

WORLD & NATION

Bishops decry church fires, abortion

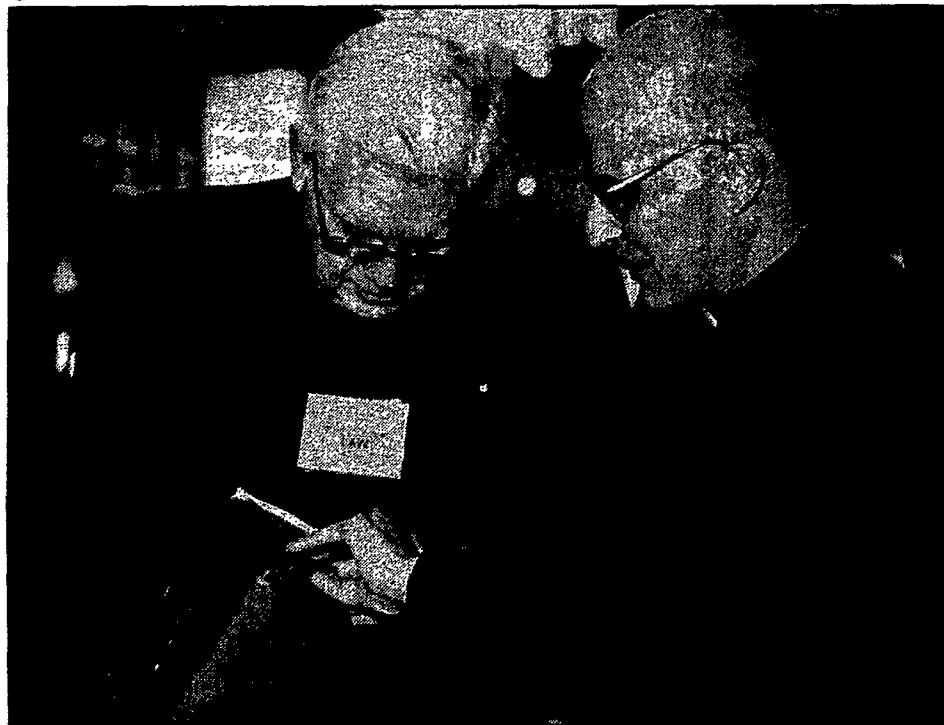
By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

PORTLAND, Ore. — The nation's Catholic bishops deplored partial-birth abortions and the burning of black churches at their spring meeting in Portland June 20-22.

Bishop Anthony M. Pilla of Cleveland, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that election-year accusations of partisanship will not deter the bishops from applying Catholic social teachings to public policy issues facing the nation in the months to come.

The bishops also:

- Moved closer to completion of an entirely revised Sacramentary in English.
 - Voted to ask Vatican permission to allow Catholic funeral Masses in the presence of cremated remains.
 - Approved creation of a national office to coordinate Catholic preparations for the third millennium, but must vote by mail on initial funding for the office.
 - Approved a one-time national collection in Catholic parishes as a special gift to Pope John Paul II on the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination.
 - Continued discussions on restructuring the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and U.S. Catholic Conference.
 - Contributed \$50,000 from NCCB reserves to a national interreligious campaign to assist congregations victimized by the recent spate of church burnings across the country, most of them directed at black or racially mixed churches.
 - Discussed examples of diocesan vocations programs as part of their three-year national vocations strategy.
 - Heard an update from Bishop John F. Kinney of St. Cloud, Minn., on the work of his Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse.
 - Marked the 150th anniversary of the Portland Archdiocese by concelebrating their Saturday evening closing Mass at Portland's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.
- On their final day the bishops met in an executive session closed to the media. Some bishops said afterward that top-



Denise Hogan/CNS
Boston Cardinal Bernard Law (left) and Portland Archbishop Francis George open a box of checks earmarked for a church destroyed recently by arson in Portland. The bishops personally donated nearly \$10,000 to the church.

ics during that session included a discussion of how bishops can advance women's role in the church within the framework of existing laws and policies, and a talk by Jesuit theologian Father Avery Dulles on the doctrinal status of the papally affirmed teaching that the church is not able to ordain women to the priesthood.

Bishop Pilla opened the meeting with a major talk on the bishops' role in public policy debates in an election year.

He said the bishops will not back down from spelling out positions based on principles of morality and social justice just because some will accuse them of partisanship when their position is closer to that of one party or the other on a particular issue.

His point was driven home a short time later as he issued a statement, with the unanimous concurrence of the body of bishops, calling on Congress to override

President Clinton's April veto of the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

Cardinal Bernard F. Law of Boston, who introduced the statement as chairman of the NCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, reported that his office has distributed some 9 million sets of three postcards to promote a postcard campaign urging legislators to override the veto. (See accompanying story.)

Shortly before the June meeting began, four committees of bishops met to develop a joint statement decrying the racial and religious prejudice behind the recent spate of arson attacks on churches, mainly with black or racially mixed congregations.

The bishops urged Catholics to support victimized congregations, including making contributions to a Burned Churches Fund coordinated by the National Council of Churches in New York.

Groups push veto override

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Nearly nine million postcard sets have been ordered for the Project Life Postcard Campaign 1996, a nationwide effort to get Congress to override President Clinton's April 10 veto of a bill banning the partial-birth abortion procedure.

The campaign targeting members of Congress is set to begin the weekend of June 29-30. It is co-sponsored by the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, a grassroots Catholic pro-life group, and the U.S. Bishops Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

The Diocese of Rochester is joining in the effort by urging people to pray about the issue, write letters to the editor in local newspapers and call or write to both Senators Alfonse D'Amato and Patrick Moynihan to thank them for supporting an override of the veto, and to congressional representatives — especially Louise Slaughter and Maurice Hinchey, who voted against the ban — urging them to support an override.

