

# Bishops urge whites to vote 'yes' for reform

PRETORIA, South Africa (CNS) — Following South African President F.W. de Klerk's announcement of a whites-only referendum on racial reforms, the southern African bishops' conference urged whites "to vote a resounding 'yes'" for equality.

The vote would be a "a clear apology for apartheid and a firm commitment to a future democratic South Africa," the bishops said.

"It is in the best interests of all South Africans to know, as clearly as possible, where the white community generally stands on the issue of a negotiated settlement for a non-racial democracy in our country," the bishops said in a Feb. 25 statement.

The March 17 referendum will ask whites to vote "yes" or "no" to the question: "Do you support continuation of the reform process which the state president began on Feb. 2, 1990, and which is aimed at a new constitution through negotiation?"

The referendum was called by de Klerk the day after his Nationalist ruling party lost a Feb. 19 election in the Transvaal city of Potchefstroom by 2,140 votes to the right-wing Conservative Party. The loss was considered a major blow to the party among Afrikaner voters.

"The white right of South African politics has used this (Potchefstroom election result) to claim legitimacy and has increasingly become more aggressive," the bishops said.

"Sadly, the referendum called by President de Klerk is a legacy of our apartheid history," the statement



AP/Wide World Photos

On the last leg of his African tour, Pope John Paul II (left) is greeted by Guinea President Lansane Conte after arriving in Conakry Feb. 24

said. "But past history can be turned to present advantage. Whites have often been asked to express sorrow for the past. The best apology is a change of behavior.

"Given the reality of South Africa's history, neither the right nor the white population as a whole can be ignored," the bishops said. "The transition to a new South Africa, which cannot be stopped, can either be a peaceful one or one fraught with more conflict and bloodshed."

The bishops said whites must realize that voting "no" was actually "choosing conflict and bloodshed."

"On the other hand, a 'yes' vote will

indicate a desire for peaceful, if difficult negotiations," they said.

The bishops said although South Africa's white minority — 18 percent of the population — has no moral right to exercise a veto power over the majority, South Africans have a right to know what the future holds.

Seventy-three percent of South Africa's 39.5 million people are black, but blacks have no voting rights in national elections or referendums.

The bishops said they looked forward to the day, "hopefully before the end of this year, when all the people of South Africa can exercise their democratic right to vote in choosing a new

constitution and a new government."

Sister Margaret Kelly, general secretary of the National Justice and Peace Commission, said "a revolution will start" if the right wing wins the referendum.

"Whites should not veto" the poll, Sister Kelly said. "Without necessarily supporting de Klerk personally, this is a chance for white people to come forward and give massive support to the negotiation process."

African National Congress executive committee member Marion Sparg said the organization found itself in an "extremely difficult position" regarding the referendum.

"On the one hand, simply to tell whites not to vote would be extremely dangerous, because of the consequences of a Conservative Party win," Sparg said.

"On the other hand, we have to bear in mind that de Klerk is effectively giving white South Africans the opportunity to derail the entire peace process, and that is something we can't tolerate," she added.

The African National Congress was expected to formulate an official viewpoint on the referendum.

Leading South African business groups, the Democratic Party and the international community have urged a "yes" vote in the poll.

De Klerk said the government would regard a simple majority of those participating in the referendum as a sufficient mandate to continue with negotiations for a new constitution.

## IF YOU'RE 65 OR OVER, YOU SHOULD HAVE THIS REMOVED.

Perform a little minor surgery on this ad, and you'll quickly recover a host of valuable benefits. Like free in-home consultations, 30 day trial period, nationwide service network, batteries, service and repairs for all makes of hearing aids, and \$100 off the purchase of any custom hearing aid. So call now for your free Hearing Aid Evaluation.

**SENIOR SPECIAL**  
FREE Hearing Aid Evaluation  
& \$100<sup>00</sup> Discount (Prior Sales Excluded)  
Expires 3/31/92

\$100.00 OFF on Hearing Aid Purchase with this coupon (\$200 OFF on both ears)

**CRANDALL HEARING INSTRUMENTS**

TOLL FREE: 1-800-421-1012

**GREECE**  
1577 Ridge Rd. West (716) 865-4311  
NEWARK  
165 E. Union St. (315) 331-6161

**HORNELL**  
40 Federation Bldg. (607) 324-4171  
CANANDAIGUA (Medicine Shoppe)  
66 West Avneue (716) 396-9970

Hearing tests are conducted for the express purpose of making the selection and adaptation of hearing instrumentation and not for the medical diagnosis of hearing loss.

For all your Lenten traditions

# Wegmans Seafood

WEGMANS WHARF COUPON

**SAVE 1.50**  
On the Purchase of  
Two Fresh Haddock  
Fish Frys

Limit 1 thru 3-31-92



WEGMANS WHARF COUPON

**SAVE 2.00**  
Schooner Breaded Fish  
2-3 lb. bag. Choose from  
Crunchy Perch, Flounder or  
Shrimp Crunchies.

Limit 1 thru 3-31-92



WEGMANS WHARF COUPON

**SAVE 5.00**  
Ocean Magic Frozen  
Imitation Crab  
5 lb. pack.

Limit 1 thru 3-31-92

