

Cardinal Mahony demands apology

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — Cardinal Roger M. Mahony was still seeking a satisfactory response from Mother Angelica of the Eternal Word Television Network for her nationally broadcast attacks on his pastoral letter on Sunday Mass, said the cardinal's press spokesman, Capuchin Father Gregory Coiro.

He said Feb. 3 that he knew of no new developments since early December, when Cardinal Mahony, who heads the Los Angeles Archdiocese, wrote Mother Angelica a five-page letter demanding a straightforward apology and retraction.

The cardinal said if that did not happen he would be forced to pursue a complaint through the Holy See because "I could not allow my teaching authority and good name in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to be impugned publicly."

He sent a copy of his letter to the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

The conflict began Nov. 12 when Mother Angelica, on her nationally syndicated cable television show, "Mother Angelica Live," accused Cardinal Mahony of denying the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

"I'm afraid my obedience in that diocese would be absolutely zero. And I hope everybody else's in that diocese is zero," she said.

When Cardinal Mahony demanded a public clarification and apology, she responded Nov. 18 with a one-hour TV commentary in which she apologized at the beginning but went on to criticize the cardinal's pastoral at length, repeatedly saying that she found it confusing.

In his Dec. 1 letter Cardinal Mahony said he would have been "quite satisfied



with the apology had she stopped there.

"However," he said, "I believe that your apology was so diluted by your continuing commentary that any ordinary viewer would have found my pastoral letter to be at best confusing and at worst somehow a dangerous teaching document."

"You yourself used the words 'confused' and 'confusing' at least 30 times during the course of that segment, leaving no doubt that you disapproved of the pastoral letter."

Father Coiro released the text of the cardinal's letter to Catholic News Service Feb. 2. He said the cardinal gave permission to release it to journalists who asked for it after *The Wanderer*, a national Catholic newspaper, quoted portions of it in a story in January.

In the letter Cardinal Mahony asked Mother Angelica to work with Bishop

David E. Foley of Birmingham, Ala., where EWTN is located, to draw up "a brief, written statement of retraction and apology that would be read without any further comment or commentary."

He said "essential elements" of the apology would include an acknowledgment that she misjudged the pastoral letter "and you do not question my firm belief in the full nature of the Eucharist, nor my teachings about the Eucharist."

He said it was also essential that she say she does not invite people to disobey their bishop and that it is not within her competence to do so.

"The Holy Father is the only competent authority in the church empowered to do that," he wrote.

Father Coiro told CNS that it is a violation of church law to incite Catholics to disobey their bishop. He said that in Mother Angelica's "so-called apology program, she didn't seem to realize the seriousness of the violations."

In light of the wide dissemination of Mother Angelica's earlier criticisms, Cardinal Mahony said he expected that an apology and retraction would be broadcast "on at least four different occasions" before Christmas.

"It is my fond hope and desire that this matter can be handled in this way, discreetly and without further public comment by you or by me," he said.

But he added that if a satisfactory apology and retraction were not forthcoming, he would have "no choice" but to "pursue the case before the Holy See."

EWTN President R. William Steltemeier, contacted by telephone Feb. 3 for comment on Cardinal Mahony's complaint, said he had "no comment, no comment whatsoever."

Mother Angelica proclaims healing



BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (CNS) — Mother Angelica, founder of the Eternal Word Television Network, reported that leg and back pains that have kept her in braces for the past 40 years were healed after a prayer

session that included a recitation of the rosary.

Mother Angelica, 74, disclosed the healing Jan. 29 on "Life on the Rock," a youth-oriented talk show that is shown on the EWTN cable channel. The healing took place the day before the program was broadcast, she said.

On her own EWTN show, "Mother Angelica Live," she always has been seen seated. On "Life on the Rock" she was seen walking a few steps unaided as she was introduced to a standing ovation from the studio audience. She also stood with program host Jeff Cavins for the length of the show's first segment.

Born Rita Rizzo in Canton, Ohio, in 1923, Mother Angelica suffered spinal injuries affecting her back and legs in an accident when she was a nun in Ohio.

Despite successful surgery, she had worn a brace on her left leg for 40 years. She started using crutches, and other braces on her right leg and back, four to five years ago, she said. Because the braces stayed hidden underneath Mother Angelica's habit, Cavins said some may not have been aware she had worn them.

Mother Angelica attributed the healing to the rosary, saying people declare "the rosary is a weapon" so often that they forget its power.

"The rosary is powerful for healing. The rosary is powerful for inner-strength. The rosary is powerful," she said.



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