

Italian agency, London paper leak encyclical

Document knocks moral dissenters

ROME (CNS) — An Italian news agency published two-fifths of the embargoed text of Pope John Paul II's new moral theology encyclical Sept. 24, more than a week before the Vatican's planned Oct. 5 release.

In the encyclical, the pope calls for a "new evangelization" that includes "the proclamation and presentation of morality" to counter the "de-Christianization" of today's world, according to the agency.

The Italian Catholic agency *Adista* ran the encyclical's table of contents and three large segments including all of Chapter 3 — in all, 47 of the document's 120 numbered sections. The next day, Italian newspapers were filled with stories on the encyclical based on *Adista's* extensive excerpts.

Leaked segments show that Pope John Paul's purpose in the encyclical is to set forth, as he says in the introduction, "the principles of a moral teaching based upon sacred Scripture and the living apostolic tradition, and at the same time to shed light on the presuppositions and consequences of the dissent which that teaching has met."

The first leak of the encyclical came Sept. 23, however, when *The Times* of London quoted from its English version in articles reporting that the document reiterates church stands on sexuality and criticizes organized public dissent from church moral teaching. *The Times* articles, which were quoted the next day in several other English-language newspapers, provoked sharp criticism from the British Catholic hierarchy.

A statement from the Archdiocese of Glasgow, Scotland, said the reports "misrepresented" the encyclical as dealing mainly with sexual issues.

"It is particularly sad that a document which seeks to give clear moral leadership, and promote public morality, should be so misrepresented," said the statement in reply to press inquiries.

Cardinal George Basil Hume of Westminster, speaking on behalf of the bishops of England and Wales, said Sept. 24, "In some reports this document has been misunderstood and given misleading emphasis."

"I am confident that when it is properly presented and understood it will be widely welcomed," he added.

The Times articles said the pope renews his stance against artificial birth control, calling it "intrinsically evil." It said he also restates his opposition to

abortion.

The encyclical, titled *Veritatis Splendor* ("The Splendor of Truth") was described by *The Times* as 179 pages long in its English version.

The encyclical excerpts reported in Italy included a lengthy section on "freedom and law" in which the pope criticizes moral theories that challenge the church's condemnations of sexual activity outside marriage — premarital, homosexual or autoerotic — or its prohibitions against direct sterilization, artificial birth control and artificial insemination.

The encyclical's references to various issues of sexual and reproductive morality came only as a list, however, not as the thematic point of discussion, which was law, freedom and the bodily aspect of the human person, the excerpts show.

Catholic officials like health plan, but wary of abortion

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — As the debate on national health-care reform began in earnest, much discussion centered on the topic likely to get the most Catholic attention — the inclusion of abortion coverage.

The topic drew comment from both President Clinton and his top health-care adviser, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, in the days following the reform plan's unveiling Sept. 22.

The plan does not mention abortion by name, but calls for coverage of family planning and unspecified "pregnancy-related services."

"There are people on both sides with very strongly held feelings who would like this plan either explicitly to say abortion is covered or must be mandated and ... people on the other side who say abortion should be prohibited and absolutely eliminated," Hillary Clinton said in a Sept. 24 interview with CBS News.

"We're not going to make people on the extremes of this issue happy," she added. "I think we're striking the right balance."

At a Sept. 23 town-hall meeting in Tampa, Fla., a nurse told the president that he was "personally and morally involving me in the abortion issue by using my tax dollars."

"We are also personally and morally improving preventive and primary-care services," Clinton responded.



President Bill Clinton shares a laugh with his wife, Hillary, and Tipper Gore during a Sept. 23 kickoff rally for his health-care reform plan.

Catholic officials found much to praise in the Clinton health-care reform plan, but worried that the inclusion of abortion coverage could sink the long-awaited reforms.

"The president has set the terms of the debate and demonstrated the bold presidential leadership that is required to elevate health-care reform to a national priority," said John E. Curley Jr., president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association of the United States.

"CHA applauds President Clinton for his courage in taking the first step on what will be, no doubt, an arduous

journey of a thousand miles," said Sister Maryanna Coyle, president of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, who chairs CHA's board of trustees.

The U.S. bishops were generally positive toward the plan, but expressed bitter disappointment that it proposed to cover abortion.

"The plan outlined by President Clinton ... is a major step forward in several important respects, particularly in its strong commitment to universal access," said Auxiliary Bishop John H. Ricard of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Domestic Policy Committee.

"However, it is a tragic step backward in its inclusion of abortion coverage as an integral part of national health-care reform," he added.

Bishop Ricard also expressed reservations about the plan's exclusion of migrant farmworkers and undocumented immigrants.

The administration's 240-page booklet describing Clinton's American Health Security Act of 1993 contains many of the elements called for by the U.S. bishops and by the Catholic Health Association in its Proposal for

Systemic Health Care Reform.

It calls for universal health-care coverage for all U.S. citizens and legal residents, and a comprehensive package of medical benefits including most medically necessary services by hospitals and doctors; prescriptions; dental and vision care for those under 18; and limited mental-health and long-term care coverage.

The plan would be administered by regional or corporate health alliances that would not be permitted to exclude anyone in their areas. If a person changes jobs or moves, he or she would be covered by the former health plan until enrolled in a new alliance.

Every employer would be obliged to pay at least 80 percent of the cost of health-care coverage for each employee, with the workers paying the rest.

Government subsidies for the unemployed and for certain small businesses would be financed through increased taxes on cigarettes and a 1 percent payroll surcharge on corporate alliances to fund medical research.

Catechism due by year's end

VATICAN CITY — It will be the end of the year before the English-language edition of the "Catechism of the Catholic Church" is published, according to North American bishops visiting Rome for meetings with Pope John Paul II.

"By the end of the year would seem to me to be the quickest you could expect it now," said Cardinal Bernard F. Law of Boston, who was assigned by the Vatican to oversee the original English translation.

The English-speaking bishops' conferences still have not received Vatican-approved copies of the English text, Cardinal Law told Catholic News Service Sept. 22. Once they do, it will take another six to eight weeks for printed and bound copies to reach bookstores.

The cardinal was in Rome for his *ad limina* visit, which bishops make every five years.

Canadian bishops were in the city a week earlier for their *ad limina* visits. They said it was clear from meetings with the doctrinal and clergy congregations that the publication of the English text could come after the first anniversary of Pope John Paul II's formal presentation of the catechism to the world.

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