

# Catholic Spokesman Denies 'War on Divorce Reform'

(N.C.W.C. News Service)  
ALBANY — The spokesman for the New York State Catholic Welfare Committee has denied ever declaring "war" on a bill to liberalize the state's divorce law.

In a statement issued here, Charles J. Tobin also denied attempting to influence the legislature to defer action on the bill "beyond this legislative session."

Tobin said his comments came in answer to speculation about the committee's official position, which was sparked "by recent comments" by Sen. Jerome L. Wilson, chairman of the joint legislative committee on matrimonial laws. Wilson had accused Tobin of being "in opposition to meaningful divorce reform."

"ON THE CONTRARY, our efforts and our cooperation with the

joint legislative committee has been directed toward expected action on legislation at this legislative session," Tobin said. "We had the opportunity on Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 to appear before public hearings to give our views," he declared. The spokesman for the state's Catholic bishops then reiterated those views in a seven-point statement:

"1. We believe in the permanence of marriage, and we maintain that society must find feasible programs to protect and foster such permanence.

"2. Legislation on marriage and divorce is concerned not only with the rights of individuals, it has profound effect upon society and family life. We are disturbed over the present heavy toll which marriage dissolution and remarriage levy upon families and children.

"3. We do recognize that fraud,

collusion and perjury have been brought about through the misuse of our present matrimonial laws and procedure.

"4. We are aware that there are those in our pluralistic society who do not agree with our belief that marriage is indissoluble. Despite inference to the contrary, we do not seek to impose our beliefs upon the civil law of marriage and divorce.

"5. As responsible citizens interested in promoting the common good, we have urged and will continue to urge that divorce and the right to remarry be carefully guarded.

"6. If the evidence clearly establishes that the common good in New York will be advanced by some modifications in the grounds for divorce, we urge that such change must not be permitted to foster or encourage dissolution of marriage.

"7. Accordingly, we again express our concern that the grounds for divorce not be broadened that the law could, in effect, be permitting divorce by consent."

"WE ARE preparing now to appear at the public hearing on Feb. 25, at which time we will have comment to make on the specific provisions of the proposed, bill," Tobin said.

## Petition Pope

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ordering preservation of Latin in monastic liturgy.)

● That in such liturgical functions no vernacular language or polyphonic music be admitted. (Father Bugnini commented that the Holy See allows polyphonic music in monastic services.)

● That no electric amplifiers or loudspeakers be used in monastic services. (Father Bugnini said he had no comment on this, except that while such equipment often has unfortunate effects, in principle it could have advantages. He also said that the petition had not arrived at his office.)

# Response to Peace Pleas Gratifying to Pope Paul

VATICAN CITY — (NC) — Persons close to Pope Paul VI reported he was highly gratified at the prompt response to his appeal to neutral nations to offer their arbitration in the Vietnam war.

They said the Pope was taking added encouragement from the thousands of messages reaching the papal secretariat of state applauding the papal efforts for peace.

The Pope was said to have received further cause for optimism from the reports from New Delhi to the effect that North Vietnam's President Ho Chi Minh had appealed to India and several other nations to intervene in the cause of peace.

Letters and telegrams were coming to the Vatican from heads of state and chiefs of government as well as ordinary citizens and even children.

Despite the front-paging in the Vatican City daily newspaper L'Osservatore Romano of public reactions to the Pope's continued efforts for peace, the state secretariat was maintaining an absolute reserve. Its officials refused even to speak of the Pope's appeal to Austrian Foreign Minister Bruno Kreisky to enlist the help of neutrals who do not maintain diplomatic relations with the Holy See. Yet L'Osservatore Romano quoted a Swiss news agency report that Kreisky obtained agreement from Switzerland, Sweden and Finland to offer their good offices in an international conference on Vietnam. A source close to the state secretariat asserted that the Pope's efforts for peace in Vietnam "are continuing."

(From New Delhi, meanwhile, came word that North Vietnam's

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consulate general had delivered a letter to India's President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan from Ho Chi Minh on Jan. 24 asking him to use his good offices to help restore peace in Vietnam. It was understood that the message was one of several to heads of state or heads of government, including one to President Charles de Gaulle of France.

(Ho's message to Radhakrishnan reportedly was receiving intense study by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her government. At the same time, it was revealed that the Indian government had received a message from Pope Paul urging India as neutral nation to use its good offices in the cause of a Vietnam armistice. A New Delhi government spokesman announced that the Pope's message was under study and that a reply would be sent in due course.

## Says Time Runs Out

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and into the streets," Father Ouellet said.

## Red China

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voted membership, it should spurn it, as it has threatened to do, the UN might be faced with an embarrassing, but not necessarily critical situation. If Red China should be admitted, there would be some agitation in this country to have the U.S. withdraw. But this would not likely to happen, because it has been said officially that "there can be no mistaking the importance the United States places on the United Nations." Perhaps the most reassuring fact in any circumstance is that the UN is presently enjoying the greatest prestige, due in no small part to the visit paid to it by Pope Paul VI last October.

The 38-year-old priest, who was asked to leave the diocese of Mobile-Birmingham by Archbishop Thomas J. Toolen because of the role he played in the civil rights demonstrations, said he never disobeyed the archbishop's directive that no Alabama priests were to take an active part in the demonstrations, even though he was involved in the turmoil because his parishioners were involved.

Owen J. Murphy Jr., editor of the Catholic Free Press, Worcester diocesan newspaper, introducing Father Ouellet, emphasized that "contrary to the reports of some individuals and some publications Father Ouellet is not numbered among what they call 'the ever-growing number of silenced priests in the American Church.'"

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