

Millions in despair



AP/Wide World Photos
ON THE STREETS — A child sucks on a pacifier while smoking a cigarette Oct. 29 on the streets of Sao Paulo, Brazil. To relieve hunger pains, the child sniffs glue from a bag he is holding in his left hand. The number of children on Sao Paulo's streets increased recently as several hundred escaped from a Sao Paulo state reformatory. According to government estimates, about seven million children live on the streets in Brazil.

Sisters' deaths send shock waves

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In a letter to the Provincial Superior of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, Cardinal Mahony said, "your province now takes its place in the ranks of those religious communities whose members have shed their blood in the mission of Jesus Christ and His church."

He noted that the order has had a "long and illustrious history in the life of the church throughout the world." In particular, he praised the order for sending sisters to Liberia to minister to the poor and those without hope.

"Liberia has been ravaged with civil strife and war for several years now," Cardinal Mahony said. "And yet, your sisters stayed on even in the midst of

these dangers. They faced danger constantly with the uncertain political future of the country, and even without the basic governmental protection, they remained at their posts with commitment and self-giving."

Mayor Flynn also expressed his concern saying, "As a Catholic, I am personally outraged as well as saddened by this brutal crime."

He said people of every race and religious belief are united with the members of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ in sorrow over the deaths of the five women "whose love of God and commitment to humanity overrode the personal dangers they faced in a violence-torn country."

"We raise our prayers to God so that their sacrifice may give rise to proposals and concrete initiatives for dialogue and peace that could influence the fate of that martyred country," he said.

Archbishop Francis asked the rebels Nov. 2 to "allow us to retrieve the bodies so that we can at least ... bury them."

"We hold Mr. Taylor and the NPFL responsible, directly or indirectly, consciously or not, for the deaths of these five lovely people," he said.

Liberian church officials reported in late October that they were very worried after having lost contact with the sisters.

Archbishop Francis reported Oct. 31 that the five sisters were found dead.

Liberia

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missionary work with long service in Liberia. Sister Muttra had been in the country since 1971, having served prior to that in Vietnam.

The names of the novices were not immediately available.

"Despite the great danger" brought by the civil war, "until the end the sisters remained alongside the population threatened by the violent battles underway in that city," Pope John Paul II said.

"May the Lord welcome into his joy the deceased religious and give consolation to their families and their sisters," the pope prayed.

N.Y. commission says parade to include gays

By Tracy Early
 Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — The New York City Human Rights Commission ruled Oct. 27 that sponsors of the city's St. Patrick's Day Parade must allow participation of a homosexual group.

It ordered that sponsors admit the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization to the next parade without delaying until it reaches the top of a waiting list. Though a waiting list does exist, the commission said, other groups have been accepted without being placed on it.

A panel of three commission members reversed the decision of the commission's chief administrative law judge, Rosemarie Maldonado, who ruled last March that discrimination was allowed under the First Amendment right of freedom of religion and expression.

The decision against the Ancient Order of Hibernians, traditional sponsors of the parade, left open the possibility that New York might not have a St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1993.

Decisions of the commission can be appealed to the courts. Lawyers for the Hibernians were reviewing whether to take that action.

George Clough Jr., a St. Louis attorney who is national Hibernian president, said in an Oct. 29 telephone interview that the national convention in New Orleans last July passed a constitutional amendment forbidding local units from sponsoring parades or public commemorations.

The action, which was not publicized until the New York Human Rights Commission decision was issued, was taken because the Hibernians could not afford to continue paying the "tens of thousands of dollars" in legal fees required for defense against lawsuits, Clough said.

If individuals who have been involved in parades in the past wish to continue, he said, they must incorporate separately so the Hibernian organization will not suffer legal liability. He has not heard of anyone else willing to sponsor the New York parade, he said.

Clough called the commission action "just another example of anti-Catholic bigotry."

He noted that the commission decision distinguishes the case of the St. Patrick's Day Parade from a 1988 court case upholding the right of the Ku

Klux Klan to discriminate in holding a parade to promote its beliefs.

The commission said that "this exclusivity was part and parcel of the message being conveyed" in the Klan parade. But it said that the St. Patrick's Day Parade "means different things to different people" and is "sufficiently secular" that including the homosexual group would not compromise the sponsors' free exercise of religion.

Allowing the homosexual group its own opportunity to march would not be sufficient, the commission ruled. Since members of the group wish to "celebrate and affirm within their own community that they are lesbians and gay men of Irish descent," the commission decided, letting it march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade is "the only means of assuring its members full participation in the life of the community."

Clough said the reasoning in regard to the Klan would also allow New York's annual Gay Pride Parade to discriminate against groups not in sympathy with the views of its sponsors.

"The St. Patrick's Day parade will be the only one that can't keep anybody out," he said.

The position of the Hibernians has been supported by the New York Civil Liberties Union. Norman Siegel, director, criticized the commission for trying to define what message the Hibernians wished to convey in the parade and for defining a parade in legal terms as a "public accommodation."

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