

Church sustains push for religious freedom

By Bill Pritchard
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — While political reform continued to sweep communist Eastern Europe this week, the Catholic Church kept up its push for greater religious freedom in the region and Pope John Paul II prepared for his historic Dec. 1 meeting with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

In one of the most dramatic theaters of change, the crumbling hard-line government of Czechoslovakia allowed the Catholic Church to broadcast a Mass for the first time since communist rule began. During that service, Prague's 90-year-old Cardinal Frantisek Tomasek threw the church's weight behind the reform movement.

On another stage, the Ukrainian Catholic bishops asked their Russian Orthodox counterparts to help press for legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the Vatican announced that a scheduled theological dialogue between Vatican and Russian Orthodox representatives had been delayed to allow an important new member of the Russian team to become acquainted with his post.

Also in Vatican-Soviet relations, a major Communist Party newspaper gave Pope John Paul II unprecedented praise in its Nov. 21 edition. Two days earlier, the Vatican's newspaper had said in an editorial that the reforms underway in the East bloc showed that communism and its companion, state atheism, are "clearly exhausted."

From the Polish political front, the majority leader of Poland's equivalent of the House of Representatives said the Catholic Church in his country gives a "moral guarantee" to the country's evolution from a communist-dominated state. The legislator, Solidarity's Bronislaw

Geremek, who was visiting Washington with Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, said Nov. 16 that the church is "building confidence toward the new government — which is led by Catholic intellectuals."

The biggest recent surprise in the string of sudden reforms in the East bloc was the Nov. 24 shakeup of the Czechoslovakian Communist leadership, including the ouster of party boss Milos Jakes.

The shakeup was pushed by hundreds of thousands of Czechoslovakian citizens who took to the streets demanding reform. Many of the demonstrators were Catholics, who comprise about 68 percent of the country's 15.5 million people.

Cardinal Tomasek, the country's leading churchman, celebrated a televised Mass Nov. 25 at St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague, during which he gave church support to reform.

"In this historic moment in the fight for truth and justice in our country, I and the Catholic Church are on the side of the people," the cardinal said. As he has in the past, the cardinal urged demonstrators to practice non-violence.

The liturgy marked the first time under Communist rule that Czechoslovakian television broadcast an entire Mass live.

In the Soviet Union, where a new law on religious freedom was being considered, the Ukrainian Catholic bishops asked Russian Orthodox Patriarch Pimen I of Moscow and other leaders of his church to help, "in the name of Christian justice," their campaign for legalization. The Catholics also asked for help in the return of church buildings given to the Russian Orthodox Church when Josef Stalin outlawed Ukrainian Catholicism in 1946.

"We ask your holiness (Patriarch Pimen), and all of you, our beloved brothers, to understand our attachment to certain church buildings, which are closely tied to



AP Wide World Photo

Thousands of people crowded Wenceslay Square in downtown Prague Thursday evening, Nov. 23, to demonstrate for more democracy in Czechoslovakia.

our particular history," the Ukrainian bishops wrote.

The letter, sent in early October, was released Nov. 20 by the Ukrainian Catholic leadership-in-exile in Rome.

On the same day, the Vatican confirmed that a scheduled Nov. 19-26 meeting between its representatives and Russian Orthodox delegates had been postponed. The new Orthodox official in charge of relations with other churches, Metropolitan Kiril of Smolensk, needed time to get briefed on his new job, the Vatican said.

A Vatican official expressed confidence about the change. "We see this appointment as good," the official said. "He can do good for his church."

The following day, a leading Soviet daily newspaper published a long article praising Pope John Paul as a "remarkable personality" dedicated to peace.

The article in the Komsomol Communist

Youth league newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, also said "the Vatican is not calling for a crusade against communism and we do not call religion 'opium' anymore."

Two days before the Soviet article appeared, the Vatican's official newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* said in an editorial that the reform movement in Eastern Europe showed that communism and state atheism are on their way out.

