The body was later identified as that of 33-year-old Capt. Fernando Ribas-Dominicci.

"Libya wanted once more, in a very special way, to show that reconciliation is the best way to begin a new era, a new period of peace, especially with America," said Bishop Martinelli.

"Some people might think that this could be opportunistic, but I emphasize that we should put in evidence the positive aspect of this gesture," he added.

Bishop Martinelli called the Libyan decision a "humanitarian action."

There was initial confusion over the identity

"The declarations of some university authorities, reported by the mass media, constitute instead the elaboration of a moral doctrine which affirms as licit under certain conditions that which, under the same conditions, the magisterium of the church has declared illicit," the article said.

Declaring that the church's mission concerns not only humanity's eternal salvation, but also the common good, the article's anonymous author warned that this good is threatened by the "technological manipulation of the very sources of life."

of the airman's remains "because there were no identity documents," said the bishop.

Initial news reports said the corpse was that of Capt. Paul Lorence, weapons system officer aboard the F-111 which Capt. Ribas-Dominicci piloted.

From personal effects it seemed more likely, at first, that the remains were of Lorence, Bishop Martinelli said.

The joint Air Force-Navy raid was in retaliation for what U.S. authorities claimed was a Libyan-backed bombing of a TWA airliner and a West Berlin disco frequented by U.S. servicemen.

Five days before the raid, Bishop Martinelli and three other churchmen were arrested by Libyan authorities. Church officials at the time said the priests were seized as possible hostages in the event of a U.S. attack.

The four clergymen were released April 19, following Vatican intervention.

Bishop Martinelli was born in Libya of Italian parents and is a member of the Italian province of Franciscans.

The release of the airman's remains followed weeks of escalating tensions between Libya and the United States. U.S. warplanes shot down two Libyan fighters over international waters in the southern Mediterranean Jan. 4.

President Reagan has accused Libya of building a chemical weapons complex and in December said he was considering possible military action against the facility.

In 1980, Melkite Archbishop Hilarion Capucci of Jerusalem was instrumental in obtaining the release of eight corpses of U.S. servicemen killed in a failed attempt to rescue U.S. hostages in Iran.

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