

Chapter 8: Beyond the Archdiocese

By Thomas J. Reese, S.J. From *Archbishop: Inside the Power Structure of the American Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989)

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The hardest part of my job is to be sandwiched between Roman orders and my people and priests' hopes and ideals.

Archbishop Weakland

I say no to altar girls. Oh God, what troubles I get into by saying no to altar girls.

Archbishop Lipscomb

A bishop's primary concern is the internal governance of his local church, but what happens in his local church can be affected by church institutions outside his diocese. Decisions made by church organs, especially the Vatican and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, can sometimes be binding on the bishop.

Bishops, as successors of the apostles, are also responsible for the welfare of the whole church, not just their dioceses. By their participation in various church organs (ecumenical councils, Roman synods, national conferences, Vatican congregations), bishops help in the governance of the entire church.¹ Cardinals and archbishops exercise this responsibility to a greater extent than other bishops. As a result, archbishops are both governors and governed.

Province Metropolitan

What makes an archbishop different from a bishop is that he is a metropolitan, the head of an ecclesiastical province that contains his archdiocese and one or more dioceses. More than half of the thirty-one provinces in the United States have boundaries coextensive with those of a single state (Alaska, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin). Only California has more than one province (part of Maryland is in the province of Washington, DC). The remaining provinces contain more than one state.

The metropolitan has practically no power over the diocesan bishops in his province who are called suffragans. He is involved primarily in ceremonial functions such as attending the celebration of anniversaries or the installations and burials of bishops in his province. "You go over and show the archbishop's flag on those occasions when they have special events and ceremonies," explains Archbishop Lipscomb of Mobile whose province includes Alabama and Mississippi.

If a problem arises in a diocese in his province, the archbishop may get involved. Priests of the diocese might complain to him, or he might be approached by the pro-nuncio for information. He might also take the initiative and bring things to the attention of the pro-nuncio. "It is up to me

to inform the pro-nuncio if a bishop is getting ill," says Archbishop Hannan of New Orleans. "I always talk to the bishop first and tell him what I am going to do because you have to get his cooperation." But if the bishop does not want to resign or take the archbishop's advice, there is nothing the metropolitan can do about it.

Archbishop Hannan as metropolitan of Louisiana was very active behind the scenes in Lafayette, LA, where a priest admitted to sexually abusing thirty-five children and was sentenced to twenty years in jail. Fourteen families sued the diocese, whose insurance companies eventually paid them an undisclosed sum that was estimated to be as high as \$5 or \$10 million. It became impossible for the local bishop to deal with this crisis, because he had transferred the priest to his current parish after knowing of his involvement in an earlier incident. The bishop, who had sent the priest to a psychiatrist, admitted making a mistake in not recognizing the depth of the priest's illness.

Archbishop Hannan became involved because the Vatican wanted to avoid the publicity that would surround a criminal trial. "My job was to see that the right steps were taken to make sure that there wasn't any trial," says Archbishop Hannan. He visited the priest in jail and convinced him to accept a plea bargain.

In addition, after the diocese settled with the parents, the insurance companies began arguing about who should pay what. The crimes occurred over a number of years when different companies were insuring the diocese. Each company wanted someone else to pay. One source says that Archbishop Hannan brought representatives of the insurance companies together in his office and told them they were not leaving until they agreed on a settlement. They settled.

A metropolitan can also come to the defense of his suffragan bishops. Archbishop Borders of Baltimore, whose province includes Virginia, objected to Rome's proposal for a visitation or investigation of the diocese of Richmond by a Vatican official. He argued that if a visitation was necessary, it should be done by an American bishop. Ultimately it was done by Archbishop May of St. Louis.

The bishops of a province meet under the chairmanship of the archbishop to draw up the provincial list of episcopal candidates (see chapter 1). The provinces also set up provincial tribunals to review annulments as was called for by the new code of canon law. Some provinces also work on other common projects. But bishops usually work under the auspices of state Catholic conferences, which are composed of all the bishops of one state.

State Catholic Conference

Bishops gather one or more times a year as a state conference usually chaired by the archbishop.² As a state conference, they can develop common policies and programs aimed at both religious and public concerns. Normally decisions are made by consensus rather than by vote. The state conference may have a small staff (one to fifteen employees) including a lobbyist who works in the state capital. Additional staff work is often done by committees made up of officials (chancellors, superintendents of schools, directors of Catholic Charities) from the various dioceses in the state. They might also invite outside experts and observers to attend their

meetings. As a regular practice, some include representatives from priests' councils at their meetings.

In the religious sphere, a conference might develop common programs and policies on sacramental preparation, faculties, the implementation of canon law, etc. Less confusion and problems exist when these policies are the same for the entire state. For example, if one diocese requires attendance at an extensive marriage preparation program, while its neighbor does not, problems can arise. Some conferences have agreed on a common policy for dealing with holy days that fall on Saturdays or Mondays.