The diocese is also making available postcards as part of the nationwide campaign. Individuals interested in receiving postcards should contact Suzanne Schmittman at the Pastoral Center, 716/328-3210; Scarlett Stevens at Finger Lakes Social Ministry, 315/789-2686; or Kathy Dubel at Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, 607/734-9784.

In addition to the postcard campaign, the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities and the pro-life secretariat have called for a National Day of Prayer and Fasting for Life to be observed July 11.

"We feel it would be most appropriate to urge all Catholics to pray as Congress prepares for a veto-override vote on partial-birth abortions," said Boston Cardinal Bernard F. Law, chairman of the committee, in a June 6 letter to bishops.

CALENDAR

All Diocesan

Education

■ AUG 2-3 — Convention: Regional Catholic homeschooling gathering; Syracuse; Jim Likoudis, Steve Wood, Mary Kay Clark, speakers; for more information, call Jackie Spilinger, 315/689-1394.

Social Activities

■ June 29-30 — Annual lawn fete: Sacred Heart Church, 15 Sumner St., Batavia; June 29, 2 p.m., bingo; 8 p.m.-midnight, music by Buffalo Jacks; June 30, noon, chicken barbecue, golabki; 3-7 p.m., music by Happy Richie's Polka Band, 8 p.m.-midnight by Bedrock Boys.

Livingston County

Fundraiser

■ SAT, JUNE 29 — Community craft and yard sale: St.

Columba Church, 198 North St., Caledonia; 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; refreshments.

Monroe County

Social Activities

■ SUN, JUNE 30 — Monthly meeting: Catholic Golden Age Association, Prince of Peace Chapter; 2 p.m.; Christ the King Parish Hall, 445 Kings Hwy. S., Rochester; lawyer Anthony Leavy will present an update on legislation affecting seniors; guests welcome.

■ FRI, JUNE 28 — Luncheon: "Last Friday Series"; sponsored by Catholic Leadership Forum for young Catholics; 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m.; University Club, 26 Broadway, Rochester; Father Lee P. Chase, speaker; "What It's Like to be a Young Priest Today"; \$10; call Nancy Nash, 716/328-3210.

■ FRI, JUNE 28 — Reservations due: for 23rd annual Whackers and Hackers Invitational Golf Tournament July 12; sponsored by St. John Fish-

er College alumni; Shadow Pines and Shadow Lake golf clubs, Penfield; \$68 registration fee; car and cash prizes awarded for hole-in-one contest; for information call Ann-Marie Sturtz, 716/385-8001.

■ FRI, JUNE 28 — Reservations due: for July 13 softball tournament at Gary Beikirch Veterans Park, Long Pond Road, Greece; men's, women's divisions; \$125 fee per team; to benefit Journey Home, Inc., comfort-care home planned for Greece; sponsored by Bartolomeo Funeral Home; call Bill Padulo, 716/254-5400.

■ SAT, JUNE 29 — Buffalo Zoo Day: 9 a.m.; meet at Southtown Plaza, Henrietta, under sign; sponsored by St. Thomas More Singles' Club for ages 21 and over; for information call Anne, 716/482-5656.

■ FRI, JULY 5 — Dinner-bingo night: dinner, 3:30 p.m.; Marriott, 1890 W. Ridge Rd., Greece; bingo, 6:15 p.m.; St. Cecilia's, 2763 Culver Rd.; sponsored by St. Thomas More Singles' Club; for information, call Anne, 716/482-5656.

■ UNTIL JULY 15 — Contest applications: accepted for

Sept. 28 Miss Polonia Contest at St. Stanislaus Auditorium, Hudson Avenue and Norton Street, Rochester; sponsored by Polonia Civic Centre Inc. of Rochester; seeking candidates 15-20 years old, of Polish ancestry and living in Monroe County; call Valenteen Palis at 716/266-3144 or Irene Peters, 467-3398; prizes of \$1,000, \$500 and \$200.

Fundraisers

■ MON, JULY 22 — Golf tournament: Kids Adjusting Through Support second annual open; Blue Heron Hills Country Club; Flaum/Christ Builders of Frontier Field are major sponsors; featuring Rochester Amerks, Knights, Raging Rhinos; \$100 fee (\$125 after July 1) including lunch, dinner, foursome with hole sponsorship \$500 before July 1; call Dr. Michael Henrichs, 716/232-5287.

Seneca Cayuga

Religious Activity

■ JUNE 27-29 — Summer festival: St. Patrick's Church, 97 W. Bayard St., Seneca Falls; 5 p.m. dinners, 6 p.m. festival opens with food, family games, entertainment available; disc jockey Bob Bachman 7-10 p.m. Thursday; Karvel the Magician 6:30 p.m., Community Band 8 p.m. Friday; Finger Lakes Rhythm Cloggers 7 p.m. Saturday followed by Country 5 Plus 18-11 p.m.

■ FRI, JUNE 28 — Divorced/Separated/Bereaved: Group of Greater Seneca County; 6 p.m.; St. Paul's Episcopal Church Parish House, 101 E. William St., Waterloo; call Carl and Alma, 315/539-2284.

Tompkins Tioga

Health Event

■ TUE, JULY 2 — Blood drive: 12:30-4:40 p.m.; St. Patrick's Church hall, 300 Main St., Owego; for appointment, call 607/687-3802.