

# Cardinal denounces Boston's AIDS education plan

BOSTON (NC) — Calling an AIDS education program in Boston's public schools "amoral," Boston Cardinal Bernard F. Law has asked Catholic parents not to allow their children to participate in the program.

"The curriculum presents various issues of sexual behavior in a valueless, amoral context," Cardinal Law said in a letter read at Masses in the Boston Archdiocese May 20-21. "It is in the best interests of the children not to participate in the AIDS education program."

Cardinal Law said the Archdiocese of Boston would provide an alternative by sponsoring a "value-centered comprehensive program of AIDS education" in the summer and fall at different locations in the city.

AIDS, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, is a fatal disease that severely weakens the body's immune system and often leads to pneumonia and some forms of cancer. It is thought to be transmitted chiefly by active male homosexuals, by drug addicts using dirty needles and by pregnant women to their children.

Cardinal Law said Boston's AIDS-education program emphasizes the use of condoms instead of sexual abstinence as a way to avoid getting AIDS. He said teaching children to use condoms gives them a "false sense of security" because the failure rate of condoms poses a "serious health hazard for our children."

Laval Wilson, Boston's school superintendent, disputed the cardinal's argument. "It is fine for him to take moral positions,

but young people have not abstained from sexual activity," said Wilson, former superintendent of schools for the Rochester City School District. "That's the reality we deal with in public schools."

"(Students) are not all Catholic, but Protestants, Jewish, Buddhists," said school committee member Jean McGuire. "They have a right to know how to protect themselves from any sexually-transmitted disease."

Cardinal Law also denounced the program, aimed at seventh through 12th graders, because it did not involve the parents in AIDS education. Moral values "are not promoted" when parents are not involved in discussions about the issues their

children will study, Cardinal Law said.

"The program to be offered in the Boston public schools could place our children in danger, both moral and physical," the cardinal said. "It admits of a permissiveness in sexual behavior which is not acceptable to a great many citizens of the city, is certainly unacceptable for Catholics, and which increases the children's risk of getting AIDS."

He added that archdiocesan officials would be willing to help any public school system develop "sound programs of education in human sexuality which do not conflict with our values and which protect our children and respect the rights of parents as their primary educators."

## Fr. Matthew Fox 'acquiesces' to sabbatical

By Cindy Wooden  
NC News

WASHINGTON — Dominican Father Matthew Fox, who said last November that he was not sure whether he would comply with his superiors' request that he take a one-year sabbatical, has decided "to acquiesce," according to his assistant.

David Gentry Akin, assistant to Father Fox at the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality in Oakland, Calif., told National Catholic News Service May 23 that Father Fox is "reading, writing, relaxing and traveling."

Father Damian A. Byrne, the Dominican master general, asked Father Fox, a founder of the institute, theologian and author specializing in creation-centered spirituality, to take a year to reflect on his work. The sabbatical was to start Dec. 15, 1988.

When the request was made public last November, Father Fox said he would be silent for one semester, but after that he would "wrestle with my conscience every day" about maintaining the silence for a full year.

Akin said Father Fox decided in April to follow his superior's request "after a lot of prayer, reflection and dialogue with trusted advisers" within the Dominicans' Midwest province.

Father Fox had received a grant for travel during his sabbatical, Akin said. He

has been visiting theologians and small Christian communities in Europe, South America and Africa.

Father Fox also is working on two new books, Akin said. One is about St. Thomas Aquinas, and the other focuses on creation spirituality and liberation theology. Father Byrne's request for a sabbatical year followed a four-year investigation of Father Fox's work by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Akin added that in late June or early July, Father Fox would go on a "vision quest," a Native American experience similar to a retreat. It will take place during two or three days in the Seattle area.

## Hispanic AIDS service set

The inaugural Bilingual AIDS Interfaith Service in the Hispanic Community will be held Friday, June 2, at 7:30 p.m. in the Hispanic Presbyterian Church, 48 Cammeron St., Rochester.

The theme for the evening, which is sponsored by Iglesia Mahanaim Pentecostal Church, is "A Call to Compassion: AIDS Ministry in the Hispanic Community." The featured speaker of the evening will be Pastor Justo Gonzalez II, founder of the church's AIDS ministry, and vice president of the board of directors of AIDS Rochester, Inc.

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