

Walesa wins presidency in runoff

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — Lech Walesa, who rose from an unemployed electrician to the presidency of Poland, won the election with tacit support of the nation's bishops.

Walesa, a devout Catholic, was expected to travel Dec. 11 to Poland's holiest shrine in Czestochowa to pray before the Black Madonna, the Polish patroness whose image he always wears on his lapel.

The Nobel Peace Prize laureate will probably be sworn in as president later in December. Unofficial results of the runoff election gave Walesa 74 percent of the vote and Stanislaw Tyminski, an emigre businessman, 26 percent.

Although the hierarchy decided against officially supporting his campaign, Walesa was the Polish bishops' favorite in the Dec. 9 elections, said Cardinal Jozef Glemp of Gniezno and Warsaw.

"In truth, the church has abstained from directly intervening in the elections," he said in an interview in the Dec. 5 issue of *Il*

Tempo, a Rome daily newspaper.

He said a Nov. 30 Polish bishops' statement was clear in indicating that the hierarchy preferred Walesa because he led the Solidarity struggle against the communist government.

Cardinal Glemp said in the interview that the election between Walesa and Tyminski, who lived outside Poland during the anti-communist struggle, was "a choice in which the good of the entire nation" was at stake.

In their Nov. 30 statement, the Polish bishops said the helm of the state should be passed to a person who based his actions on Christian virtues and would preserve the good achieved by Poland and other countries that overcame "totalitarian enslavement."

Sipping victory champagne, Walesa pledged to rebuild a country battered by four decades of communism and take it closer to the European community.

"We have to build a system that fits into

Europe. I want to build it with you. I never doubted for a moment that we would win," Walesa told a news conference after initial results were announced.

"We have moved away from the system of the past 45 years and now we must build a new one," said the Solidarity trade union chairman, who led Poland's long struggle against communism to victory last year.

Walesa will take over the presidential Belvedere Palace from Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the former communist leader who jailed Walesa and thousands of Solidarity members under martial law in 1981 and 1982. Jaruzelski was among the first to congratulate the new president.

Walesa asked Bogdan Borusiewicz, head of Solidarity's Gdansk chapter, to take over his responsibilities at the union.

Walesa promised to speed up political and economic reform in Poland and pursue a softened version of the Solidarity-led government's austerity measures, aimed at creating a Western-style free market.



AP/Wide World Photos
NEW TITLE — Major Wally Vaughn, previously known as an Air Force chaplain, dispenses holiday mail to troops at a Saudi Arabian base Dec. 7. The U.S. military has changed chaplains' titles to "morale officers" in an effort to keep religious presence low-key in the Islamic nation.

Church leaders oppose giving condoms to students

By Tracy Early
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — A proposal by Joseph A. Fernandez, chancellor of the New York City public school system, to distribute condoms in high schools as a method of preventing AIDS has drawn strong opposition from local church officials.

Under the plan, all students in grades 9 through 12 could get condoms on request without parental consent. The city has 120 high schools with 261,000 students.

Reaction came from individual Catholic leaders and from groups of clergy and laity of many religions.

Bishop Thomas V. Daily of Brooklyn said the program "pre-empts the clear rights of parents to direct the moral edu-

cation of their children by fostering the idea that non-marital sexual activity, really sexual promiscuity, is acceptable behavior as long as disease and pregnancy are avoided."

Calling the proposal "an act of the worst desperation," Bishop Daily said neither the chancellor nor the board of education — the policy-making body that oversees his work — had made any real effort to help young people deal with their sexuality in a safe and positive way.

Bishop Daily's statement was read at hearings held by the Board of Education Dec. 5.

At the same hearings, Monsignor John G. Woolsey, director of the Office of Christian and Family Development of the

New York Archdiocese, said the plan would tell students that they were not expected to live "a proper moral lifestyle."

"That you would attempt to implement this plan without parental consent is of great concern to those of us who are trying to strengthen the integrity of family bonds and family life," he said.

"We're going to fight this right to the end," Monsignor Woolsey told Catholic News Service. "This is an insane proposal."

He said the board of education was to vote on the plan Jan. 23.

Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York had not issued a formal statement on the plan.


In September, Monsignor Woolsey joined in forming an interfaith Coalition of Concerned Clergy that has an office at

Calvary Baptist Church, a fundamentalist church in midtown Manhattan.

The Rev. Kevin Rhodes, an associate minister of the church, Rabbi Saul Eisner of the Rabbinical Alliance of America (Orthodox) and Monsignor Woolsey sent a letter Nov. 30 to principals of the public schools.

They asked the principals to oppose "the administrative nightmare of a condom distribution center that will yield no public health benefits and will otherwise be seen by the children entrusted to your care as a symbol of the school system's ethical despair."

The coalition also includes representatives of the Brooklyn diocese, the Greek Orthodox archdiocese and the black Pentecostal Faith Church.



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