

Czechs Optimistic About Church-State Accord

Vienna, Austria — (NC) — There is continued optimism among Catholics in Communist Czechoslovakia that their government will reach some kind of accord with the Holy See giving the Church greater freedom to carry out its mission.

All reports arriving here from Prague indicate that the Czechoslovak government is willing to make some concessions to insure domestic peace and to put on the best possible face for its neighbors in the West.

NO ONE, neither the communists nor the Catholics, regard this phenomenon as a fundamental change in communist ideology. The Czechoslovak government is still wedded to atheism, and the destruction of religion remains an ideological goal. Nor do Church authorities believe any Church-State

accord will settle all outstanding problems. Instead, the agreement will be a *modus vivendi* like that reached last September between the Vatican and communist-ruled Hungary. It will only mean that severe restrictions will become less severe, and that the Church will be given some room to breathe.

Negotiations now underway between Prague and Rome are concentrated on four points: the appointment of bishops, religious instruction for youth, the removal of restrictions against seminaries, and the future of suppressed religious orders.

THE APPOINTMENT of bishops is the area in which the talks have apparently been most successful so far. For years the barrier to any accord in Czechoslovakia was the presence of Josef Cardinal Beran of Prague. Now that the cardinal

has left the country and the Prague archdiocese is being administered by Bishop Frantisek Tomasek, the way seems open to agreements on other members of the hierarchy.

A second barrier apparently overcome is a formula for the oath which a bishop must take to be acceptable to the state. It has been reported that Bishop Tomasek took such an oath when appointed to the Prague See in February.

AT THE PRESENT time there are nine dioceses in Czechoslovakia without bishops, either because no bishop has been appointed or because his work is obstructed by the government.

On a wider scale, the Czechoslovak bishops would like to establish a national bishops conference. The first talk of such a conference would be to set down norms or official translations for the use of

vernacular languages in the liturgy. Until now bishops have made temporary arrangements for liturgical services.

IN A JOINT pastoral letter late in May, the bishops announced plans to create "special committees" in Prague that would deal with Biblical studies, catechetics, pastoral work, art and music. A liturgical handbook is being issued for the clergy.

Turning to the problem of education, it has been reported here that in August priests all over Czechoslovakia will ask parents to send their children to religious instruction classes this fall. A short time ago if a priest made such a request from the pulpit he would be imprisoned.

Now, although the communist government seems willing to permit some young children to attend

religion classes, the situation is far from satisfactory for Church officials. It is estimated that 10 percent of all children under 10 now attend classes, but the vast majority of these are in rural sections of the country.

WHEN IT COMES to the education of seminarians, the situation is even worse. There are two seminaries permitted to accept students at Bratislava and Litomerice. Together they have about 140 students.

The shortage of young priests can be seen in the Archdiocese of Prague. This year only three priests will be ordained for Prague. Before World War II the archdiocese had about 25 new priests each year, and before World War I it ordained an average of 50 priests a year. The average age of the priests in the archdiocese at the present time is 65.

Papal Gift Presented To Hungarian Primate

Vienna — (NC) — Franciskus Cardinal Koenig of Vienna has presented a gift chalice from Pope Paul VI to Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of Hungary, marking the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian's primate's ordination to the priesthood.

It was reported in Rome that Cardinal Koenig spent 90 minutes talking with Cardinal Mindszenty (June 11) on the eve of the anniversary observed in the U.S. Legation in Budapest where the primate has been living since the Hungarian uprising of 1956. Vatican officials said Cardinal Koenig delivered a personal message to Cardinal Mindszenty from the Pope.

The Vatican City newspaper L'Osservatore Romano stated that Pope Paul "united himself spiritually" to the Hungarian cardinal while celebrating Mass (June 12). The paper said Pope Paul included "the illustrious archdiocese of

Esztergom and the beloved Hungarian nation" in his wishes and prayers.

The Latin inscription on the chalice presented to the cardinal reads: "Pope Paul VI to Josef Cardinal Mindszenty on completion of 50 years in the priesthood, as a token of deepest affection."

Although Cardinal Koenig has acted as a Vatican negotiator in eastern European countries in the past, having visited Cardinal Mindszenty previously in 1963, sources have indicated the recent trip had no diplomatic purpose. They said Cardinal Koenig had no instructions to discuss the possible future of Cardinal Mindszenty.

While in Hungary, Cardinal Koenig met with Archbishop Endre Hamvas of Kalocsa, chairman of the Hungarian bishops' conference who is confined to a hospital in Kalocsa. It is reported the archbishop is suffering from cancer.

Holy Office Denies Report

Rome, Italy—(NC)—A spokesman for the Congregation of the Holy Office has issued a categorical denial of published reports that jurisdiction over marriage cases has been transferred from that body to other Vatican offices.

The spokesman said that the current regulation on Holy Office competence in marriage cases, expressed in Canon Law 247, remains full in effect. The law states: "It (the Congregation of the Holy Office) has exclusive jurisdiction in cases which involve directly or indirectly the Pauline Privilege in marriage, disparity of cult and mixed religion, and to this congregation belongs the power to dispense from these impediments."

