

Prelate says bishops send 'mixed signals' on schools

By Tracy Early

Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Retired Bishop William E. McManus of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., a former chairman of the bishops' education committee, said June 1 that the U.S. bishops were sending "mixed signals" on the importance of Catholic schools.

Virtually all bishops continue to express a belief in the schools' importance, but create doubt by questioning whether the church can afford the schools and by failing to open schools in new residential areas, he said.

Bishop McManus was a panelist at a teleconference on "Paying for Parochial Schools," one of a series sponsored by the National Pastoral Life Center in New York. Father Philip J. Murnion, the center's director, was moderator.

The program originated in the studios of the New York Archdiocese and was broadcast to diocesan groups across the country by the bishops' Catholic Telecommunications Network of America.

With U.S. Catholics enjoying unprecedented prosperity, he said, there is no question they can afford to support the schools and pay teachers better salaries.

And with the number of schools declining since the Second Vatican Council, the bishop said, failure to establish schools in new residential areas will make people wonder about the church's commitment to the system's future.

"Our credibility won't be worth a hill of beans until we build some new schools," he said.

Bishop McManus said many priests will not even give schools verbal support. The youngest priests are the least enthusiastic, he said, suggesting their seminary training might be responsible.

Other panelists agreed that the schools needed more enthusiastic support from clergy, particularly pastors.

Richard J. Burke, president of Catholic School Management consulting firm in Madison, Conn., said the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884 gave a mandate for pastors to establish schools and parents to send their children to Catholic schools.

But, he said, now the church speaks of Catholic schools as preferable but not essential.

Michael S. Trudeau, principal of Cataldo interparochial school, Spokane, Wash., said educators needed to "market" their schools to pastors. Younger priests, he said, tend to be afraid of schools, rather than committed to them.

Mercy Sister Mary Jean Meier, development director for the Los Angeles Archdiocese, said educators needed to do "a selling job" first to parents, and then

educators and parents could together stir pastors' enthusiasm.

She said Catholic schools can also reach out to the larger community for financial support and get help from such sources as foundations and business leaders.

Trudeau described the "fair share" plan he has promoted at his school—explaining to each pupil's parents the real costs of the school and asking for that amount if they can pay it. If they cannot afford it, he said, they pledge what they can and the parish supplies the rest.

Burke advocated a "multi-tiered" financial program with support from parents and parish as the base, then added assistance from the diocese and other sources, including businesses.

A prerequisite to any successful appeal, he said, is "clearly defining the mission of the school."

Bishop McManus said funds spent on schools should be discussed as an "investment" in the church's future, not as a "subsidy."

When Catholic schools are viewed primarily as a service to those parents with children in the school, he said, then debates arise over how much other people should assist those parents.

All the panelists agreed that Catholic educators need to tell the story of their accomplishments in a better way. "Our children test out superior to those in public schools, and we have fewer dropouts," Sister Meier said.

Syracuse bishop leading fight against dial-a-porn

By Sister Mary Ann Walsh
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Costello of Syracuse is spearheading a campaign to restrict access to dial-a-porn services in New York state.

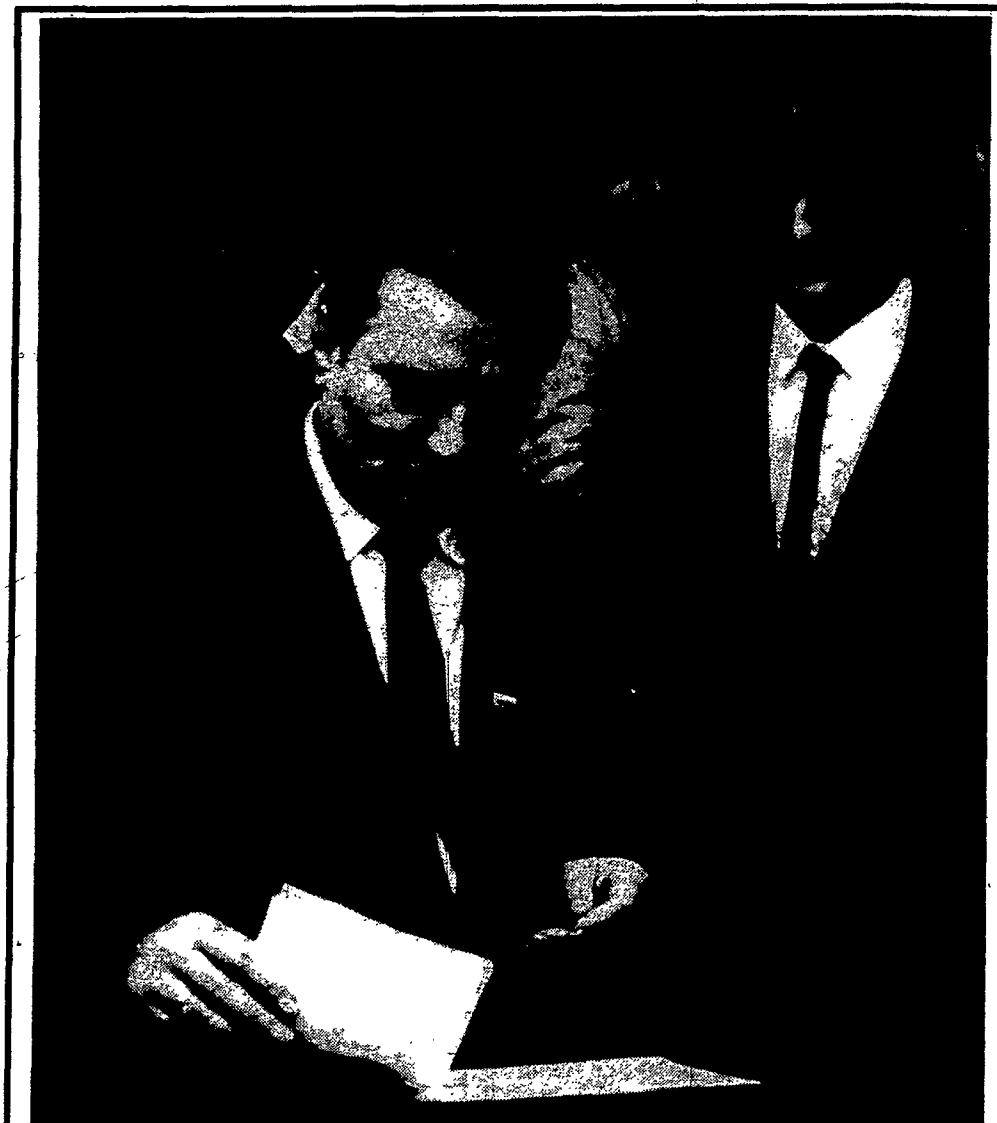
If the New York Telephone Company cannot "just say 'no,'" at least it ought to "require people to apply for this kind of a service as they do for other kinds, such as call waiting," Bishop Costello said.

