

WORLD & NATION



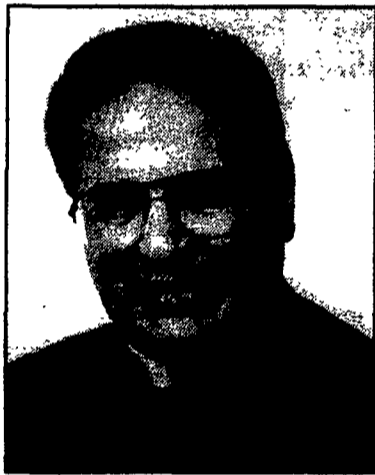
Reuters/CNS

MASS AMONG RUINS

Cardinal Vinko Puljic of Sarajevo celebrates Mass at the ruins of a Catholic church in the town of Gornja Dubica in Bosnia Herzegovina March 23. Croats expelled by Serbs during the war are now returning to their homes.

Members of 12 groups face excommunication

LINCOLN, Neb. (CNS) — Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz of Lincoln has formally warned Catholic members of groups supporting legal abortion or euthanasia that they will be automatically excommunicated if their membership continues after May 15.



Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz

The penalties apply to members of Planned Parenthood, the Hemlock Society, Catholics for a Free Choice, Call to Action or its Nebraska chapter, traditionalist groups that do not support church reforms since Vatican II, and groups affiliated with the Freemasons, the bishop said.

"Membership in these organizations or groups is always perilous to the Catholic faith and most often is totally incompatible with the Catholic faith," said an announcement published March 22 in the *Southern Nebraska Register*, Lincoln diocesan newspaper.

The announcement, called "extra-synodal legislation," was dated March 19 and signed by Msgr. Timothy Thorburn, chancellor of the Lincoln Diocese, "by mandate of" Bishop Bruskewitz.

It said any Catholics "in or of the Diocese of Lincoln who attain or retain membership" in any of the organizations after April 15 are automatically "under interdict and are absolutely forbidden to receive holy Communion."

"Contumacious persistence in such membership for one month following the interdict on part of any such Catholics will by that very fact (*ipso facto latae sententiae*) cause them to be excommunicated," it added.

The Latin phrase "*ipso facto latae sententiae*" means "by that very fact the sentence will be carried out."

Publication of the notice by the *Southern Nebraska Register* should be considered "a formal canonical warning," it said.

In an editorial accompanying the notice, the newspaper said the move was a "service of clarification" by the bishop.

"Because certain organizations have been, either directly or indirectly, asserting that membership in them does not contradict membership in the Catholic Church ..., our bishop has found it necessary to dissipate ambiguity and overcome any confusion in the minds of Catholics in the Diocese of Lincoln about these matters," the editorial said.

"Despite the fact that the anti-Catholicism of most of these organizations and groups is frequently open and apparent, some of their members and leaders have been trying to sell their evils to the unwary and uninformed, and sometimes to give the impression that the Catholic Church is divided or undecided about some of these groups and organizations," it added.

The editorial said the bishop "has told us that he would feel he had failed in his office (as bishop) and in his duty to protect the Catholic faith, unless he acted as he did."

The action was taken "only after the bishop engaged in extensive consultation over many months with innumerable inquiries and discussions," the editorial said.

The groups named by Bishop Bruskewitz were: Planned Parenthood, Society of St. Pius X, Hemlock Society, Call to Action, Call to Action Nebraska, St. Michael the Archangel Chapel, Freemasons, Job's Daughters, DeMolay, Eastern Star, Rainbow Girls, and Catholics for a Free Choice.

The Hemlock Society works to legalize physician-assisted suicide, and Planned Parenthood and Catholics for a Free Choice both support legal abortion.

Job's Daughters, DeMolay, Eastern Star and Rainbow Girls all are affiliated with the Masons. The Society of St. Pius X and St. Michael the Archangel Chapel both oppose the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

Msgr. James D. Dawson, vicar general of the diocese, said the bishop's action was prompted in part by the formation of a Nebraska chapter of Call to Action.

Call to Action, a Chicago-based organization, opposes church teaching on artificial birth control and supports married priests, women's ordination and greater lay participation in church leadership.

Sheila Daley, Call to Action co-director, said Bishop Bruskewitz's action "violates the most basic principles of justice."

"It is the sort of bully boy tactic that makes the church incredible in the eyes of many reasonable people," she said.

Human Life International, a pro-life group based in Maryland, praised Bishop Bruskewitz for his "courageous act of leadership" and urged bishops throughout the world to follow suit by taking strong action against church dissenters.

1996 MILESTONES

A Tribute to Vocations in the Catholic Church

Publication Date: April 18, 1996 ■ Deadline: April 9, 1996

Today, in a time when religious vocations and marriages are being challenged, it is important to recognize, honor and salute those who have lived their vocations — either in service to the church or in marriage. With its April 18 edition, the *Catholic Courier* will publish its special Milestones section, which will highlight priests, sisters, brothers and married couples celebrating 25, 50, 60 and 65+ years of devotion to their vocations. This special section will also feature biographical sketches of priests retiring from duties in 1996.

This special section will honor the significant achievements of priests, sisters, brothers special jubilees of their vocations. It will provide biographical sketches of those in the diocese celebrating such milestones, and will focus on their vocations as models for others considering priesthood or religious life. Couples celebrating significant anniversaries of their marriage will also be included to highlight the importance of marital vocations in the Catholic Church.

You can salute individuals and couples celebrating anniversaries and jubilees in 1996, offering your testimony to the importance of vocations.

This special section will salute the priests listed below, 44 women religious and more than 200 married couples celebrating wedding anniversaries.

Retiring Priests:

- ♦ Rev. Emmett J. Halloran, St. Patrick's, Macedon
- ♦ Rev. Daniel P. Tormey, St. Joseph, Scottsville
- ♦ Rev. Joseph P. Brennan, University of Rochester

60-Year Jubilarians:

- ♦ Rev. Austin B. Hanna, Retired
- ♦ Rev. Elmer W. Heindl, St. Charles Borromeo
- ♦ Rev. Robert F. McNamara, Archivist, St. Thomas the Apostle
- ♦ Rev. James F. O'Connell, Holy Trinity

50-Year Jubilarians:

- ♦ Rev. John P. Norris, St. Catherine of Siena

25-Year Jubilarians:

- ♦ Rev. Peter T. Bayer, Chaplain, St. Anne's Home
- ♦ Rev. Donald J. Curtiss, Chaplain, Strong Memorial
- ♦ Rev. P. Frederick Helfrich, Chaplain, St. Mary's Hospital

Religious Women:

- ♦ 1 Franciscan Sister of Allegany
- ♦ 33 Sisters of St. Joseph
- ♦ School Sisters of Notre Dame
- ♦ 10 Sisters of Mercy

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