

ALTAR GIRLS REFERENCE NOT IN DOCUMENT

ROME (CNS) — Rewriting a proposed Vatican document on liturgical norms, Vatican officials have dropped all references to altar girls and are substantially revising other points in the document, a Vatican official said Sept. 29.

A ban against allowing ministers of other mainline Christian faiths to bless the congregation at the end of a Catholic liturgy also has been removed, according to an official familiar with the document.

The official said the document, which the Vatican hopes to release by December, will be less detailed than the draft circulated in June.

MOTHER TERESA TO BE BEATIFIED OCT. 19

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Just over six years and six weeks after her death, Mother Teresa of Calcutta will be beatified by Pope John Paul II Oct. 19 in St. Peter's Square.

The founder of the Missionaries of Charity died of cardiac arrest Sept. 5, 1997, in Calcutta, India. A mere 15 months later, Pope John Paul gave permission for her beatification process to begin.

She won the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize and, just three months before her death, was awarded the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor.

PARENTS SUE CHURCH OVER SON'S DEATH

PITTSBURGH (CNS) — The parents of 19-year-old college athlete Billy Gaines filed a \$75-million wrongful-death lawsuit against the priest accused of giving their son alcohol, three Pittsburgh-area churches, the Pittsburgh Diocese and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The suit alleges that Father Henry Krawczyk, former pastor of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Homestead, served alcohol to a group of teenagers, including Gaines, at a cookout the night before the accident.

In the early morning hours after the cookout, Gaines and his friends climbed stairs up to the attic over St. Anne Church, which is part of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish. According to news reports, as Gaines turned to go down the steps, he fell through the ceiling.

Host's remarks cause firing

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier



Lonsberry

Controversial radio personality Bob Lonsberry was fired Sept. 29 from his position as talk-show host for WHAM 1180-AM in Rochester, five days after Rochester-area religious leaders — including Bishop Matthew H. Clark — joined the chorus of disapproval against perceived racist remarks by Lonsberry.

Lonsberry also has been fired from his other daytime talk show on KNRS Radio in Salt Lake City, Utah.

He had been suspended from WHAM since Sept. 22 for calling Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. a "monkey" and an "orangutan" in recent weeks on his long-running weekday show. Johnson is African-American.

WHAM placed Lonsberry on a two-day suspension, which was then extended to one week. In a Sept. 25 statement, Lonsberry said he would be taking additional time off "to reflect and begin diversity training." Also that day Lonsberry publicly apologized to Johnson, whom he has frequently criticized on the air in the past. The following day, in an article posted on his Web site, Lonsberry reiterated his apology and maintained that he is not a racist.

However, a statement WHAM issued Sept. 29 said, "After Mr. Lonsberry made inappropriate comments on the air, he convinced us he was willing to face his mistakes and learn from his behavior. Although Mr. Lonsberry expressed a willingness to change, it became obvious to us that he is not embracing diversity or the beliefs of this station."

Bishop Clark declined comment on Lonsberry's firing. Neither Lonsberry nor Jeff Howlett, station manager at WHAM, responded to the *Catholic Courier's* requests for comment.

On Sept. 24 Bishop Clark had helped lead a press conference at the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester's main offices. Rabbi Laurence Kotok, leader of Temple B'rith Kodesh in Brighton, had first proposed the idea of a joint announcement by religious leaders regarding what he termed "incredibly outrageous and hurtful" statements by Lonsberry.

"I really felt that there was a need for representatives of the religious community to speak as a communi-



Photo by Jamie Germano, courtesy of the Democrat and Chronicle

Religious leaders speak out against a statement made by WHAM radio talk-show host Bob Lonsberry, who called Rochester Mayor Bill Johnson an orangutan. From left are the Rev. Alan Newton, executive minister of the Rochester/Genesee Region American Baptist Churches; Rabbi Laurence Kotok, leader of Brighton's Temple B'rith Kodesh; Episcopal Bishop Jack M. McKelvey; and Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

ty," Rabbi Kotok said.

He, along with Bishop Clark and Bishop Jack McKelvey of the Rochester Episcopal Diocese, presented a three-paragraph statement that reads, in part: "We deplore any speech or actions which have derogatory racial overtones, especially that recently directed at Mayor William Johnson by Bob Lonsberry. Such speech causes pain for many and does damage to our community. For far too long people of color have had to speak to power about racial slurs and actions. We consider it our responsibility to speak to it now."

Also leading the Sept. 24 press conference were the Rev. Alan Newton, executive minister of the Rochester/Genesee Region American Baptist Churches; and Dr. Muhammad Shafiq, imam and executive director of the Islamic Center of Rochester. Those two men signed the statement written by Rabbi Kotok, Bishop Clark and Bishop McKelvey, as did leaders from the Presbyterian and Methodist communities. Strong criticism of Lonsberry also was voiced last week by members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as well as Rochester political leaders and the pastors of African-American churches.

Doug Mandelaro, spokesman for the Roman Catholic Diocese of

Rochester, said Bishop Clark's involvement in the religious leaders' statement and press conference is consistent with his longtime efforts to promote religious and racial harmony.

"It's very important for the bishop that people strive to look not at their differences, but their similarities," Mandelaro said. "The bishop sensed that the medium of radio was being used to divide and to hurt through the choice of words that (Lonsberry) used."

In his Sept. 30 Web column Lonsberry reacted to his firings by remarking that the controversy in Rochester wore down his employers, maintaining that they "didn't want any brush fires anywhere. So I think some suit on the other end of a conference call made a decision." Both KNRS and WHAM are owned by Clear Channel Communications Inc.

Bishop McKelvey said last week he was pleased that Lonsberry's suspension had been extended after the public protests. Yet neither he, nor other religious leaders who signed the Sept. 24 statement, had called for Lonsberry's outright dismissal.

"I think Mr. Lonsberry, at least according to what I read, is hoping to change. That's what we expect from every human being, the potential to change," Rabbi Kotok said Sept. 26.

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