



Hundreds of opposition supporters handed out leaflets and demonstrated outside a church in downtown Panama City Sunday, May 14. Church-goers throughout the country applauded Sunday when Roman Catholic clergy read a letter condemning electoral fraud and violence in Panama.

AP Wide World Photos

Panamanian bishops decry violence, fraud

By Bill Pritchard
NC News

WASHINGTON — Panama's bishops placed themselves in the middle of the country's political crisis by issuing a public statement accusing the government of fraudulently and violently thwarting the May 7 presidential elections.

They made a general call for non-violence, including a plea to "our military brethren" to refuse to fire on unarmed civilians.

The bishops further accused Panama's leaders of attempting to intimidate the church.

They called on the government, ruled through political allies by defense chief Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, to respect the vote, which church polls indicated was won by a 3-to-1 margin by opposition candidates. Those opposition candidates — presidential nominee Guillermo Endara and vice-presidential nominees Guillermo Ford and Ricardo Arias Calderon — and many supporters were severely beaten by government-backed mobs May 10.

The statement, signed by Archbishop Marcos G. McGrath of Panama City and nine other bishops, was read during Masses throughout Panama May 14. The document was drafted in a secret meeting in Panama City May 11.

The bishops were supported by their U.S. counterparts in a letter, dated May 12, from Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis, president of the U.S. bishops' conference.

Archbishop May said: "I join with you in your call for those who wield power in Panama to respect the expressed will of the Panamanian people.

"I continue to urge the U.S. government to join with other interested American states in seeking to uphold the will of the

Panamanian people by political and diplomatic means," the U.S. prelate said.

Meanwhile, most of nearly 2,000 combat-ready reinforcements for American troops at bases in Panama arrived from the United States by May 15. The same day U.S. Ambassador to Panama Arthur Davis accused Noriega of ordering the attack on the opposition leaders with the intention of killing Ford.

Noriega's government came under further pressure as church officials protested the slaying of a Dutch priest by a soldier on election day. The priest, Vincentian Father Nicolas Van Kleef, had worked in the country for more than 20 years.

In their post-election statement, Panama's bishops said that "the veiled threats or expressed intimidation, the restrictions of movement and expression, the assaults and robberies of ballot boxes, the mobs of the military and paramilitary attacking property and persons are some of the examples of flagrant acts that were committed to frustrate popular will."

The bishops also expressed "surprise and pain" that the government's Electoral Tribunal had nullified the vote on May 10.

They congratulated Panamanian voters for going to the polls "in a massive and peaceful manner" and said their political will deserves respect.

But they said the country's rulers behaved in the opposite manner.

"What moral justification can there be to scatter, with beatings and bullets, men and women who have not committed any other crime but peacefully claiming their rights?" they asked. "What moral justification can there be to keep the population frightened through 'hordes' fed by hate and a false nationalism that neither recognizes nor respects the persons and rights of other Panamanians?"

'May Day' celebration set for Our Lady of Mercy High

This year's "May Day" celebration at Our Lady of Mercy High School, one of the oldest events on the school calendar, is scheduled for Friday, May 26.

Under the direction of Sister Maureen Servas, the Marian liturgy will include a Mass at 8:45 a.m. in the school auditorium. The traditional crowning ceremony, in which Bishop Matthew H. Clark will be the principal celebrant, will follow.

In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Mercy's founding, a brunch for alumni, seniors, parents, and faculty will immediately follow the ceremony at 11 a.m. The cost is \$5 per person; \$2.50 for children six and under and religious.

Those interested in attending the events should make checks payable to Mercy High School, and mail them by May 19 to Mary Jo Lanphear Barone, 912 Landing Rd., N., Rochester, 14625.

Sponsor A Child like Conchita (\$15 a month)

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION
For CHILDREN & AGING

Founded and directed by
CATHOLIC LAY PEOPLE.

YOUR \$15 MONTHLY PROVIDES A NEEDY CHILD WITH: NOURISHING FOOD, MEDICAL CARE, the chance to GO TO SCHOOL and HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. YOUR CHILD WILL GROW IN THE DAILY KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S LOVE AND YOUR LOVE.

You will receive a photo of your child, description of your child's country, family history, translated letters, & quarterly newsletters!


Plus you will receive the personal satisfaction of helping a child in need.

Let the little children come unto me. — Mark 10:14



Little Conchita lives in a small village in the mountains of Guatemala. Her house is made of cornstalks, with a tin roof and dirt floor. Her father struggles to support the family as a day laborer. Your concern can make the difference in the lives of children like Conchita.

FOR THE CHILD WHO IS WAITING
You can make visible GOD'S LOVE. (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Philippines, India, Kenya).

MEMBER 

YES I would like to share my blessings with a needy child.

I would like to sponsor a boy girl A CHILD WHO MOST NEEDS MY HELP.

I am enclosing \$15 for first month \$45 for three months.
 \$90 for six months \$180 for the entire year

I cannot sponsor a child at this time, but I enclose my gift of \$_____ to be used for the EMERGENCY FUND for Children.

Please send me more information on sponsoring a child.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Main checks payable to: CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN & AGING (CFCA)
Member: U.S. Catholic Mission Association • National Catholic Development Conference
• Catholic Press Association • Financial report available on request CJ 5/18/89

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN & AGING
Attn: Robert Hentzen, President
13001 Wornall Road
P.O. Box 410327
Kansas City, MO 64173-0158
(816) 941-9100

Order your 1989 Diocesan Directory

New loose-leaf format with index tabs for easy reference in a durable three ring binder—for only \$15!
♦(Annual supplements will be priced at an estimated \$7.50 per copy.)



Special Limited-Time Offer: For each paid order made by April 15, we will apply a credit of \$5.00 toward the purchase of the 1989/90 Directory supplement, scheduled for publication in September, 1989.

The 1989 Diocesan Directory is also available at Logos and Trants bookstores. ♦Due to the increased cost of this improved format, we cannot offer volume discounts.

CATHOLIC COURIER, OFFICIAL DIRECTORY
1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, NY 14624

Enclosed please find my check for \$_____ to cover the cost of _____ Directories.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please Make Checks Payable to Catholic Courier Directory