

Prelate plans to buy \$430,000 Conn. home

By Daria Keyes
Catholic News Service

HARTFORD, Conn. — In Catholic churches across the Archdiocese of Hartford March 15, Sunday-Mass homilies focused on a house — the \$430,000 residence Archbishop Daniel A. Cronin plans to buy in West Hartford.

The house became news two weeks earlier when the archbishop's plans were reported by the *Hartford Courant*, the see city's daily newspaper. Archdiocesan officials urged priests and deacons to explain the facts of the planned purchase at weekend Masses to avoid a backlash that could undermine this year's \$4 million archdiocesan appeal.

"Misperceptions could prove to be a negative factor surrounding Appeal '92," wrote Father Douglas P. Clancy, director of the appeal.

The archbishop's prospective home — a two-story frame house in a residential neighborhood — has seven bedrooms, two fireplaces and an in-ground swimming pool.

The "fact sheet" sent to all priests and deacons stressed that "in the present real estate market, the property is considered an outstanding buy and investment."

It also pointed out that most of the diocesan bishops in the country, including all those in neighboring dioceses, live in separate residences.

Five unrelated adults — the archbishop, his priest-secretary, and three sisters on his residential staff — would live in the house. The other two bedrooms would be used as guest rooms.

"The swimming pool is not a requirement of the archdiocese. It happens to come with the house. The pool was installed for the benefit of the present owner's seven children and their friends," the fact sheet said.

It also argued that home ownership "can be a less expensive way to live than in a rented accommodation."

Archbishop Cronin was installed as head of the Hartford Archdiocese Jan. 28. He is living at the cathedral rectory until arrangements for his own resi-

dence can be completed.

His predecessor, Archbishop John F. Whealon, had lived for 22 years at St. Mary Home for retired priests and had sold the previous bishop's mansion for \$288,000 in 1974. The archdiocese had purchased the mansion 10 years earlier for \$107,000.

Archbishop Whealon, who was admired by many for his simple lifestyle, rented a two-room suite at the retirement home, ate with the retired priests and in the summer often provided part of the community meal from the vegetable garden he tended.

When Archbishop Whealon died last August, the yearly archdiocesan expense for his room and board at the home was \$26,400, according to the fact sheet.

"The rental portion of this expense, approximately \$20,400 per year, provided no return or equity, as would mortgage payments for the purchase of a home," it said.

The fact sheet did not say how much the archdiocese will pay each year for cleaning and maintenance on the house, and for other staffing services Archbishop Whealon either had received as part of his rent or did not need at the retirement home.

It underscored the fact that all the funds for the new house would come from a 65-year-old property fund into which Archbishop Whealon had put the proceeds from the 1974 sale of the former bishop's house.

"No monies will be taken from the Archbishop's Annual Appeal or from contributions of the people of the Archdiocese of Hartford," the fact sheet said.

Father Thomas J. Lynch, pastor of St. Mary Parish in Newington and former archdiocesan chancellor, said public explanations were needed because media coverage was slanted to make unfavorable comparisons between the planned new residence and Archbishop Whealon's decision to rent.

"Christ calls us to the simple life. You can live the simple life in a mansion or a hovel," said Father Lynch.



AP/Wide World Photos
PARENTS' PLEA — Laura Campo (left) and Justin Pearson (center), parents of an infant born March 21 without a brain, listen during an emergency hearing called at the Broward County Courthouse March 26. A judge ruled that the parents may not take the child's vital organs and donate them to other children before she dies. The baby died March 30.

Pope urges 'concern' for divorced Catholics

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II said Catholics who have divorced and remarried need the church's spiritual advice and its "affectionate concern."

At the same time, the pope said, such pastoral care cannot go outside the norms established by church law. The church holds that those in irregular second marriages remain part of the church, but cannot participate in the sacraments.

The pontiff made the remarks March 28 in an address to a group of French bishops. As in many Western countries, divorce among Catholics is considered a major pastoral problem in France.

"Men and women who live in situations considered irregular from the religious point of view need the spiritual assistance and the full help of the church's affectionate concern," the pope said.

"I encourage pastors to welcome people living in such situations, and to remain attentive to their needs so that they can live their life in baptism," he said. The pope previously has said divorced and remarried Catholics should

not be made to feel separated from the church.

The pope encouraged the bishops to continue improving preparation courses for marriage. Marriage, he said, presupposes a spirit of giving and sacrifice, as well as the ability to welcome, and at times forgive, the marriage partner.

He said France, like other Western societies, suffers from a predominant moral relativism, in which individualism prevails. Many people today mistakenly believe that "what is legal is in itself moral," he said.

This has important repercussions in the field of health care, the pope added. He said researchers should continually evaluate their actions according to moral criteria. Civil authorities must protect all those — especially the weakest — who may face "eventual excesses of science and technology," he said.

The pope spoke particularly of the handicapped. To refuse them life, he said, is to practice a "shameful eugenics." Whatever the prognosis for the handicapped, he said, doctors can never justify "radical therapeutic choices" made according to an arbitrary or subjective definition of the quality of life.

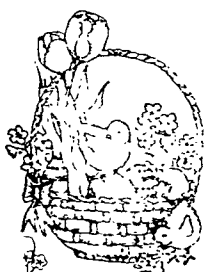
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