



AP/Wide World Photos
A woman religious dances and cheers along with several thousand African National Congress supporters as ANC President Nelson Mandela arrives at an April 18 election rally in the Karoo town of Aliwal North.

South Africa's bishops call for calm during historic elections

By Bronwen Dachs
Catholic News Service

PRETORIA, South Africa — South Africa's bishops appealed for calm during a deadly wave of bombings in the final hours before the beginning of South Africa's historic elections.

Calling the bombings "despicable acts of faceless slaughter," they urged the perpetrators to "come to their senses," noting that they would receive "the condemnation of the world and the judgment of God."

Although no one claimed responsibility for the blasts which had killed 19 people as of April 25 and wounded scores, the African National Congress said it suspected right-wing whites who were boycotting the April 26-28 poll.

"Nothing will stand in the way of the forthcoming elections. The majority in our country have chosen the way of negotiation, democracy and peace," said the statement by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Conference.

"Tragedies like this instill fear. We call on all not to overreact and to maintain calm," they said.

A Pittsburgh priest in South Africa to monitor the elections expressed optimism about the vote.

Father Donald McIlvane, who was monitoring elections in Port Shepstone, in Natal province, said he did not expect polling conditions to be perfect, but "they will be much more peaceful than they would have been" if the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party headed by Mangosuthu Buthelezi had stuck to its planned boycott of the election.

Buthelezi's April 19 decision to participate "eased a lot of tensions and fears" in Port Shepstone, which has been rocked by the political killings that have ravaged Natal and KwaZulu, he said.

"People are very excited about voting; I think there will be a big turnout," said Father McIlvane, who was participating as a member of the Ecumenical Monitoring Program in South Africa.

Nation evokes contradictory images of Richard M. Nixon

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Disgraced into resigning the presidency but eulogized as a distinguished statesman, Richard M. Nixon was a friend of Catholic cardinals who backed many church-supported ideals. But he also included a priest-congressman on his famous "enemies list."

The nation's contradictory images of the late president were mirrored by the impressions of Mr. Nixon from 35 years worth of Catholic news stories on him. Mr. Nixon, a Quaker, lost the 1960 presidential race to John F. Kennedy, the first Catholic sent to the White House. When he was elected president himself eight years later, Mr. Nixon began hosting weekly religious services in the White House, met several times with Pope Paul VI, and had a Jesuit on his speechwriting staff.

Mr. Nixon died April 22 at the age of 81. His funeral was to be held in his hometown of Yorba Linda, Calif., April 27 with full presidential honors. A national day of mourning was declared by President Clinton.

"For 30 years we've been trying to figure out Richard Nixon's demons," said Father Robert Drinan, SJ, who as a congressman in 1973 filed the first resolution of impeachment against Mr. Nixon.

While noting that Mr. Nixon "had many virtues," including the way he treated his family and a relatively liberal approach to social welfare politics, Father Drinan acknowledged that even two decades after they both left elected politics he had trouble separating his feelings about Mr. Nixon.

"I can't be objective," said Father Drinan, now a law professor at Georgetown University. "He put me on his enemies list." At the height of criticism for his handling of the Watergate break-in, Mr. Nixon compiled a list of White House enemies including journalists, members of Congress and others he believed were out to get him.

Years after Mr. Nixon resigned the presidency in 1974 amid impeachment hearings in the wake of the Watergate coverup, his close friend, the Rev. Billy Graham, said the real Mr. Nixon "was the one we knew before Watergate and know now."

"I don't know how he got into the trap of Watergate and I don't think he knows," the Rev. Graham said in 1986.

When Mr. Nixon resigned, another friend, now-retired Cardinal John J. Krol of Philadelphia, was president of the U.S. Catholic Conference. The cardinal said at the time: "His resignation is indeed saddening. It terminates the presidency of a man who, whatever his strengths and weaknesses were, entered office with the intention of serving the best interests of the nation."

Mr. Nixon was a supporter of Catholic education who not only backed tax credits for parents whose children attended parochial schools, but contributed more than \$6,000 to Philadelphia's archdiocesan schools after he left office.

But his address to the Knights of Columbus annual convention in 1972 in which he pledged support for parochial schools was denounced by other educators as "a crass political maneuver to capture the Catholic vote."

He twice went to the Vatican as president for audiences with Pope Paul VI.

As president, Mr. Nixon decided not to establish full diplomatic relations with

the Vatican, but named Henry Cabot Lodge as his envoy.

Two prominent priests were members of Mr. Nixon's staff. John McLaughlin, then a Jesuit priest, was part of Mr. Nixon's White House speech-writing team. McLaughlin now hosts a television political commentary program. The late Sulpician Father John F. Cronin, a prolific writer on Catholic social thought, also served as one of Mr. Nixon's speech-writers in the 1950s.

Another Mr. Nixon friend, Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh, was named to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. The University of Notre Dame, where Father Hesburgh was president, honored Mr. Nixon with its Patriotism Award in 1960.

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