

WORLD & NATION

Archbishop bars public dissenters from ministries

By Catholic News Service

OMAHA, Neb. — Archbishop Elden F. Curtiss of Omaha has barred Catholics of his archdiocese from church ministries and offices if they publicly support abortion or euthanasia or publicly dissent from church teaching on women's ordination.

Catholics are also forbidden to be active Masons, he added.

He did not, however, legislate penalties of interdict and excommunication for Catholics belonging to certain Masonic and other groups, as Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz did a month earlier in the neighboring Diocese of Lincoln.

In a three-page letter April 22, read at all weekend Masses April 27-28, Archbishop Curtiss warned that "any Catholics in this archdiocese who publicly support abortion or euthanasia may not be in any teaching, ministerial or liturgical ministry or be a member of any parish or archdiocesan council."

He called the papal teaching that women cannot be ordained priests "a doctrinal matter for the whole church."

"Therefore, Catholics who publicly disagree with this papal teaching are in



Reuters/CNS

Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Neb., warned Catholics in his diocese in March they will be excommunicated if they belonged to several groups opposed to church teachings on such topics as abortion and euthanasia. Archbishop Elden F. Curtiss of Omaha banned public advocates of abortion and euthanasia from church ministries and offices April 22.

dissent against the teaching magisterium of the church. They may not be in any teaching, liturgical or ministerial role in this archdiocese or be a member of any parish or archdiocesan council," he wrote.

He also urged Catholics to support the requirement of celibacy for priests of the Latin rite.

He acknowledged that mandatory celibacy is a disciplinary rather than doctrinal requirement for priests but added, "it will continue to be a necessary condition for seeking ordination because of its value to the whole church."

He said the Omaha Archdiocese and its parishes value and practice lay consultation, but "the selection of bishops is quite another matter. ... Those who promote a popular vote for the selection of bishops either do not understand the process or they want to assert their own authority over that of the bishops to nominate and even choose their own candidates."

Archbishop Curtiss said that while the Catholic-Masonic antagonism of the past has subsided, "there are still differences in fundamental principles and perspective which cannot be dismissed." Church

opposition to Catholic membership in the Masons, reiterated by the Vatican in 1983, remains, he said.

"Catholics cannot be active members of the Masonic Lodge in this archdiocese or anywhere else in the world," he said.

In his letter the archbishop attached the restrictions on ministry, teaching or membership in church councils only to Catholics who publicly support abortion or euthanasia or publicly oppose church teaching on ordination of women.

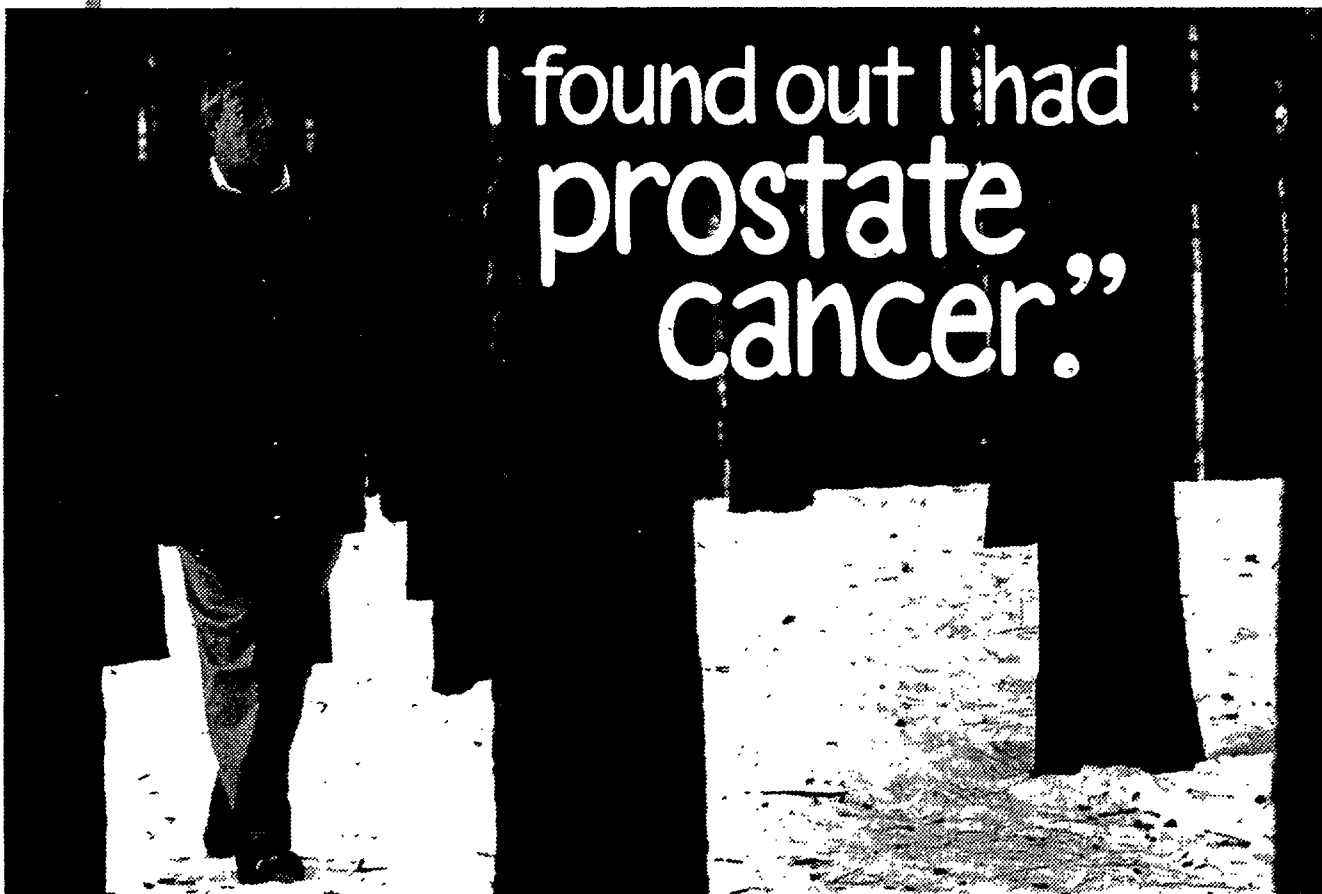
He closed with an invitation to Catholics who want more information or dialogue on any issues raised in his letter to "please write to me at the chancery ... and I will make sure that you have a response."

In a brief statement April 25, Bishop Bruskewitz called Archbishop Curtiss "a skilled and experienced pastor ... motivated by the most profound pastoral charity and concern for his flock."

"Situations differ from one place to another in pastoral and ecclesial dimensions, therefore it is not proper for me to comment further on his actions, which seem admirable," Bishop Bruskewitz added.

"The loneliest I ever felt was when

I found out I had
prostate
cancer."



"I was devastated. I felt like I was the only one in the world. Then I met other men who'd been through prostate cancer. They became a great source of strength and support. After my operation, I wanted to repay them. So I headed up a men's support group through Cancer Action. I never imagined I'd need United Way. Thanks for your help."



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