

WORLD & NATION

Cardinal works to end AT&T's porn business

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

ATLANTA — An interreligious group that includes Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore is working to convince AT&T to get out of the business of hard-core pornography and may step up its efforts in coming months.

Cardinal Keeler reported on the efforts June 15 during the U.S. bishops' spring meeting in Atlanta.

He said the campaign organized by the Cincinnati-based Religious Alliance Against Pornography originated with an Oct. 23, 2000, story in *The New York Times* that detailed how "two of America's best-known corporations, AT&T and General Motors, were in the hard-core pornography business to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars annually."

The GM board of directors has since announced that it will sell the subsidiary that distributes hard-core pornography, while AT&T is "still in the business," the cardinal said.

AT&T Broadband, a business unit of AT&T, provides cable TV service to some 16 million people in the United States. Steve Lang, a spokesman for AT&T Broadband, said "adult entertainment" is offered in some markets.

A delegation from the Religious Alliance Against Pornography met a few months ago with Michael Armstrong, the CEO of AT&T, said Cardinal Keeler, who was part of the delegation.

The group expressed its concern "that Ma Bell was in a business that causes so much harm to individuals, family life and society."

Armstrong "pointed out ways in which they tried to limit access to the hard-core

material and said that they intended to stay in the business while GM did," Cardinal Keeler said. "To date, however, there is no sign of any change of policy."

The cardinal said he planned to call on other members of the bishops' conference to write individual letters to Armstrong expressing their concern on this issue. He said Jewish, Muslim and other Christian leaders would be doing the same thing.

Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, president of the bishops' conference, said in response to the report that he thought many of his colleagues would be "happy to write letters and say, 'Shame on Ma Bell.'"

Cardinal Keeler said the AT&T aspect was just "one aspect of what is a huge problem," noting that "the business of making pornographic films is several times greater in terms of money than the regular film industry."

After the report, the cardinal told Catholic News Service that many bishops had approached him and offered to join in the anti-porn effort.

"They were ready to turn in their (AT&T) credit cards," he said, "but we're not asking for that yet."

Lang of AT&T Broadband told CNS June 18 that the company provides programming "to a wide, diverse audience with varying interests."

"In the case of adult programming, we give customers control over whether it comes into their homes and who can order it," he said. "We trust our customers to make decisions that are right for their households."

Lang also said AT&T had announced plans last October to spin off AT&T Broadband into a separate company.



Reuters/CNS

Abortion on-board

The Dutch ship Aurora, called "The Sea of Change," with on-board abortion and family planning services sits in the Dublin, Ireland, harbor June 15. Irish pro-life organizations called the ship "a publicity stunt" and said they would ignore it. Abortion is illegal in Ireland.

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Bishops

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tional Catholic Migration Commission by the Vatican.

It urged the United States to reaffirm its traditional commitment to aiding refugees abroad and welcoming them into the United States.

Addressing a gap in their "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services," the bishops made several revisions to clarify that Catholic hospitals involved in partnerships or mergers with other health care institutions "are not permitted to engage in immediate material cooperation in actions that are intrinsically immoral, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide and direct sterilization."

Responding to surveys that indicate many Catholics do not believe Christ is truly present in the bread and wine consecrated at Mass, the bishops adopted a statement, "The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist: Basic Questions and Answers."

"In the celebration of the Eucharist, bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ," it says.

It affirms that in the Eucharist "the whole Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine."

Liturgical matters occupied a good portion of the meeting.

In the opening session the bishops were told that the Holy See has approved the second volume of the U.S. Lectionary for Mass, carrying readings for weekdays, feasts of saints and Masses for various occasions. They passed a resolution urging that it be published expeditiously "for pressing pastoral reasons."

They also held an extended discussion of concerns raised by a recently published Vatican document on liturgical translation, *Liturgiam Authenticam* ("The Authentic Liturgy").

Some bishops questioned whether the document's detailed translation rules were appropriate. Others asked about its impact on a wide range of matters from biblical and liturgical scholarship to liturgical music and the future of international translation commissions.

Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, NCCB president, eventually cut off the discussion with a promise that it would be brought back onto the agenda later in the meeting. It was resumed June 16 during the bishops' executive session, closed to the media.

On other liturgical matters, the bishops approved:

— A revised version of "This Holy and Living Sacrifice," a document containing norms for the reception of Communion under both kinds. It encourages Catholics to receive Communion under both kinds when possible as "a fuller sign of the eucharistic banquet."

— A series of changes in U.S. norms for Mass, including a decision affirming that Catholics are to receive Communion standing and are to bow their heads as a sign of reverence before receiving.

The liturgical decisions must receive Vatican approval before they take effect.

Ending years of conference work on the U.S. application of Vatican Catholic higher education norms, the bishops approved a recommended procedure for bishops to grant theologians a "mandatum," or ecclesiastical mandate to teach.

The bishops broke into regional groups for about an hour the first morning of their meeting to discuss this fall's world Synod of Bishops, on the topic of the role of bishops.

Cardinal Jozef Tomko, who recently retired after 16 years as head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, urged the bishops to work to "create a deeper missionary consciousness in the whole church of God."

He praised U.S. Catholics for their strong record of lay leadership and support for the missions, but urged a "dynamic new evangelization" in the country.

Coadjutor Bishop Joseph A. Galante of Dallas, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Communications, led a discussion on the mission and structure of Catholic News Service. He reported that Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Curry of Los Angeles, chairman of the communications committee's CNS subcommittee, will serve as a year-round ombudsman through whom bishops can channel any comments about the news agency.

Archbishop Roger L. Schwietz of Anchorage, Alaska, head of the bishops' Committee on Vocations, reported on plans for the third Continental Congress on Vocations next April in Montreal.

He said that many faith communities in the United States are experiencing a similar lack of clergy vocations similar to that of the Catholic Church.



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