

Prelate opposes bid to abandon pastoral

ORLANDO, Fla. (CNS) — Abandoning the U.S. bishops' pastoral on women would be "tantamount to proclaiming" that the bishops cannot support church teaching banning ordination of women to the priesthood, said retired Bishop Thomas J. Grady of Orlando.

Bishop Grady, a member of the bishops' committee writing the proposed pastoral letter, said debate over the pastoral has focus on the ordination of women and that many times "equality and ordination" have been seen as synonymous.

"As a result, many things that the letter has to say about women working in the home or in the marketplace or even in the church have been ignored," he said.

Bishop Grady made the comments in a column which was published in the Sept. 21 issue of all editions of *The Florida Catholic*, newspaper of the Florida dioceses of Orlando, Palm Beach, Pensacola-Tallahassee, St. Petersburg and Venice.

He said that the seven-year process of writing the proposed pastoral has been "of great service to the Catholic community because it has called attention to the concerns of women, raised the sympathy and consciousness of many people, and generated both popular and scholarly interest."

From its inception, the pastoral's subject was controversial, Bishop Grady acknowledged.

"The committee took as a given that it would respect church teaching with regard to the ordination of women, reproductive rights and family life," he said.

Both liberals and conservatives "had strongly held positions before the pastoral was initiated and have never moved away from those positions," he said.

Many of those with strong opinions on the letter have never read it, the bishop said.

"The subject of the letter will not go away," said Bishop Grady. "As the draft continues on, riding the rough seas of controversy, what is needed is less rhetoric and more peaceful guidance of the Holy Spirit," he said.

Bishop Grady said the Sept. 13 announcement of the decision by the 50-member U.S. bishops' Administrative Committee to delay a vote on the pastoral letter on women "does not mean that the pastoral letter is terminated but that consultation about it (will) be broadened to an international scale."

The decision was made after Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, received a request from Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, Vatican secretary of state, that voting on the second draft of the proposed pastoral letter on women be delayed until the bishops consult with bishops' conferences of other nations.

The vote had been expected to take place in November at the general meeting of the U.S. bishops.

A number of critics have said the letter suffers an internal contradiction because it insists on women's equality on the one hand but at the same time supports the church ban on women's ordination to the priesthood.

Saying the letter would hurt the church's credibility, several bishops indicated recently that they planned to oppose passage of the letter this fall.

Bishop Grady noted that international



AP/Wide World Photos
DEATH WALK — A man identified as a Zulu Inkatha supporter is led away by members of the rival African National Congress, after the man was beaten and stoned in Soweto, South Africa. Shortly thereafter, the man was set on fire and burned to death.

consultation was "very helpful" to the bishops who worked on the 1983 pastoral letter on war and peace.

He said he and other bishops on the writing committee for the women's pastoral "welcomed the suggestion" of broader consultation.

"It was the conviction of the committee that women in every country, to quote Pope John XXIII, 'are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity ... and demand' rights befitting a human person both in domestic and public life," said Bishop Grady.

Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, a member of the NCCB Administrative Committee, said in a statement that the decision to delay the vote was not a decision to abandon the pastoral.

He said a straw vote of the committee was taken which showed "overwhelming support" to continue moving forward with the pastoral.

Bishop Fiorenza's statement was issued for the Sept. 28 issue of the *Texas Catholic Herald*, diocesan newspaper.

He said it would be a mistake to abandon the pastoral "because it addresses the concerns of many women, perhaps a majority of women."

Bishop Fiorenza said "there was much in the pastoral that would help in addressing sexist attitudes in the church and society."

He said the pastoral should not be "held hostage to those who want more from it than is possible, or to those who think the pastoral has gone too far."

Economy spurs review of USCC programs

By Mark Pattison

Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops are reviewing the structure and expenses of their twin conferences, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Catholic Conference, in light of budget pressures in Washington and in their home dioceses.

