



NGURU, BIAFRA — Bombed-out feeding center for refugee adults and children, attacked by a Nigerian plane (Oct. 19) shortly after 4,000 people had left the building. At right Father Donal O'Sullivan, Irish member of the Holy Ghost Fathers, and Sister Joseph Therese inspect bomb crater in which one of the six people killed was found days later. (NC Photo by John R. Sullivan)

Bishops' Meeting Stresses Pastoral

Washington — (NC) — The annual meeting of the U.S. bishops was a bit different this year. Held at the Washington Hilton hotel here on a lower level (one bishop said it was like going down in a bomb shelter), the week was, as usual, devoted to study, discussion, debate and decision making. New aspects included a sit-in in the lobby one evening by a group of Washington priests and their supporters, irritating not a few other people using the hotel (a second planned sit-in fizzled when the expected crowd didn't show); and the glare of television lights almost every time the bishops left their meeting room.

Highlight of the week was the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on "Human Life in Our Day." The bishops were given a draft at the

first day's meeting; from then on questions about the pastoral dominated almost every news briefing. Auxiliary Bishop James P. Shannon of St. Paul and Minneapolis conducted noon briefings; Auxiliary Bishop Gerald V. McDavitt of Philadelphia chaired a panel of bishops each evening.

The pastoral was approved, 180 to 8, at the Friday morning session. A drafting committee headed by Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh had worked almost constantly on the document, revising it in accord with suggestions received from other members of the hierarchy. As Bishop Wright said at the closing news briefing Friday (Nov. 15), "the hierarchy moved to express themselves first of all as speaking in collegiality, in solidarity with the Holy Father on this point, and therefore they have endorsed the teaching of Pope Paul VI on the matter of the transmission of life."

Questions throughout the week at news briefings raised questions on conscience and contraception, and Bishop Wright at the Friday briefing said: "We take the Catholic position that an informed Catholic conscience is one which is informed in the light of the teaching of the Church, that it is not a merely instinctive conscience operating in a vacuum."

The pastoral also dealt with selective conscientious objection, the Vietnam war, foreign aid, licit

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Editor's Desk

The 11 o'clock TV news telling of the position stand of the U.S. bishops on the matter of the Pope's encyclical "On Human Life" was so short and telegraphic in its announcement that at this time we do not feel justified in commenting on it.

The text of the Bishops' statement from their meeting in Washington last week will appear in next week's edition of the supplement section dated December first.

We are pleased, however, that the statement did take some cognizance of conscience. At least that was what we gathered from the report of the national news media. We trust that the statement of the U.S. bishops will use forthright, declarative sentences in enunciating their message to their American Catholic people.

We have suffered through endless paragraphs recently of translations of Italian and Latin compositions which are so difficult to absorb as they are couched in flowery, descriptive language that it is almost like reading novels of Sir Walter Scott.

THE CATHOLIC weekly of Bishop Federal's Diocese of Salt Lake City, Utah, recently carried a column entitled, "How to Read This Newspaper." It said that in the light of confronting controversy it seems that the Catholic press must expose all these happenings that occur. The newspaper contended that if the Church-related press plays up the disputes within the Church, it is not to present a balanced picture of the Church and thus to fail to be genuinely truthful and charitable.

The purpose of the Church-related press continues to be its service to the Catholic people to form as well as inform, to inspire and to instruct in the teachings of the Church. Here's what the Salt Lake Monitor had to say:

"If a newspaper is to present the news, it will on many occasions present news stories of events and opinions, with which various readers will strongly disagree. Nevertheless, the news-

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Half Million Deaths Feared

New York — "A half-million Biafrans will be dead by December," unless the means are found to increase the number of relief flights into the blockaded country, Msgr. Andrew P. Landi, assistant director of Catholic Relief Services, the U. S. Catholic overseas aid agency, said here.

Msgr. Landi returned to New York from a two-week tour of religious relief facilities in Biafra and on the Portuguese African island of Sao Tome, and confer-

ences with relief officials in Rome and Geneva.

The food problem, while improved in some respects, is actually becoming worse for Biafrans, he reported. It is better because the number of deaths from Kwashiorkor, the often-fatal protein deficiency, have been reduced among children.

