

WORLD & NATION

Bishops to revise education document

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education has asked the U.S. bishops to redraft their proposed U.S. document to implement Vatican norms for Catholic higher education.

Bishop Anthony M. Pilla of Cleveland, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, has appointed a subcommittee headed by Cardinal Anthony J. Bevilacqua of Philadelphia to work on the revision.

The bishops approved an implementation document last November and submitted it to Rome for the necessary Vatican approval.

The bishops' conference announced in a news release May 27 that Cardinal Pio Laghi, prefect of the Vatican congregation, expressed "profound gratitude" for the work that went into that document but asked for a "second draft" that would include:

- The addition of "essential elements" of a mission statement.
- Juridical elements the congregation regards as necessary for "an effective functioning institutionally of Catholic universities as university and as Catholic in all aspects of their organization, life and activity."
- Additional attention to Canon 812 of the Code of Canon Law, which says that teachers of the theological disciplines in Catholic higher education need "a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authority" to teach.

He suggested that revisions be made before the document goes to the Vatican Congregation for Bishops, which is to give final approval of the document.

The news release said the cardinal also asked for more study of the U.S. bishops' 1989 document, "Doctrinal Responsibilities: Approaches to Promoting Cooperation and Resolving Misunderstandings Between Bishops and Theologians."

The implementation norms that the

bishops submitted to Rome said the procedures spelled out in "Doctrinal Responsibilities" should be used if a situation occurs in which a bishop, as primary teacher and guardian of the faith, believes that a faculty member of a Catholic institution is teaching views contrary to or dangerous to the faith.

According to the news release, Cardinal Laghi gave Bishop Pilla a letter with four pages of observations on the proposed implementation norms when Bishop Pilla and other NCCB officials were in Rome in May for meetings with Vatican officials.

The news release carried some quotations from the observations. But an NCCB spokeswoman, Mercy Sister Mary Ann Walsh, said the full text would not be released.

Appointed to Cardinal Bevilacqua's subcommittee were Cardinal Adam J. Maida of Detroit; Bishop Thomas G. Doran of Rockford, Ill.; Bishop Raymond L. Burke of La Crosse, Wis.; and Msgr. John Alessandro, an episcopal vicar of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y.

The subcommittee is to serve under the bishops' Ad Hoc "Ex Corde Ecclesiae" Implementation Committee, headed by Bishop John J. Leibrecht of Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Mo.

"Ex Corde Ecclesiae" ("From the Heart of the Church") is Pope John Paul II's 1990 Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities. It established worldwide norms for Catholic institutions of higher learning and called on bishops' conferences to develop implementing norms at the national level.

In a memo to bishops and Catholic academic leaders about revision of the U.S. implementation, Bishop Leibrecht said he and several bishops on the implementation committee have scheduled a meeting with Cardinal Laghi and the staff of his congregation to discuss the matter.

He expressed hopes that the contacts and dialogues on "Ex Corde Ecclesiae" between bishops and those in Catholic higher education would continue.

Such dialogues were started during the development of the U.S. implementation norms, and many bishops and educators said the mutual trust and understanding that emerged from the dialogues were among the most important results of the effort to implement the papal document.

In his memo Bishop Leibrecht said the new subcommittee "is asked specifically to look at several canonical issues included within the observations from the Congregation for Catholic Education."

But he said that "Ex Corde Ecclesiae" itself — which addressed broader issues of the mission and identity of Catholic higher education as well as juridical norms — "remains the guiding document for our conversations."

He added, "Continuing dialogues on the identity and mission of Catholic colleges and universities do not, at this time, directly depend upon the completion of this recent request from the Congregation for Catholic Education.... 'Ex Corde Ecclesiae' offers insights and challenges for local dialogues and professional associations which can be constructively addressed now."

The implementation document the Vatican returned for revision was approved by the bishops last November 22-4-6.

Throughout its five-plus years of development, questions of the ecclesiastical mandate to teach theology and the bishop's relationship to the university and its internal governance came up repeatedly as the most controversial and crucial elements to be dealt with in any implementation action.

As the document was developed, Cardinal Bevilacqua was among the sharpest critics of what he regarded as its failure to address the requirements of Canon 812.

He accepted the document in November after it was amended, at his request, to incorporate a footnote saying the NCCB would study Canon 812's requirements further.

There are more than 230 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. They have an enrollment of more than 630,000 students.



CNS/Reuters

Papal blessing

The image of Pope John Paul II is projected onto a screen in Wroclaw, Poland, June 1, as he blesses the congregation during a Mass marking the conclusion of the 46th International Eucharistic Congress.

Father Greeley cites studies of Catholic schools' quality

WASHINGTON — More than three decades of research have failed to turn up bad news on Catholic schools, said sociologist Father Andrew Greeley.

"I'm not a Catholic educator. I'm an outsider. If I report good things about Catholic schools, it's because the data constrains me to," Father Greeley told Catholic educators attending a conference on the future of Catholic schools May 30 at The Catholic University of America.

Father Greeley, director of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago and a professor at the University of Arizona, said Catholic educators "can't pretend the good news doesn't exist. They should celebrate and ask, how can we move forward?"

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