

# WORLD & NATION

## Bishops tackle liturgy, young adult proposals

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Opening what may be their last meeting as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Catholic Conference, the U.S. bishops looked back to the priestly ordination of Pope John Paul II 50 years ago and ahead to the future of the priesthood and of young adult ministry in the church.

Bishop Anthony M. Pilla of Cleveland, NCCB-USCC president, began the meeting Nov. 11 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington with an address on the challenges confronting priests in the 50th anniversary year of the pope's ordination.

"So many negative images of priests are carelessly, even heartlessly spread around, that today I believe it both a duty and a joy to speak words of affirmation and reaffirmation to our priests," said Bishop Pilla, who challenged his fellow prelates to be more collaborative with their priests, to "truly empower our priests in their ministry."

The first morning of the Nov. 11-14 meeting also featured preliminary discussion of a pastoral plan for ministry with young adults, norms for Catholic higher education, guidelines for televising the liturgy, a new statement of guidelines for the reception of Communion and a proposed statement of economic justice principles.

Further debate and a vote on those items were scheduled for later in the meeting.

But much of the meeting promised to be devoted to liturgy decisions and to plans for restructuring the NCCB and USCC, the bishops' twin national conferences.

The meeting's first votes were on liturgical texts for the proper Masses for dioceses of the United States to be included in the U.S. Sacramentary and on segment 7 of the general Sacramentary as proposed for use throughout the English-speaking world. The Sacramentary is the book of Mass prayers and instructions used at the president's chair and at the altar.

The bishops approved the texts for the proper Masses and segment 7. Segment 8, the final segment of the Sacramentary, was to be voted on later in the meeting. The new Sacramentary must be submitted to

Rome for final approval.

The 1996 meeting could be the last one the bishops conduct as NCCB-USCC. One of the restructuring proposals calls for merging the two conferences into one and renaming it the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, or USCCB.

Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago, who chairs the bishops' ad hoc Committee on Mission and Structure, was to have presented the restructuring proposals but was too ill to attend the Washington meeting due to cancer.

The restructuring recommendations include a proposal to merge the two conferences into one, a proposal to have fewer committee heads and more regional representatives on the Administrative Committee, and a proposal to set aside more time before and during national meetings for informational exchange and discussion or for regional sessions.

The 76-page draft document on young adult ministry is titled "Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Ministry With Young Adults." Developed by the bishops' Committee on the Laity after national and diocesan consultations with young adults, it seeks to address spiritual and pastoral issues young adults face as they enter new stages in education, work, independence, family relationships and their place in society.

It discusses the tasks young adults face in developing their personal identity, their relationships, their spiritual life and their understanding of the meaning of work.

"A Catholic Framework for Economic Life" is a statement jointly proposed by the bishops' domestic and international policy committees.

It seeks to boil down to 10 short statements the ethical framework Catholics should use "as principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and directions for action" in the world of work and economic life.

The proposed statement comes 10 years after the bishops' landmark pastoral letter, "Liberty and Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy."



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## Pope releases doves

Pope John Paul II releases doves from the central balcony of St. Peter's facade Nov. 10, closing 10 days of ceremonies and celebrations marking his 50 years as a priest.

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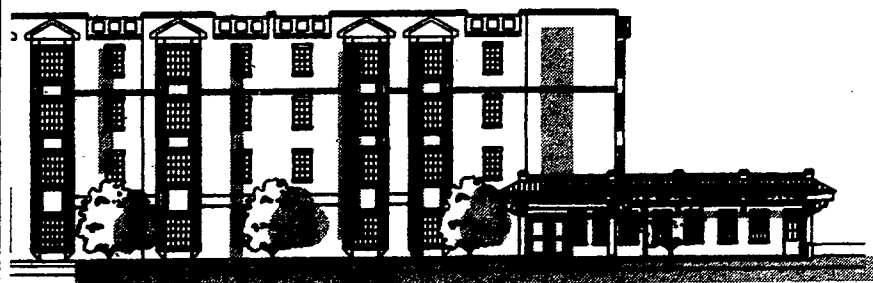
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