He made his comments in an early June telephone interview as a state Senate committee was preparing to amend its legislation governing services for callers wanting to hear sexually explicit messages.

Bishop Costello said he has thousands of signatures to back his position against the services.

Dial-a-porn services have been at the center of controversy across the nation. In 1988 they were banned by Congress, but the ban was quickly overturned by a U.S. District Court in California. The U.S. Supreme Court was expected to rule on the constitutionality of the ban this summer.

The U.S. Catholic Conference, public-



AP/Wide World Photos
TWO FIRSTS — Lech Walesa, leader of the Solidarity Union, casts his vote in Gdansk Sunday, June 4, during the first parliamentary elections in which Solidarity has participated as an opposition party. Looking on is Walesa's eldest son, Bogdan, 19, who voted for the first time.

action agency of the U.S. bishops, urged the high court to uphold the ban as an exercise of traditional broadcast regulatory authority.

The New York legislation would require people to specifically apply for dial-a-porn services and to show proof they are adults. When amended, it also was to require users to rely on a personal code to identify themselves when calling the services and to prevent the telephone company or the dial-a-porn provider from selling lists of subscribers, said Alan Davitt, executive director of the New York State Catholic Conference.

Steve Marcus, a telephone company spokesman, said New York Telephone is "on the same side" as the bishop, who represents a coalition of church and labor groups.

"We both don't like it," said Marcus. The telephone company tried to restrict the service by initiating a system to block the service from a phone line at the subscriber's request, he said.

The company is required to provide the adult message services by the state Public

Service Commission, which regulates utilities, he said.

Francis Rivett, public information officer for the commission, said its position is that "we cannot interfere with content of messages" but could order a system of blocking the messages for subscribers who do not want to receive them.

Restricting the service through blocking is not sufficient, Bishop Costello said.

If you want adult movies on cable television, he said, "you ask for them. They are not sent down the wire into your home" with the message that "you can block them if you don't want them."

In some other states, courts have banned dial-a-porn but "no court in New York state has made such a ruling," Marcus said. "We want to find a solution to this problem that will hold up in court."

Bishop Costello said "horror stories" associated with dial-a-porn abound. In Watertown, N.Y., he said, teenagers found out they could call a New York City dial-a-porn number and hear a one-minute message before they had to pay for it, he said.

Bishops' conference moves to new headquarters

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Nearly 300 employees of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and U.S. Catholic Conference moved to new headquarters in Washington June 12.

At the end of the work day on Friday, June 9, moving vans converged on the old USCC office building a few blocks from the White House. Movers worked around the clock to transfer materials to the new building, a five-story, L-shaped structure next to the campus of The Catholic University of America.

The address of the new building is 3211 Fourth St. N.E.

The following Monday morning staffers went to work in their new offices.

The bishops' general secretariat and national offices for communications, education, social development and world peace, the laity, ecumenism, the liturgy, pro-life activities, family life, permanent

diaconate and priestly life and ministry were among those affected by the move.

The staff of Catholic News Service unpacked Sunday, June 11, in order to assure uninterrupted service to clients in 40 nations. Formerly National Catholic News Service, the 69-year-old news agency took the occasion of the move to change its name, with an accompanying change in logo from NC to CNS.

Plans for the \$20 million facility began in 1981 when a task force of bishops investigating conference needs learned that modernizing the old building would cost \$5 million without any increase in space. The new structure has 170,000 square feet of office space, nearly double that of the old headquarters.

Part of the old structure was built in 1942, when the conference had fewer than 100 employees. A substantial addition, built in the 1960s when there were just fewer than 200 staff members, nearly dou-

bled the space in the old building but left no room for further expansion.


Total budgeted cost of the relocation, including the site, construction, furnishings and the move itself, was \$26.9 million. Funding for the project came from sale of the old building for \$10 million, contributions of \$7.2 million by foundations and organizations, and such unrestricted funds as investment income accumulated by the NCCB-USCC since the bishops decided on the move.

The first permanent occupant of the new headquarters was a 22-foot, 10-ton bronze statue of Christ that was taken from the front of the old offices last September, cleaned, and installed on a pedestal overlooking the main entrance to the new site.

Formal dedication of the new building is to take place Sept. 26 when the 50-bishop NCCB Administrative Committee-USCC Administrative Board holds its first meeting there.



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