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Report backs story of killings

RED BUD, Ill. (CNS) — New details on the fate of five American sisters in Liberia bolster reports that rebels shot the religious to death.

Sister Mildred Gross, provincial superior of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, said in a Nov. 9 statement she received an "eyewitness account of the death of our five sisters." The account was smuggled out of Liberia through a network of missionaries and others in West Africa.

The report blames soldiers of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, Charles Taylor's insurgent organization. Taylor's foreign affairs representative on Nov. 5 had denied rebel troops were the perpetrators.

Sister Gross said she believes the report is reliable "although this source cannot be identified."

Two of the sisters, Barbara Ann Mutra and Mary Joel Kolmer, were slain Oct. 20 as they drove one of their hired security men to visit a sick relative,

according to Sister Gross.

On the way, the nuns apparently gave a ride to two members of the joint West African peacekeeping force, which has been fighting Taylor's forces.

"They were reportedly ambushed by soldiers of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia," the provincial said. "All were killed by the soldiers who then took their vehicle."

The two sisters' bodies were reportedly later covered by a cloth as they lay on the road.

Three days later another group said to be rebel soldiers led by a man calling himself "C.O. Devil," came to the nuns' convent in Monrovia, the capital, and killed the remaining sisters and another security man.

The detailed account said that C.O. Devil demanded the keys to the convent auto, then shot the security man and Sister Kathleen McGuire to death.

He then killed Sisters Shirley Kolmer and Agnes Mueller on the road outside the convent fence, the account said.

"Sister Shirley begged him to spare their lives," Sister Gross said.

Sister Gross said that she met with State Department officials on Nov. 6 to discuss recovering the nuns' remains.

Discipleship, women topics for bishops

WASHINGTON — When the U.S. Catholic bishops meet in Washington Nov. 16-19, their proposed pastoral letter on women's concerns is expected to occupy the limelight.

But major documents on two key issues of Christian discipleship — Christ's mandate to spread the Gospel and the responsibilities of Christian stewardship — will occupy their attention as well.

They will also deal with several liturgical matters, including a new weekday Lectionary and a proposed Mass of thanksgiving for human life.

They face approval of a revised edition of their national norms for seminary formation and a request to extend for one more year their national collection to help churches in Eastern Europe.

They will be asked to vote on future priorities and plans and a proposed 1993 budget of nearly \$41.4 million for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and U.S. Catholic Conference, the respective structures for church affairs and for public policy under which the bishops are organized at the national level.

They face elections for new conference leadership, delegates to the 1994 world Synod of Bishops, and chairmen of several committees.

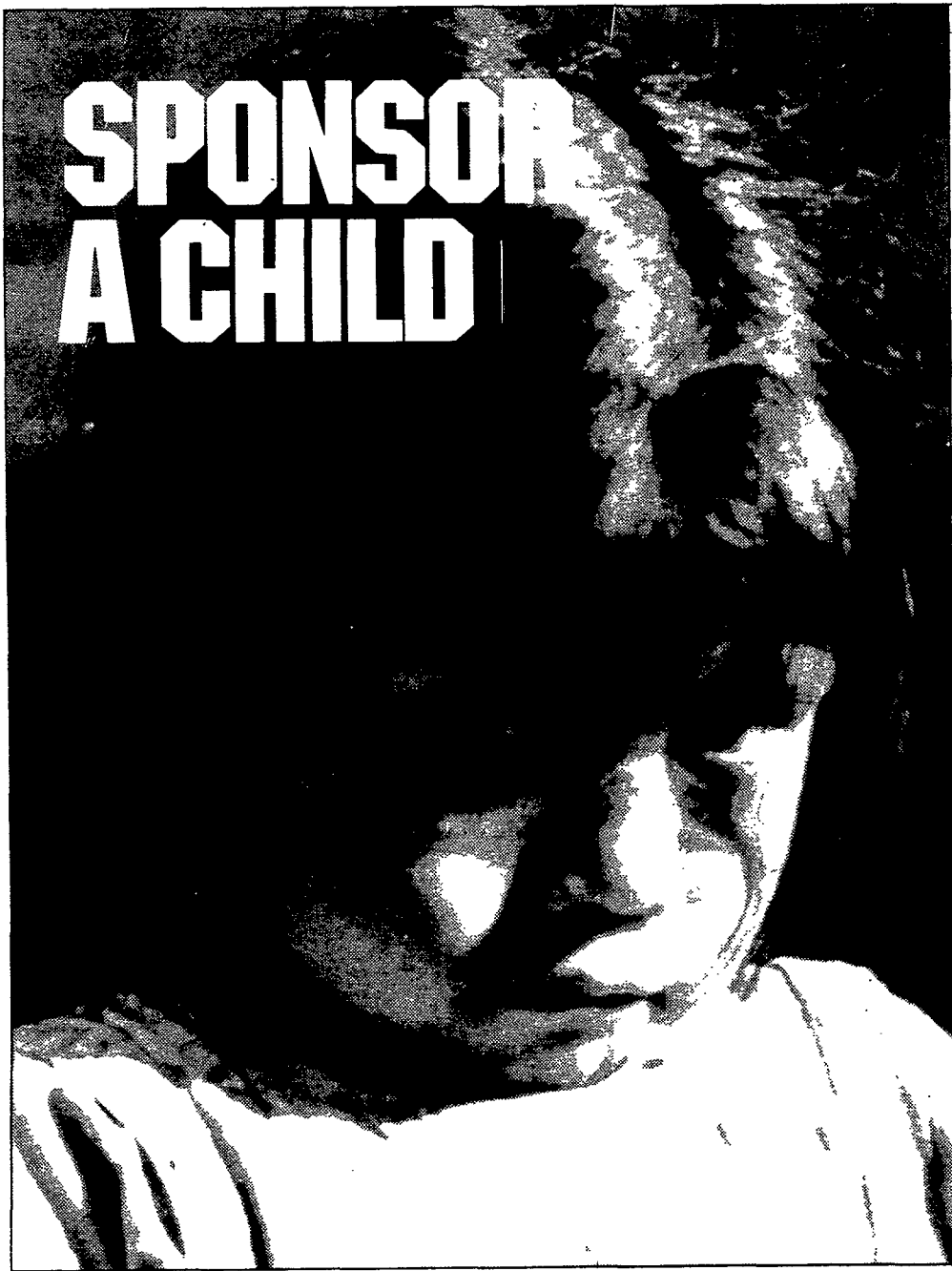
About 275 bishops are expected to attend the four-day meeting at Washington's Omni Shoreham Hotel. Usually about one-tenth of the participants are retired bishops, who retain a voice in conference affairs even though they no longer have a vote.

The fourth draft version of the proposed pastoral on women, titled "One in Christ Jesus," became public in late August and, like earlier drafts, provoked controversy. Some bishops have already called publicly for its defeat. A two-thirds vote is needed for approval.

The draft decries sexism and other evils adversely affecting women. Among other evils it cites the sexual revolution, some forms of feminism and social laws and policies that try to treat men and women exactly alike.

It calls for advancing the equal rights and dignity of women in society and the role of women within the church, provided it does not go beyond the limits set by official church policy.

The proposed pastoral defends the Vatican position that there are doctrinal obstacles preventing the church from ordaining women priests.



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