

As Berlin wall crumbles, reforms persist

By Bill Pritchard
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Since the Berlin Wall opened Nov. 9, millions of East Germans have poured through. Yet the bishops of East Germany are urging their flock to visit, not stay, in the West.

"I ask the Catholic Christians not to simply abandon" the country, Bishop Joachim Wanke, apostolic administrator of Erfurt-Meiningen, East Germany, said the day the border was opened.

Bishop Wanke, who is also vice president of the Berlin bishops' conference, urged Catholics to stay and help reform the nation. The Berlin bishops' conference includes the bishops of East Germany and West Berlin.

In other signs of the reforms in Eastern Europe, the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church opened talks on the outlaw status of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The Ukrainian church has been banned in the Soviet Union since 1946.

In a joint communique released Nov. 6, the two groups said they would "continue contacts and dialogue on this important question which preoccupies both churches." Vatican and Orthodox representatives had met four days earlier in a

hastily called meeting prompted by increasingly hostile Catholic-Orthodox confrontations in the Ukraine.

The communique called for peaceful dialogue in dealing with "the delicate and complex current evolution of the situation of Eastern-rite Catholics, especially in the Ukraine."

Meanwhile, relations between the Vatican and the Kremlin continued to get warmer. An exhibit of Russian religious art opened Nov. 11 in the Vatican Museums. The showing of icons and other traditional Russian Orthodox sacred objects was the first of its type to be held in the Vatican.

Earlier in the week, in an interview published in a Rome newspaper, a top Soviet official said his government and the Vatican agree on most social issues. That development has opened the way for the expected meeting between Pope John Paul II and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev during Gorbachev's visit to Italy Nov. 29-Dec. 3, said Vadim Zagladin, a Gorbachev foreign policy adviser.

But Zagladin told the newspaper *La Repubblica* that the issue of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is one to be worked out between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox leadership.

"This is a problem for churches, not for our state," he was quoted as saying in *La Repubblica's* Nov. 7 edition.

The Ukrainian church is expected to be a topic touched on in the meeting between the two leaders.

A proposal to ease restrictions on religion is being written in the Soviet Union. What effect the proposal would have on the Ukrainian church, if it passes, is uncertain.

The Soviets gave a further sign of interest in granting greater freedom for religion by allowing a religious service for inmates in a Soviet state prison for the first time in 60 years. Tass, the official Soviet news agency, said the service represented "a real step toward the realization of the right to freedom of conscience among inmates." The report was carried by Vatican Radio Nov. 12.

In another arena of Catholic Church-East bloc relations, Pope John Paul said the church in Hungary is enjoying a "new springtime." In a speech to a group of Hungarian nuns Nov. 3, he said, "I am thinking of a new springtime for vocations to the priesthood and religious life and even for the free exercise of pastoral activity."

On the same day, the pope made two



A West German wielding a sledgehammer chips away at the Berlin Wall as East German border guards watch from atop a portion of the wall near the Brandenburg Gate.

new bishops' appointments in Hungary.

Relations between the Vatican and Hungary have improved to the point where a papal trip is expected sometime in 1991. Both sides have expressed a willingness to begin talks aimed at re-establishing diplomatic relations.

Conference

Continued from page 4

department of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Washington, said United States military policy is that AIDS-infected people are allowed to have sex if they inform their partners and use condoms or contraceptive jellies.

Redfield said his personal view differed, adding that he would not counsel private patients to rely on condoms because the risk was still too high.

Condom use is "not the good seal of American medicine," he said.

Other speakers also opposed condoms. "To propose the use of condoms is erroneous because it promotes risk behavior, as also does the distribution of syringes for drug addicts," said Dr. William Blattner, chief of viral epidemiology at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md.

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome is caused by a virus that destroys the body's natural defenses against diseases. There is no cure for the disease.

AIDS is spread primarily through sexual activity and blood transfers. Many of the known people with AIDS are homosexuals and intravenous drug addicts. However, AIDS also is increasing rapidly among heterosexuals and babies born to infected women.