That the Holy Office refers marriage cases to other organs of the curia is in accordance with a provision of the canon which states that the congregation "may, according to its judgment and as the case demands, refer it to another congregation or to the tribunal of the Sacred Rota."

The spokesman also took issue with a published statement that cases had been "assumed at various times in the past by the Holy Office." He said that the competence which the Holy Office now has in certain marriage cases was given to it by the Church's highest lawgivers, the popes.



FRIENDS OF THE DEAF — As President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a law (June 8) authorizing the establishment of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, sponsored by Rep. Hugh L. Carey of Brooklyn (left), he shook hands with Msgr. John P. Hourihan (right), chairman of the special education department, Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J., while Father Thomas F. Cribben of Brooklyn, chaplain of the International Deaf Association, awaits his turn. (NC Photos)

Prelate Urges Anglican Orders Be Re-examined

London — (NC) — Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Athenagoras, the head of the Orthodox Church in Britain, has suggested that the Catholic Church would greatly advance ecumenism in this country if it would re-examine the whole question of the validity of Anglican orders.

Preaching in Westminster Abbey, the Metropolitan also suggested that the Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches withdraw mutual excommunications aimed at each other in the 12th century.

THE RETRACTION of these "unhappy and ill-considered documents," he said, could be a first step to real Catholic-Orthodox unity.

Regarding Anglican orders, Metropolitan Athenagoras urged the Catholic Church to re-examine "in the spirit of today's ecumenical concern" the encyclical "Apostolicae Curiae" issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1896 which held that Anglican orders were not valid.

THE ENCYCLICAL based its contention on the fact that the Anglican ordinal, the book which sets down the form for church rites, was substantially changed following the break of the English church from Rome. The encyclical declared that by the time the ordinal was revised once more in 1662 the Anglican Church had lost its ties to Apostolic succession.

Metropolitan Athenagoras suggested it might be preferable "to

leave the question of the validity of Anglican orders as it was in the 16th century, as it was in the days of Augustine and Theodore." He said such a decision would help heal "the sixth wound in the Body of Christ which is still open and bleeding."

FCC REJECTS ATHEIST'S 'EQUAL TIME' PLEA

Washington — (NC) — The Federal Communications Commission has turned down a plea by Mrs. Madalyn Murray, widely publicized atheist, for equal time on 15 Honolulu radio stations to reply to their religious programs.

The FCC said the stations "acted reasonably in good faith" in refusing equal time to Mrs. Murray. FCC chairman E. William Henry and two other commissioners said in a concurring opinion that the stations had not dealt with "controversial issues of public importance" requiring equal time for atheists.

FCC commissioner Lee Loewinger dissented from the commission's action and said it should have dismissed the petition for want of jurisdiction instead of replying to it. He contended that the commission was putting itself in "the role of supervisor of religious programming" contrary to the Constitution.

Mrs. Murray, formerly of Baltimore, was the plaintiff in one of two cases that led to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1963 ruling against prayer and Bible reading in public schools.

Urges New Approach to Care for Aged

St. Louis—(NC)—A Sociologist told the Catholic Hospital Association convention here that the health professions must give more attention to the behavioral and social sciences to understand the illness of the nation's growing aged population.

Father Lucius F. Cervantes, S.J., director of the Family Research Center at St. Louis University, cautioned against thinking that the problems of old people are "primarily biological rather than situational and social."

The "special health problem" of

the aged, Father Cervantes declared, is "survival in a society that finds their minds and bodies superfluous."

Noting that there are presently 18 million Americans 65 or older and that estimates say three-fourths of all medical work in the U.S. will soon be concerned with their care, he urged delegates to understand the true nature of their problems.

The priest suggested that the health professions in the U.S. are guilty of a "cultural lag" in continuing to concentrate on tradition-

al killer diseases and neglecting other more contemporary problems.

"One of these bright days," he said, "you will realize that you already possess a working knowledge of the fundamental aspects of the biological mechanisms of disease and you will force yourselves to examine more closely the circumstances under which disease and illness occur in a human being who is a thinking, feeling, social being highly susceptible to environmental conditioning . . ."

and the Church's attitude toward non-Christian religions.

The latter contains the highly controversial statement on the Jews which has come under fire both from conservative theologians and politicians — largely in Arab nations, who fear it might support Zionist claims. Though rumors have circulated between sessions that this document still faces a rocky road, extraordinary intervention would be required to change it in substance, since it received an overwhelming majority of votes. Only 99 of 1,992 voting Fathers rejected it.

IN THE LETTER accompanying the documents, Archbishop Pappalardo stated that the Fathers wish to speak on either religious liberty or the Church in the modern world during the fourth session should send the text of their talks, or at least a summary, to him by Sept. 9.

Each of the final five documents sent to the bishops contains a note pointing out that it is being forwarded according to a decision of Pope Paul VI communicated (May 18) to Amleto Cardinal Cicognani, Papal Secretary of State, who is chairman of the coordinating commission of the council. The Pope had examined the documents after they were put into final form by the various commissions meeting in Rome during April and May.