Communism is "clearly exhausted, as admitted by its own exponents," the newspaper said on its front page Nov. 21. The crisis "is not, at the core, only a question of economics, politics and representation," the newspaper said. "Another idol to be removed is that of state atheism."

"This aging ideology is decaying in the conscience of the Soviet people and is opposed to the demands for the recognition of civil and human rights," it said.

Bishop denies assemblywoman the right to receive Communion

SAN DIEGO (CNS) — Bishop Leo T. Maher of San Diego has denied a Catholic assemblywoman the right to receive Communion because she has taken a "pro-choice" position on abortion in her campaign for the state Senate.

Lucy Killea, a Democrat who represents a San Diego district in the state Assembly and is running in a special election Dec. 5, said in reacting to the bishop's prohibition that she would not try to receive the Eucharist but would continue to attend Mass.

In a Nov. 15 letter sent by facsimile transmitter to Killea, Bishop Maher said "that by your media advertisements and statements advocating the 'pro-choice' abortion position ... you are placing your-

self in complete contradiction to the moral teaching of the Catholic Church."

He said he had "no other choice but to deny you the right to receive the Eucharist."

Bishop Maher's action was believed to mark the first time a U.S. bishop has refused the Eucharist to a public official.

Last January it was made public that a parish priest in Alexandria, Va., withheld Communion during Mass from a city council member over his vote on a school health clinic.

In television ads, Killea, 67, appears on camera saying government should not interfere with a woman's "private de-

Continued on page 14

Custom Stained Glass Studio
Supplies • Repairs • Classes

- Commissions
- Gift Certificates
- Large Selection Of Holiday Gift Items

Since 1977
(716) 426-4450
3029 Buffalo Rd. • Across from Elm Grove Kodak

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)
Vol. 101 No. 57 Nov. 30, 1989
Published weekly except week after July 4 and Christmas by the Rochester Catholic Press Association.
Subscription rates: single copy, 50¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$15; Canada and foreign \$15 plus postage.
Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340.
Second-class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

Last evening, as we were settling our market for the night, I was struck with the delight of our farm products. It suddenly seemed amazing to me that we grew all of our shiny red apples, we press our cider, we cook and stir and bottle our fruits producing shelves of homemade preserves, spiced fruits, canned fruits, brandied fruits and cordials and that our herb garden blossoms all summer with a bounty of flavors for our herbal vinegars and oils. Our three bakers tie on their aprons each morning as they sift and measure and bake cookies and pies and tarts. Baskets are overflowing with packages of dried sweet cherries and crisp dried apples and the oak walls of our market are filled with garland and vases of colorful dried flowers harvested throughout the year and elegant wreaths twisted with rose hips and nuts, apples and spruce. Beyond this we package our farm harvest in baskets and boxes tied up with bows for shipping and for local delivery.

HURD ORCHARDS
A FARM. A FAMILY. A TRADITION.
Rt. 104 West, Holley, N.Y. 14470 639-9938
Open 8-8 Daily, May - December

Before you run...
Call the Covenant House 9-LINE, a hotline for troubled youth and families, open 24-hours a day, seven days a week, from anywhere in the U.S.
1-800-999-9999
The street is no solution. Old problems get worse, and new ones are created.

ROCHESTER ORATORIO SOCIETY
1989-1990 (45TH) SEASON
Candlelight Performance of
HANDEL'S MESSIAH
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1989 & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1989
8:30 P.M.
The audience is invited to meet the soloists and partake of refreshments after the performance.
Asbury First United Methodist Church
1050 East Ave., Rochester, NY.
SECTION A - \$15.00 SECTION B - \$10.00
For information or tickets, Call 377-5234 or 872-4497

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS
BURKE JEWELERS (Midtown), HEDGEDORN's (Webster), HOUSE OF GUITARS, MUSIC LOVERS SHOPPE
PARKLEIGH, RECORDED CLASSICS (Village Gate), WENDELL HARRISON MUSIC

These concerts are made possible, in part, by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts