

Bishops may face backlash over abortion, Cuomo says

NEW YORK (CNS) — Gov. Mario Cuomo, D-N.Y., praised the Catholic bishops for promoting public attention to abortion but warned that when they appear to try to "influence" elections, adverse reactions are likely.

He also suggested that a law demanding parental notification or consent when a teenage daughter gets an abortion "might be beneficial" and endorsed "strengthened regulations" mandating better pre-abortion efforts to inform women of abortion alternatives.

The governor, who has been chided publicly by Catholic prelates for his views on abortion, commented in a 3,000-word letter to *Commonweal*, an independent biweekly Catholic magazine. Copies of the letter, published in the March 23 issue, were released early by *Commonweal*.

"I don't think there's any disagreement that the Catholic bishops of this country have done as much as any group to keep abortion from becoming a non-issue, something that does not demand and deserve our attention," Cuomo wrote. "For that, I believe they deserve our gratitude."

"But I don't think we can exempt them from the demands of prudence in the political arena. When the public perception is that they are not simply exercising their teaching role for Catholics, but trying to influence the outcome of an election, there will be publicity."

He cited the case of Bishop Leo T. Maher of San Diego. The bishop denied the right to receive Communion to Lucy Killea, a candidate in a state Senate election, because of her abortion-rights political stance. She later won the election.

"Bishop Maher, it seems to me, did not advance with that action the cause he espouses," Cuomo wrote.

He also said he agreed with a comment that *Commonweal* magazine had made in regard to criticism of him by Auxiliary Bishop Austin B. Vaughan of New York. The bishop in January said the governor "seriously risks going to hell" and has a "pro-death position" on abortion, and he said he doubted Cuomo can be a "good and faithful Catholic."

Commonweal said in a subsequent editorial that "bishops have a responsibility to teach and even to enforce the moral law, but their office does not confer the power to read souls, or to make apodictic judgments about how a particular moral principle is to be translated into law and public policy."

The governor said that when New York state expanded state medical care coverage for low-income people, "abortion and some other services were at my insistence not included," but he said he got little support for his stance from the bishops.

"I might add that it was not a popular decision, and that those, including the Catholic bishops, for whom it assumably was popular, were publicly silent about it," Cuomo wrote.

He also said the issue of parental notification in teenagers' abortions has not

yet come before his administration.

If a daughter of his had sought an abortion, "I would have wanted to know," he said. "And I believe further it is possible that in some individual cases such a law might be beneficial, not necessarily as a way of preventing abortions but of helping to provide a minor the support she needs at such a time," he wrote.

He also discussed the practice of pre-abortion counseling for women with problem pregnancies.

Given that practice, "it would seem reasonable that other such centers ... be likewise required to assure that their clients understand the full range of options, including adoption," Cuomo said. "If strengthened regulations are required to assure this full disclosure, I would favor that."

He took issue with a *Commonweal* editorial that had included him among a list of politicians who have been evasive on the abortion issue and on its treatment of his views on the death penalty as contrasted with his views on abortion. He has opposed the death penalty.

"Our political leaders, rather than engaging in" the type of political and moral debate that can lead to conversion of others' hearts and minds, "seem to be evading it," *Commonweal* said.

As for his abortion and death penalty opinions, he wrote, "if it were my judgment that theoretically doable legal restrictions on abortion — for example, limitation of (state) funding — were fair and would engender a greater respect for life in our state, then I would have to be disposed to advocate for such change."

Commonweal editor Margaret O'Brien Steinfelds said the magazine would respond to the letter in a future issue.



NEW PRESIDENT — Lithuania's new president, Vytautas Landsbergis, speaks to the Lithuanian Parliament after his election earlier this month.

Vatican could face record budget deficit in 1990

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican could face a record budget deficit in 1990, far more than has been covered through worldwide giving and other resources.

The two main sources of supplementary income in recent years — the worldwide Peter's Pence and revenues from Vatican City State — will fail to cover the shortfall unless contributions increase dramatically, said a Vatican financial statement.

The statement, issued March 15 at the end of a three-day meeting of a special Council of Cardinals, showed projected expenses of \$152.4 million and income of \$66.5 million for 1990, creating a deficit of about \$86 million. The shortfall has developed despite efforts to hold down costs, said a top Vatican official.

Vatican City State is expected to show a profit of about \$12.6 million in 1990. The city-state budget covers administration of the 108-acre state in which Vatican offices are located and is considered separate from the Holy See's budget.

The Peter's Pence collection brought in

\$48.4 million in 1989, down from nearly \$53 million the previous year.

If Peter's Pence contributions stay the same in 1990, that would still leave a gap of about \$25 million.

The Vatican has previously warned that it would have to dip into its investment patrimony if the shortfall cannot be covered. In 1988, the last year for which final figures are available, the Holy See managed to cover the deficit of \$57 million without touching the patrimony.

The Council of Cardinals expressed "deep concern" over the situation and issued a "particularly pressing appeal" to the whole church to give even more generously to the Holy See.

Cardinal Edmund C. Szoka of Detroit, who will take over as head of the Vatican's budget office in June, said after the meeting that he hoped the projected shortfall for 1990 could be made up as well. He said the council was being deliberately conservative in estimating income, and that some costs might be cut further.

"But there is a problem, and we certainly have to count on and hope for a major

increase in Peter's Pence," Cardinal Szoka said.

The Peter's Pence collection is scheduled for the weekend of June 24 in most U.S. parishes.

Cardinal Szoka noted that most Vatican expenses had been cut or held at previous levels for the last few years. The cardinals' statement said the 1990 figure of \$152.4 million represented a policy of "dutiful austerity."

"Without a substantial increase in contributions by the universal church, it would clearly be difficult for the Holy See to meet its essential expenses, despite all the efforts of austerity — which will be intensified," the statement said.

To underline its point about the universal church's responsibility for Vatican operations, the statement quoted from Canon 1271 from the Code of Canon Law, which states that "bishops are to assist in procuring those means whereby the Apostolic See can properly provide for its service of the universal church." The council said it wanted to "deeply thank" the bishops, priests, religious and the faithful who have made personal sacrifices to help contribute to the Vatican.

The cardinals added that they were making "another particularly pressing appeal so that this collaboration may be generously intensified." Cardinal Szoka and Cardinal John J. O'Connor, of New York were the two U.S. representatives on the cardinals' council.

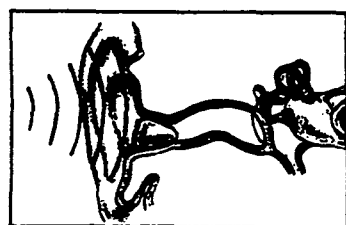
A Vatican bank oversight commission, which also includes Cardinal O'Connor, was expected to meet to review candidates for the bank's directorship. The post has been vacant since the bank, known formally as the Institute for the Works of Religion, was restructured in 1989.

Italian news agencies reported that an Italian banker, Giovanni Bodio, had been given preliminary approval as director.

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