

New sex-abuse review board begins its work

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The new National Review Board, set up to monitor the Catholic bishops' handling of the clergy sex-abuse crisis, sent out a no-nonsense message from its first meeting July 30.

It called on all dioceses in the country to report to it within 30 days on the current status of their sexual-abuse policies and practices. It also declared it would try to select the director of a new national Office for Child and Youth Protection by Sept. 1.

Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating, board chairman, said the board needs the status reports to give it a "snapshot" of what the board faces around the country.

He said the Sept. 1 target for selecting an office director was symbolically important, to send a message by the start of the school year that the church is taking the safety of children seriously.

At its first meeting the board also elected Illinois Appellate Court Justice Anne M. Burke of Chicago as vice chairwoman and formed a four-member committee, headed by Washington attorney Robert S. Bennett, to lead the search for a director of the child-protection office.

Before the meeting Keating had a one-hour business breakfast with four representatives of the Survivors Network for Those Abused by Priests, a national victim support group better known by its acronym, SNAP.

Later the SNAP representatives met with the board for about 40 to 45 minutes.

Keating and Burke said afterward that other survivors of clergy sexual abuse will be invited to speak at the board's next meeting Sept. 16 in Oklahoma City.

The National Review Board was mandated by the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" that the U.S. bishops adopted June 14 at their national meeting in Dallas.

Its members — 12 so far, with a 13th appointment pending — were selected by and report to the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill.

Bishop Gregory attended part of the five-hour inaugural board meeting, intro-

duced the board beforehand to the USC-CB staff in Washington, and participated in a press conference that followed. But he said he will not ordinarily attend the meetings. "They will decide how to act. They have my confidence," he said.

Others on the board include former White House chief of staff Leon E. Panetta, publishing executive William R. Burleigh, aviation manufacturing executive Ray H. Siegfried II, former Catholic Conference of Kentucky director Jane J. Chiles and University of San Diego president Alice Bourke Hayes.

Also on the board are Duquesne University civil and canon law professor Nicholas P. Cafardi, New York attorney

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Saints for Latin America

MEXICO CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II completed his two-day stay in Mexico by beatifying two Zapotec Indian martyrs from the southern state of Oaxaca; the previous day, he had given the Americas its first indigenous saint in Juan Diego.

It was an emotional farewell to a country that he has visited five times. The pope ended the Aug. 1 beatification service, held in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with the unscripted pronouncement, "I may be going, but my heart stays with you. Beautiful Mexico, may God bless you."

The pope said he beatified Jacinto de los Angeles and Juan Bautista, who were killed in 1700 by a lynch mob angered by the pair's zeal in denouncing pagan practices, because they "gave their lives to defend the faith."

It was a ceremony that mixed solemn church liturgy with colorful indigenous ritual before a congregation given to spontaneous bursting into applause, cheers and chants.

The newly beatified Indians had been given the role of moral guardians in their highland village of San Francisco Cajonos in Oaxaca by the Dominican fathers in the area. Because of this, they reported to local authorities their discovery of an ancestral cult operating in secret. Learning of this, an enraged mob first hacked the two men to pieces with their machetes and then tore out their hearts, throwing them to the dogs.

During his homily, the pope called the martyrdom "an example of how nothing, not even life itself, should go before the commitment of baptism." He also challenged the potential contradiction some observers have noted between the beatification of indigenous people whose role was to crack down on their own ancestral traditions, and the church's current drive to show itself sensitive to indigenous culture.

Juan Bautista and Jacinto de los Angeles were "an example of how you can reach God without renouncing your own culture," the pope said.

Some 8,000 indigenous people from Oaxaca were in the basilica complex for the event. The pope was wheeled along on a raised platform pushed by four indigenous people. Several of the Mass' readings and prayers were given in the native languages of Oaxaca, home to 16 different ethnic groups.

The beatification ceremony was also a



Sergio Dorantes/CNS

An indigenous woman from Oaxaca stands outside the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe Aug. 1 with incense to offer Pope John Paul II. The pontiff beatified two indigenous martyrs, Jacinto de los Angeles and Juan Bautista, who were killed by a mob in 1700.



Sergio Dorantes/CNS

An oil painting shows Blessed Juan Diego kneeling in prayer. The pope made Juan Diego a saint July 31 during his visit to Mexico.

chance for the pope to bid farewell to the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe that hangs over the basilica's altar.

"Before the sweet face of the Virgin of Guadalupe who has been a constant support to the faith of her Mexican children, let us renew the commitment to evangelization which also distinguished Juan Bautista and Jacinto de los Angeles," he said at the end of his speech.

After the ceremony, the pope was driven to the airport for the trip back to Rome. He was cheered by millions of Mexicans, as he had been throughout his stay. It was the end of a marathon international tour that began July 23 in Canada, where he appeared at World Youth Day events, and included a stop in Guatemala before his July 30 arrival in Mexico.

Local Mexican reflects

The highlight of the pope's Mexican journey came July 31 when he canonized Juan Diego, the Mexican peasant whose visions of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the 1500s fueled conversions among the native peoples

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