The impact of potential changes would begin to be felt in 1992, with all changes fully in place by 1993, according to Father Dennis M. Schnurr, NCCB-USCC associate general secretary.

One possible outcome could be loss of jobs at the NCCB-USCC, Father Schnurr said. Other outcomes could include an increase in diocesan assessments to fund NCCB-USCC activities or a change in the assessment formula, which now taxes each diocese equally based on the number of Catholics.

Preliminary recommendations have been disclosed to NCCB-USCC office directors but not made public.

The review is taking place under the Conference Assessment Project or CAP. "Assessment" refers to the review of NCCB-USCC structures, not the assessment paid by each diocese to the NCCB-USCC general fund, Father Schnurr said in an interview with Catholic News Service.

Bishop Clark to celebrate Mass honoring St. Therese

PITTSFORD — Bishop Matthew H. Clark will be the main celebrant at a Mass honoring St. Therese of Lisieux on Monday, Oct. 1, at 9 a.m. at the Carmelite Monastery of Our Lady and St. Joseph, 1931 W. Jefferson Road, Pittsford.

All are welcome to join the Carmelite Sisters in honoring St. Therese, whose feast day is Oct. 3.

The diocesan assessment has risen steadily in recent years. In 1971, the assessment for each diocese was 6 cents per Catholic. In 1976, it was raised to 7 cents. Those five years marked the longest period between assessment increases in the past 20 years.

In 1979, the assessment was raised to 8 cents per Catholic. In 1980, it increased to 10 cents; in 1983, to 12.3 cents; in 1986, to 13.3 cents. In 1989, the assessment was raised to 15.7 cents.

Diocesan assessments account for 78.2 percent of the 1990 NCCB-USCC general fund of \$10,379,325.

The NCCB-USCC also is operating under a hiring freeze. Vacant positions must be reviewed by the appropriate NCCB-USCC associate general secretary before they may be filled.

A "no-growth" requirement in effect for the past two years also stipulates that budgets are not to increase except for salaries and fringe benefits.

When the NCCB-USCC assessment increase was discussed at the November 1989 NCCB general meeting, "some bishops said they might not be able to afford an increase," Father Schnurr said. "They were even cutting back in their dioceses."

"If they were doing that in their own dioceses, then it wasn't right that the (bishops') conference should escape a similar scrutiny," Father Schnurr said.

A "CAP committee" headed by NCCB president Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati and made up of the NCCB Executive Committee and the NCCB Committee on Priorities and Plans is overseeing the project.

Questionnaires were mailed May 1 to all U.S. bishops to poll them on their understanding of NCCB-USCC activities. They were also sent information booklets

with brief sketches of offices' functions, sources of revenue, expenses and staffing levels.

Bishops were asked, among other things, about their familiarity with each office's work; whether budget and staffing levels should change or stay the same; about each office's work quality, productivity and contributions to the church's mission; and its importance to the church on the national level.

According to Father Schnurr, 123 ordinaries and 43 auxiliaries responded. Results were compiled in time for the CAP committee's meeting after the bishops' June retreat in Santa Clara, Calif., he said.

At that time, the committee outlined recommendations for the NCCB-USCC. Those recommendations were reviewed Sept. 13 when CAP committee members gathered in Washington for the NCCB Administrative Committee meeting.

NCCB-USCC office directors were informed Sept. 19 of "suggestions that may have an impact on their offices and their programs," Father Schnurr said. The recommendations "could affect some departments rather substantially. The potential is there," he said.

Each NCCB or USCC committee will then give feedback to the CAP committee prior to its spring 1991 meeting, Father Schnurr said.

NCCB-USCC office directors will discuss the recommendations with the standing bishops' committee with which they work. Father Schnurr said the directors would have a chance to give "persuasive argumentation why a proposal is workable or why it's not in the best interest of the conference."

Final CAP recommendations will be the sole discussion topic at the NCCB's June 1991 meeting in Collegeville, Minn., which will be closed to press coverage.



Doug Lezette
Co-Anchor

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