



**PAPAL PORTRAIT** — Pope John Paul II speaks with Spanish artist Cristobal Moreno Toledo, who presented the pontiff with a portrait during the weekly general audience at the Vatican April 1.

AP/Wide World Photos

## March

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want treatment stopped, while the Will to Live says that treatment should be continued except in specified circumstances. It defines food and water as "not medical treatment, but basic necessities."

In comments on the bishop's document, Dominican Father Kevin O'Rourke, director of the Center for Health Care Ethics at St. Louis University Medical Center, said it is an "anachronistic" statement that "equi-

vocates" on some of the key issues in the theological debate.

Jesuit Father Richard McCormick, professor of Christian ethics at the University of Notre Dame, called it "a long, cumbersome document that doesn't add a great deal new" to the nutrition-hydration debate.

William E. May, a moral theologian at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, disagreed. "This is a very carefully prepared statement," he said.

He questioned Father McCormick's assessment that most theologians and doctors hold a more liberal view.

## Bishops call for less rigid church position on gays

By Keith Picher  
Catholic News Service

CHICAGO — Three Catholic bishops speaking at a forum on "lesbian and gay people and Catholicism" said they hoped pastoral leaders will adopt less rigid attitudes toward homosexual men and women.

Bishops Kenneth E. Untener of Saginaw, Mich., and William A. Hughes of Covington, Ky., and Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton of Detroit addressed a March 28 symposium in Chicago organized by New Ways Ministry. The Maryland-based organization seeks understanding and acceptance of gays and lesbians in the Catholic community.

Bishop Gumbleton said he stewed over his talk more than "almost any other presentation I have delivered." He said he was fully aware that "certain church authorities are not happy we are here today."

After learning his brother was gay, Bishop Gumbleton said, he could not face the issue or even visit his brother. He credited an old woman whose son died of AIDS with helping him to accept his brother and comfort his still-troubled mother on her death bed.

Because of the loving response of the gay and lesbian community to AIDS, Bishop Gumbleton said he hopes society will realize they have been wrong about gay people. He said he hopes

homosexual people will not be treated as "contaminated" or as "second-class citizens."

Bishop Untener said the church is most true to its tradition when it is open and inclusive. Although it has never been perfectly open, excluding people because they are sinners is like "poking fun at people going to Weight Watchers for being fat," he said.

Church teaching on homosexuality consistently acknowledges that it is a complex issue, that homosexual orientation is not sinful and that gays and lesbians deserve special pastoral concern and sensitivity, he said. The church teaches that homosexual activity, as distinguished from orientation, is morally wrong.

"We need to be careful about saying this is a complex question and then treating it as if it had simple solutions," said Bishop Untener. Mail he receives sometimes does just that, he said, plainly stating that a bishop should not associate with such people. "This bridge has not yet been crossed," he added.

Bishop Hughes, who chaired the U.S. bishops' task force that drafted "The Many Faces of AIDS: A Gospel Response," said four unfair stereotypes about gays are still commonly accepted: that they are attracted to children, that they are sexually active, that they can change orientation and that all gay men are effeminate.

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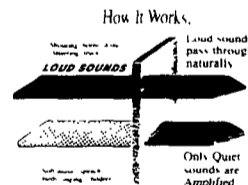
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