

WORLD & NATION

Clinton Communion violates Catholic norms

By Bronwen Dachs
Catholic News Service

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — The parish priest of the South African church where U.S. President Bill Clinton attended Mass said he was following a new South African bishops' directory on ecumenism when he gave Clinton Communion.

A Vatican official said it appeared clear that Clinton should not have been given Communion.

Father Mohlomi Makobane, parish priest of Regina Mundi Church in Soweto, said he knew Clinton was likely to come up for Communion but that he had not asked permission to give it to him from Bishop Reginald J. Orsmond of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Father Makobane said after he had read the Directory on Ecumenism in Southern Africa, accepted by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference at its plenary meeting in Pretoria in January, he "took it for granted" that Clinton would be allowed to receive the Eucharist.

The priest said he gave a copy of the bishops' document to the organizers of Clinton's visit when discussing the possibility of Clinton wanting to receive Communion.

Clinton, a Southern Baptist, and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, a Methodist, joined more than 1,000 people at the March 29 Mass. Both received Communion.

At the Vatican March 31, Bishop Geraldo M. Agnello, secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, said: "Since this is a person who is not a Catholic, he cannot be admitted to eucharistic Communion. This is a canonical norm... and therefore no bishops' conference can advance a different rule."

Bishop Agnello said the exceptions not-



President Clinton receives Communion from Father Mohlomi Makobane at Regina Mundi Catholic Church in Soweto March 29. The priest later told CNS that he thought Clinton, who is not Catholic, would be allowed to receive Communion in special circumstances outlined by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference; a Vatican official later said the act violated canon law.

ed by canon law were limited and were designed for situations in which other Christians are unable to worship in their own churches. For example, he said, canon law could allow for an Orthodox Christian who is unable to find an Orthodox church in his area to attend Mass in a Catholic church and take Communion.

A secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Bishop Jean-Claude Perisset, also cited the limitations of canon law in such cases, along with the pontifical council's own 1993 ecumenical

directory.

The Vatican press office had no comment on the episode.

The Code of Canon Law permits non-Catholics to receive Communion in a Catholic Church in cases of "grave necessity" if they "cannot approach a minister of their own community and on their own ask for it" and if they hold what Catholics believe about the Eucharist.

The Southern African bishops' ecumenical directory says that "abstinence from ecumenical sharing is the normal

state of affairs." It says that "a special need" for eucharistic sharing "can be said to exist on occasions when Christians from other churches attend a eucharistic celebration for a special feast or event."

"On these occasions, eucharistic sharing may be both meaningful and desirable, expressing the degree of unity that the participating Christians already have with each other," the document says.

The directory also notes that the Catholic Church has a longstanding pastoral practice of not refusing someone who comes to receive Communion in good faith. But, the document adds, when possible, the person should be advised afterwards of Catholic discipline.

Father Makobane said, "One shouldn't embarrass a president, though obviously not at the expense of Catholic Church teaching." He added that Clinton was "coming to our church not for a political meeting, but to pray with us at a eucharistic celebration."

Father Makobane added that the Gospel reading at the March 29 Mass, Jn 8:1-11, was "not purposely chosen to embarrass the president."

The verses recount the tale of an adulteress Jesus saved from death by stoning, when he challenged her accusers, saying the one without sin should cast the first stone.

"When I saw it (the Gospel reading) I thought 'Oh my God,' but what could I do? I had to follow the reading of the day," Father Makobane said in a March 30 telephone interview from Soweto.

Allegations of sexual misconduct by Clinton are "American business, not our business," he added.

South Africa was Clinton's fourth stop on his 11-day trip through sub-Saharan Africa. He left for Botswana March 29 and from there was to go to Senegal.

Parish Graphics...

Looking for Quality Printing?

Call us for...

- ✓ Letterhead
- ✓ Envelopes
- ✓ Business Cards
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Bulletins
- ✓ Brochures
- ✓ Catalogs
- ✓ Presentation Folders
- ✓ Menus
- ✓ Continuous Forms
- ✓ Computer Forms
- ✓ Snapshots (Carbon & Carbonless)
- ✓ Labels

We can...

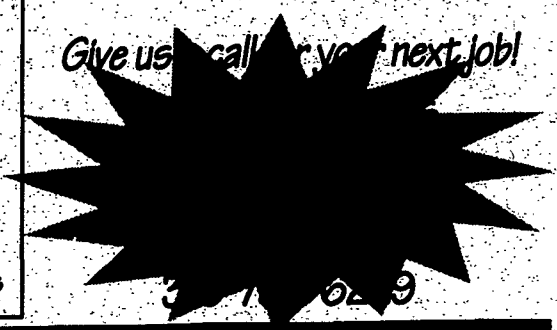
- ✓ Die-Cut
- ✓ Laminate
- ✓ Number
- ✓ Round Corner
- ✓ Eyelet
- ✓ Provide Rubber Stamps

Through a special arrangement between Wayuga Press and the Catholic Courier Graphics Department, you can now get quality, affordable typesetting and printing.

The Courier's award-winning graphics department can transform your ideas into the work you need. When Courier Graphics typesets your work you can be sure that the finished product will attract the attention it requires.

Then Wayuga Press will print your work in a timely manner, with the quality you expect and at a price you can afford.

Give us a call for your next job!



"A Basket of Cheer"

EASTER BRUNCH BUFFET

THE GREENHOUSE CAFÉ & THE GRAND BALLROOM
SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1998 • 11:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Reservations Strongly Recommended (Private Rooms Available)

FRESH BEGINNINGS

Fresh Seasonal Salad Bar with an Array of Accompaniments
Fresh Sliced Seasonal Fruit Displays

COOKED TO ORDER STATION

Fluffy made To Order Omelets • Belgian Waffles
with Fruit Toppings

BREAKFAST SELECTIONS

Scrambled Eggs • Crisp Strips of Bacon • Pork Sausage Patties

THE CARVERY

Carved Roast Leg of Lamb with Mint Jelly • Carved Baked Ham
Top Round of Beef with Burgundy Mushroom Sauce

ENTREE & ACCOMPANIMENTS

Chicken Champagne • Seafood Jambalaya • Eggplant Parmesan
Wild Rice Pilaf • Fresh Cut Vegetable Medley
Oven Roasted Potatoes

PASTRIES & DESSERTS

Freshly Baked Breads and Pastries
Assortment of Cakes, Pies, Mousses and Cannolis
Adults: \$17.95 • Seniors: \$13.95 • Kids Ages 6-12: \$7.95
• Kids 5 & under: Free!
Prices Do Not Include Tax and Gratuity.

Entertainment for the Kids and
A Special Visit from the Easter Bunny!

SPECIAL EASTER SUNDAY DINNER

Served in the Greenhouse Café • 5:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Holiday Inn
ROCHESTER AIRPORT

911 Brooks Avenue • Rochester, New York
726-328-6000

Independently owned and operated by the BF Saul Co.