World Health Organization figures list 186,803 known AIDS patients worldwide as of Oct. 31. Most patients (107,308) are in the United States. But the figures are considered far below the actual number of people with AIDS.

In the next decade the total number of people infected will increase two to three times, while the number of AIDS cases will increase nine times, Mann said.

The conference's focus on moral and medical issues was criticized by several participants who wanted more emphasis on developing programs to help AIDS victims.

Speakers spent too much time on "all this moralistic stuff about how you get AIDS" and little about dealing with the needs of people with AIDS, said Irish Father John White, 43. Father White, a member of the St. Patrick's Missionary

Punishment

Continued from page 4

"We see that calling AIDS a punishment of God does not in any way imply an attitude of contempt or marginalization toward those afflicted; rather it indicates a way in which their suffering can acquire a positive significance and value for themselves and for all," he said.

It is a simplification to consider AIDS "as a punishment sent from heaven to punish deviant sexual behavior and drug addiction" because the disease also can be obtained "independent of any morally critical behavior," Buttiglione said.

Yet AIDS seriously calls into question the values and promiscuity fostered by the sexual revolution, especially among homosexuals, he argued.

Buttiglione argued that heterosexual

Society, said he tested positive for AIDS four years ago.

Peter Larkin, a 34-year-old Englishman who learned he had AIDS in 1987, said he was "tired of being told by others what people with AIDS are like and think."

"We are being ignored. We are all not dying in hospital beds," he said.

The meeting was a platform for "gay bashing" and did not deal with what governments, churches and private organizations must do to help AIDS patients, said Robert Kunst, executive director of Cure AIDS Now, a private service organization

intercourse is more naturally disposed than homosexual intercourse in avoiding sperm

coming in direct contact with the blood system of the sexual partner. He added that homosexuals are also especially vulnerable "because among them stable and exclusive relations are especially rare."

But doctors and scientists at the conference said the important factor in sexual transmission of the disease is not whether the activity is heterosexual or homosexual, but whether the partner is infected.

in Miami.

A group of about 80 people asked Archbishop Angelini to allow Larkin to speak for three minutes.

The archbishop refused, saying that there was not enough time. He said he had no evidence that Larkin had AIDS and pointed out that this was a conference "for AIDS patients, not of AIDS patients."

Archbishop Angelini also refused to allow floor discussion, saying this would be "too confusing." He asked participants who wanted to discuss issues to invite speakers to side rooms.

Lt. Col. Robert Redfield said that in the U.S. military, married people account for more than 40 percent of AIDS-infected

people and that the AIDS infection ratio is higher among black females than white males.

"AIDS is not a crime, nor is it a punishment sent down by God. There is no point in our trying to find scapegoats," said Father Mario Picchi, president of the Italian Center for Solidarity, which works with drug addicts and people with AIDS.



Closing Celebration Of The 25th Anniversary Of The Constitution On Sacred Liturgy

For the past year the Diocese of Rochester has celebrated in various ways the 25th Anniversary of the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy. On Sunday, 3 December, 1989 we will be closing this celebration with a Diocesan gathering at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Rev. Benedict A. Ehmann, a well known liturgist and priest of our diocese will offer his reflections and insights on the liturgical renewal. There will be a reception which will be followed by the celebration of Evening Prayer at which the Most Reverend Matthew H. Clark will preside. Music will be led by Sacred Heart Cathedral Choir. All are invited to participate in this day.

DATE: Sunday, 3 December 1989

PLACE: Sacred Heart Cathedral

296 Flower City Park

Rochester, NY

TIME: 2:00 P.M. Reflections on the Liturgical Renewal -

Rev. Benedict A. Ehmann - Rectory Hall

2:45 P.M. Reception - Rectory Hall

3:30 P.M. Evening Prayer - Most Rev. Matthew H. Clark -

Sacred Heart Cathedral

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