

KANSAS BISHOP WILL HEAD PHOENIX DIOCESE

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Pope John Paul II has named Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted, 56, of Wichita, Kan., as the new bishop of Phoenix.

He succeeds Bishop Thomas J. O'Brien, who abruptly resigned June 18 after being arrested on a felony charge of leaving the scene of a fatal accident.

Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan of Santa Fe, N.M., is administering the diocese until the new bishop is installed Dec. 20.

Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo, papal nuncio to the United States, announced Bishop Olmsted's appointment in Washington Nov. 25.

BRITISH GROUPS BACK ABORTION CHALLENGE

MANCHESTER, England (CNS) — British pro-life groups have backed a legal challenge concerning the abortion of a child with a cleft lip and palate.

An Anglican vicar, the Rev. Joanna Jepson, said Nov. 19 she was asking the courts to review the decision of her local police force, the West Mercia Constabulary, not to investigate the abortion recently performed at a hospital in western England. Newspaper reports of the legal challenge said the unnamed woman was more than 24 weeks pregnant and was therefore beyond the legal limit for abortion unless there is a risk of serious handicap.

Rev. Jepson said a cleft palate was not a serious handicap and that the law should prevent late abortions for "trivial" reasons.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Sun., Nov. 30: Isaiah 33:14-16; Psalms 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2; Luke 21:25-28, 34-36.

Mon., Dec. 1: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalms 122:1-9; Matthew 8:5-11.

Tue., Dec. 2: Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalms 72:7-8, 12-13, 17; Luke 10:21-24.

Wed., Dec. 3: Isaiah 25:6-10A; Psalms 23:1-6; Matthew 15:29-37.

Thu., Dec. 4: Isaiah 26:1-6; Psalms 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27A; Matthew 7:21, 24-27.

Fri., Dec. 5: Isaiah 29:17-24; Psalms 27:1, 4, 13-14; Matthew 9:27-31.

Sat., Dec. 6: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Psalms 147:1-6; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5A, 6-8.

Hunger increases worldwide

Stephen Steele/CNS

WASHINGTON — About 842 million people worldwide are undernourished, with the number of chronically hungry people growing at a rate of nearly 5 million a year, according to a report by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization.

The report, released Nov. 25, said the fight against world hunger was being lost and that countries would not meet the goal stated at the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome to reduce by 50 percent the number of undernourished people by 2015.

"FAO's latest estimates signal a setback in the war against hunger," the report said.

Data compiled from 1995-1997 and from 1999-2001 showed an increase of 18 million undernourished people, wiping out decreases attained in the early 1990s.

"Unless significant gains are made in large countries where progress has stalled, it will be difficult to reverse this negative trend," the FAO report said.

The report said there were 798 million undernourished people in developing nations, with the number of hungry continuing to rise in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East.

"Worse yet, it appears that the number of undernourished people in the developing world is no longer falling but climbing," the report said.



Ed Langlois/CNS

Children share a portion of corn and meal distributed by Catholic Relief Services in a village in central Ethiopia. Late this summer, the relief agency warned that chronic hunger and food shortages will continue there without long-term development projects.

The report revealed that 19 countries reduced the number of hungry people by 80 million by 2001, but those gains were being pressured by economic and societal factors, such as a rise in AIDS in poor countries and international agricultural trade

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tariffs that favor rich countries over poor countries.

Countries that succeeded in reducing hunger had a more rapid economic growth, slower population growth, lower levels of HIV infection and higher ranking in the U.N. Development Program's human development index, the report said.

The findings, FAO said, are consistent with previous data that helped shape the World Food Summit's action plan for improving food security — rapid economic and agricultural growth and an effective social safety net ensuring that the poor get enough to eat.

"If we already know the basic parameters of what needs to be done, why have we allowed millions of people to go hungry in a world that produces more than enough food for every woman, man and child?" the report asked.

FAO said there were encouraging signs in the fight against world hunger, signaling out for praise Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who has promised to eradicate hunger by the end of his four-year term.

The report also said China has reduced its number of undernourished by 58 million, while Vietnam saw a 3 million reduction.

Leaders push for restored budget

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

Bishop Matthew H. Clark and the leaders of the Diocese of Rochester's largest religious orders are urging Monroe County legislators to restore proposed budget cuts affecting abused and neglected children, high-risk pregnant mothers and the health needs of schoolchildren.

In a letter dated Nov. 21, Bishop Clark, Sisters of St. Joseph President Sister Janice Morgan and Sisters of Mercy President Sister Sheila Stevenson asked legislators to give priority consideration to restoring \$1.25 million in funding to preventative services for abused and neglected children. They said such services prevent foster-care placement and promote healthier families. They also asked for broader eligibility requirements for child-care subsidies that would help poor, working mothers avoid moving back into welfare, and for the restoration of the Baby Love program, an inten-

sive program that assists high-risk mothers in preventing premature births or in utero deaths.

Bishop Clark, Sister Morgan and Sister Stevenson asked legislators to reconsider the proposed 50-percent cut in the school-nurse program and to restore \$360,000 in proposed cuts in alcohol and substance-abuse services, which would reduce state aid by an equal amount.

"Our Catholic faith tradition, like many other faith traditions, articulates ... that a measure of the decency or civility of our society is how we treat the poorest and most vulnerable among us," their letter stated.

"We tend to the needs of our neighbors, especially those who are underserved and underrepresented. Cosigning this letter to the Monroe County legislators was very natural. They (the cuts) would make already difficult situations impossible," Sister Morgan told the Courier.

Catherine Columbo, director of communications for the Sisters of

Mercy, said that the proposed cuts to preventative services for abused and neglected children would affect two of the order's outreach programs, Mercy Residential Services and Andrew Center. She also said that the Mercy Outreach Center would be indirectly affected if the Baby Love program were cut.

Bishop Clark and the two congregational presidents also acknowledged that legislators faced difficult decisions, thanked them for their willingness to serve the county and would welcome the opportunity for further discussion. They also urged county leaders to consider the moral implications of discussion about tax rates, referring to a 1977 Catholic Charities USA statement on taxation and distributive justice.

"Principles articulated in this statement include the need for a tax structure that raises sufficient revenues to enable government to meet its responsibilities related to the basic need of our vulnerable citizens," the letter stated.