But the disease is spreading among adults, and—much worse—the problem is becoming one not of Kwashiorkor at all, but of mass starvation.

"The people have no food reserves. The supplies airlifted in go right out the same day. And the people are now eating into their supply of yams, the staple food, and harvesting what would ordinarily be harvested in January.

"Unless more food gets in and day airlifts are made—only night flights can now be made because of the threat of Nigerian jet fighters—a half-million people will be dead by December," he said.

Part of the airlift problem could be cured by obtaining planes better suited to the Biafra relief operation, he added. The agencies now use DC-7 aircraft which can carry between nine and 10 tons of supplies on each trip. But because they are primarily passenger planes, unloading is difficult and slow.

He suggested the use of Hercules planes—in military terms they are called C-130s—which can carry 26 tons of supplies and can be unloaded far more easily.

Bishop Cites Teaching Role

New York — Bishop J. P. Shannon asserted here that Catholic journalists will be confronted with the teaching assignment given by Vatican Council II for "a long time to come."

Bishop Shannon said one advantage is that the world at large now considers the discipline of theology as "hot property," while another is the large, eager, responsive audience for "vigorous journalism."

Msgr. Terrence P. McMahon of Hartford, Conn., the CPA president, discussing responsibilities of the Catholic press, asserted that like the Church, the Catholic press today is "suffering a process of change."

Msgr. McMahon said the Catholic press has the responsibility of handling disquieting issues like celibacy and differences between priests and their bishops.

Clothing Campaign Set For Week of Nov. 24

The annual Thanksgiving Clothing Campaign, sponsored by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, will be held during the week of November 24 in the Diocese of Raleigh.

Each Catholic parish in the Diocese of Raleigh will accept serviceable used or unwanted clothing, shoes and bedding.

From the parish the donated material will be sent to Catholic Relief Services warehouse to be distributed in areas of acute poverty and need overseas.

The appeal director, The Very

Rev. Louis E. Morton, said that the clothing, blankets and shoes collected will be distributed to needy persons in 70 countries of the world.

Last year over 20 million pounds of used clothing were collected in the more than 17,500 Catholic parishes of the United States.

The material is distributed to persons in need without regard to race, religion or color by Catholic Relief Services, the overseas aid agency of American Catholics.

They are also expensive, and Msgr. Landi said he hoped some government help would be forthcoming.



Official

Bishop's Residence
600 Bilyeu Street
Raleigh, North Carolina

November 11, 1968

My Dear Brethren:

Recently, in speaking of the Bishops' Overseas Relief program, our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI said:

"The greater part of the world is still suffering from so much poverty that it is as if Christ Himself were crying out in these poor to beg the charity of the disciples. Some nations with a majority of citizens who are counted as Christians have an abundance of this world's goods, while others are deprived of the necessities of life and are tormented with hunger, disease, and every kind of misery. This situation must not be allowed to continue, to the scandal of humanity. . . . Indeed, it is the duty of the whole People of God, following the word and example of the Bishops, to do their utmost to alleviate the sufferings of the modern age. As was the ancient custom in the Church, they should meet this obligation out of the substance of their goods, and not only out of what is superfluous."

Catholic Relief Services has been providing help to the victims of the civil war in Nigeria since the outbreak of hostilities there on May 30, 1967. This humanitarian help continues to be given to the needy people, without distinction, on both sides of the conflict. The hunger, deprivation and death caused by the Nigerian conflict is only one of the many areas in the world which needs our help.

We can assist God's deprived children wherever the needs exist by contributing generously to the Catholic Relief Service collection to be taken up in all the parishes of the Diocese on next Sunday, November 24th. As has been our custom, we supplement this financial collection with the annual Thanksgiving Clothing Campaign during Thanksgiving Week (November 24th to 30th, inclusive). A packet of labels and instructions for the collection in this clothing drive has been sent to your parish and we ask you to assemble all usable clothing, blankets, bedding and shoes to help clothe the naked.

"For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in. Naked, and you covered me; sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me" (Matt. 25: 35-36).

With appreciation of your generosity in the past, and hoping that you will open your heart and purse again for this most worthy cause, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Vincent S. Waters

Vincent S. Waters
Bishop of Raleigh