

## Stallings plans to be ordained a bishop



File photo  
The Rev. George A. Stallings, excommunicated for saying his Imani Temple congregation would be independent from Vatican authority, now plans to be ordained a bishop.

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Excommunicated Rev. George A. Stallings Jr., founder of the breakaway African-American Catholic Congregation, plans to be made a bishop of his church in May.

Plans call for prelates of the Old Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the African Orthodox Church to ordain the Rev. Stallings a bishop May 12 in Washington.

The site of the installation, a Baptist church in Washington's northeast quadrant, is being called the Pro-Cathedral of Our Lady of Africa for the ceremony.

Assuming that an acceptable Orthodox or Old Catholic ordination rite is followed, such a ceremony would be considered valid but illicit, or illegal, under Catholic teaching. The Old Catholic and Orthodox churches are considered to have bishops validly ordained in apostolic succession, but the Catholic Church would not permit the Rev. Stallings to exercise any episcopal ministry among Catholics.

William Marshall, spokesman for the Rev. Stallings, at first confirmed details surrounding the denominations of the ordaining prelates in a telephone interview with Catholic News Service, but said April 11 he could neither confirm nor deny those details.

The Old Catholic Church is a loose confederation of national churches brought together in 1889 by the Union of Utrecht.

It is composed of small church groups that broke with Rome. Clergy offices and titles parallel those used in the Catholic and Anglican churches.

Bishop Karl Pruter, a bishop of the Christ Catholic Church, an Old Catholic member church based in Highlandville, Mo., told CNS that the Eastern Orthodox prelate would come from a church "on the outside" of Eastern Orthodoxy.

Bishop Pruter said the African Orthodox Church is a remnant of black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey's "back-to-Africa" movement of the post-World War I era. The church broke from the Episcopal Church, Bishop Pruter said, when the

latter at that time refused to ordain blacks.

One of the Rev. Stallings' two priests, the Rev. Hugh Randolph Caines Jr., had been an African Orthodox deacon, according to Bishop Pruter. He later was ordained in the Christ Catholic Church, then left to join the Rev. Stallings.

Bishop Pruter said he would not take part in the ordination ceremony. "We do not regard the Rev. Stallings as any more orthodox" than does Roman Catholicism, he said.

The Rev. Stallings incurred automatic excommunication Feb. 5 when he said the African-American Catholic Congregation would be "independent from Rome."

## Cardinal urges rally attendance

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York has urged Americans who support human rights for all to attend an April 28 Rally for Life in Washington.

"I will be among them," the cardinal said in an April 12 statement. Organizers expect massive crowds at the event, which is sponsored by the National Right to Life Committee. It will be held near the Washington Monument.

The cardinal, chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, will be a speaker.

Cardinal O'Connor stated that in the 17 years since the Supreme Court's *Roe vs. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, many people have lost sight of the fact that abortion "destroys the life of an innocent human being" because of talk about "choice."

Rally for Life events will begin with music at 9 a.m., followed by speeches and other program highlights from 2 to 4:30 p.m.

At 5:15 p.m., Cardinal O'Connor is scheduled to be principal celebrant and homilist at a Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

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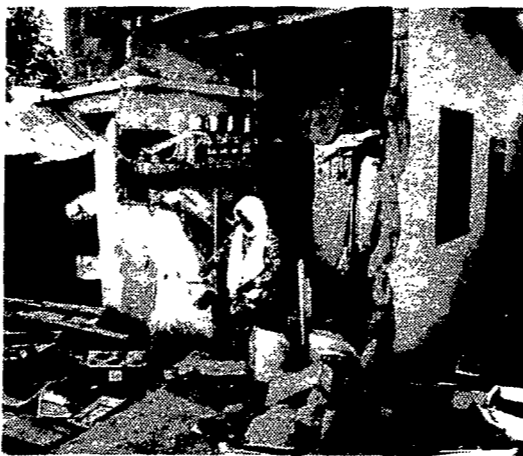
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