

Vatican recognizes Croatia and Slovenia

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican Jan. 13 recognized the independence of Croatia and Slovenia and told Yugoslavian authorities they should not view recognition of the breakaway republics as an act of hostility toward their government.

The Vatican's action came two days before the date for formal recognition established by the 12-member European Community.

Recognition came after Croatia and Slovenia met conditions set by the Vatican, promising they would follow international agreements on democracy and human rights, including full respect for the rights of minorities living within their borders.

In the fighting that erupted after the republics' June declarations of independence, Serbians, who control the federal government and army, expressed concern for Serbs living in Croatia.

Monsignor Piero Pennacchini, vice director of the Vatican press office, announced the decision and said the Vatican "hoped that with their entrance into the community of nations as sovereign and independent states,

Croatia and Slovenia will be able to contribute to the pacification of the Balkan region and to the construction of a world with more fraternity and solidarity."

Monsignor Pennacchini said the Vatican also hoped to establish diplomatic relations with the two republics.

The Vatican's ambassador to Yugoslavia will remain in Belgrade, he said. In 1966 Yugoslavia became the first communist country of Eastern Europe to establish diplomatic relations with the Vatican after World War II.

Monsignor Pennacchini said that in addition to notifying the Croatian and Slovenian governments that it had accepted their requests for recognition, the Vatican also delivered a message to the government in Belgrade, underlining that recognition is in no way a "hostile gesture" toward Yugoslavia.

Before extending its recognition, the Vatican informed the Croatian and Slovenian governments of its conditions.

The same conditions were suggested by the Vatican to the member countries of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe during a November meeting.

The conditions called for adherence



AP/Wide World Photos
A Croatian soldier (left) and a Serb from the Yugoslav federal army set up a communications wire Jan. 6 that will run between Croatian and Yugoslav army-held positions in Vincovci, some 85 miles northwest of Belgrade.

to a number of international agreements and treaties, which focus on seven points:

- Creating a juridical state.
- Respecting human rights.
- Respecting minority rights.
- Establishing democratic institutions.
- Establishing stable borders.
- Recognizing disarmament and arms control treaties.
- Being willing to resolve problems peacefully.

Monsignor Pennacchini said the Croatian and Slovenian governments

"gave their response rapidly," although he did not specify a date.

The Vatican, he said, would consider recognizing other republics under the same conditions.

Yugoslavia fired its ambassador to the Vatican, an ethnic Croatian, a week before the Vatican announcement.

The ambassador, Ivica Mastruko, said his dismissal had nothing to do with the Vatican's action. He said he had refused to accept the authority of the Serbian-dominated federal government.



AP/Wide World Photos
RUSSIAN CHRISTMAS — A woman lights candles during midnight Christmas Mass in Moscow Jan. 7. The Russian government recognized Christmas as a public holiday this year for the first time.

Bells to peal at shrine in honor of King

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington will join churches nationwide in commemorating the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday by ringing its bells for 30 minutes on Jan. 20.

The Washington-based Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday Commission has asked churches and synagogues nationwide to ring their bells at noon for 30-45 minutes on Jan. 20. Commission chairwoman is Coretta Scott King, Dr. King's widow.

Jan. 20 is the federal holiday honoring the slain civil rights leader. He would have turned 63 on Jan. 15.

The national shrine also remembered Dr. King with a memorial Mass Jan. 14 that was to be celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop William G. Curlin of Washington. During the liturgy three Catholic school students from the

Washington Archdiocese were scheduled to read essays they had written on the theme: "Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?"

Monsignor Robert N. Lynch, U.S. bishops' general secretary, sent copies of materials from the commission along with a memo to bishops across the country Dec. 9 "in the event dioceses wanted to participate" in the bell ringing, a spokesman for the U.S. bishops said.

A statement from the commission said the ceremony officially begins when a public official taps the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia at noon Jan. 20. After that, the statement said, the "peal is then echoed in each of the 50 states."

A Dec. 3 letter from Mrs. King to religious leaders across the nation said the 'Let Freedom Ring' tradition is meant to be a call to people of all races

and ethnic origins to reflect on the ideals of brotherhood, service to others and commitment to creating the 'beloved community' of which Dr. King so fervently spoke."

She said the ceremony is a good opening for discussion groups to address racial problems or homelessness at the community level.

Mother Teresa 'counting days' to leave hospital

LA JOLLA, Calif. (CNS) — After nearly three weeks in the hospital, Mother Teresa no longer needs oxygen and could be discharged within the week, Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation reported Jan. 12.

The 81-year-old founder of the Missionaries of Charity was hospitalized Dec. 26 with bacterial pneumonia and heart problems.

Her condition was upgraded to good on Jan. 11.

"Although there are still some concerns, the risks diminish with each passing day," said the hospital's Jan. 11 report on her condition. "Mother Teresa is counting the days to go home."

In the Jan. 12 report on her condition, physicians said they were "cautiously optimistic" and that Mother Teresa continues to improve. For several days she has been working on simple exercises and now needs less assistance with walking, they said.

The hospital also said her doctors have begun adjusting her medication in preparation for her discharge. She has told her doctors she feels much better and is looking forward to getting back to work.

She was on a tour of Missionaries of Charity homes in the United States and Mexico when she became ill around Christmas.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

The funeral Directors listed herein offer pre-need and at-need services and counseling in accordance with the Catholic faith.

GATES

Alvah Halloran & Son, Inc.
Funeral Home
H. Daniel Halloran
2125 Chili Avenue
Rochester, N.Y. 14624
(716) 247-7590

DiPonzio Funeral Home, Inc.
(Across from St. Theodore's Church)
219 Spencerport Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14606
429-6700

GREECE

Arndt Funeral Home
1118 Long Pond Rd.
(south of Maiden Lane)
Parking for over 100 cars
Greece, N.Y. 14626
Ronald John Arndt
(716) 225-6350

Vay-Schleich and Meeson Funeral Home Inc.
"Greece's Largest and Most Complete Facilities"
2692 Dewey Avenue
1075 Long Pond Rd.
(716) 663-2100

IRONDEQUOIT

Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc.
Edwin Sulewski
2100 St. Paul Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14621
(716) 342-3400

Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home
1270 Norton Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14621
(716) 544-5000

ROCHESTER

Crawford Funeral Home, Inc.
"Our Family Serving Your Family"
Located at 495 N. Winton Rd.
(Between Atlantic & Humboldt)
(716) 482-0400

Space
Available

MONUMENTS

HART MONUMENT CO.

2301 Dewey Avenue
Opposite Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

Since 1856

865-6746