Joint pastoral letters have also been issued by state conferences. The California conference wrote one on AIDS; the Texas conference did one on pastoral care of Hispanic immigrants and another on the sacrament of reconciliation; the Louisiana conference published one on social ministry and another on creationism. After the NCCB pastoral letter on the economy, the Kentucky, Maryland, and West Virginia conferences issued their own pastoral letters on the economies in their states.

Other conferences, such as California and Michigan, developed common services like health and liability insurance or retirement plans. The dioceses of Louisiana join together in running a three-day conference for their new principals each year.

State conferences also focus on public policy concerns. State conference lobbyists represent the bishops before the legislature in twenty-seven state capitals. State laws governing zoning, building codes, bingo, tax exemptions, private education, churches, hospitals, and social agencies can have a direct impact on activities of church organizations. The state of Nebraska, for example, requires every high school to have a vocational program. Catholic college preparatory schools must get a waiver every year from this requirement. State money for Catholic schools (textbooks, busing) or programs run by Catholic social service agencies would also be high on the agenda.

State conferences of bishops have also taken positions on numerous public policy issues that do not directly impinge on church institutions. Often the conferences are applying to the state level positions that have been taken by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. For example, numerous state conferences have opposed capital punishment and public funding of abortions in their states. Frequently a conference will make a statement on citizen responsibility prior to an election. Conferences have also taken positions on state legislation dealing with brain death, living wills, surrogate mothers, homosexual bill of rights, public school health clinics, sex education, welfare reform, shelters for the homeless, public housing, the farm crisis, migrant workers, prostitution, criminal justice system, pornography, etc.

Finally, meeting either as a province or a conference allows the bishops to discuss various concerns in an informal way. Some conferences also sponsor spiritual retreats for bishops or even time to relax together. In all of this, the archbishop can play a leadership role in developing consensus among the other bishops. If he prefers to act alone, the state conference will do little. If he opposes an action, the province or state conference is unlikely to act.

NCCB/USCC

All the American bishops meet once or twice a year as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Catholic Conference (NCCB/USCC) to deal with religious and public issues of common concern. Retired bishops cannot vote, but all other prelates have an equal vote except on financial issues, where only diocesan bishops (and not auxiliaries) can vote. The bishops elect a president and vice-president who act as conference spokesmen on national and international issues during their three-year terms. These officers are almost always archbishops.

When writing its pastoral letters on peace and on economic justice, the NCCB received wide attention in the news media. The bishops have also made public statements on Central America, South Africa, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the church in Communist countries, racism, capital punishment, health care, abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, care for the terminally ill, food stamps, Medicaid, education, homelessness, international debt, immigration, tax reform, labor relations, etc.

A great deal of their time, however, is devoted to church issues, like ecumenism, Catholic education, evangelization, family ministry, Hispanic ministry, catechetics, women in the church, liturgy, and sacramental practice. The NCCB, with the approval of the Vatican, can set policy that is binding on all the bishops. Matters that are binding on the bishops require a two-thirds vote.

Before an item is voted on by the bishops, it is normally considered in committee. Sometimes the committees themselves issue statements rather than bringing the question to the entire body of bishops. The NCCB and USCC have standing committees and ad hoc committees to deal with various concerns: budget, liturgy, doctrine, pastoral practice, canon law, farm labor, Hispanics, missions, ecumenism, laity, pro-life, priestly life, priestly formation, vocations, Latin America, permanent diaconate, women, education, communications, social development, and world peace. Also, an administrative affairs committee draws up the agenda for the conference meetings and makes policy when the conference is not in session. Committee work can be very time consuming when a major document is being prepared, especially for the chairmen.

The committees and leadership of the conference are helped by the bishops' staff based in Washington, DC. The staff is headed by a general secretary and has experts on issues of concern to the bishops: public relations, liturgy, doctrine, church finances, education, priestly life and formation, civil and canon law, domestic and international affairs, etc.

Some archbishops play a larger role in the bishops' conference than others. Officers of the conference, like Archbishops May (president) and Pilarczyk (vice president), play a very active role, as do former presidents of the conference: Cardinals Krol and Bernardin and archbishops Quinn and Roach. Archbishop Kelly, as a former general secretary of the conference, is also influential. Others, like Archbishop Weakland and Cardinal O'Connor, have been chairmen of major committees.

On the other hand, some who would have liked to play a larger role in the conference have not been supported by the other bishops. In the past, Cardinal Spellman of New York was kept from

having much influence in the conference although he was very influential in Rome under Pius XII. More recently, Cardinal Law of Boston and Archbishop Mahony of Los Angeles were defeated in 1986 when their names were put on the ballot for positions in the conference. Both men were seen as challenging the current direction of the conference. Some also feared that they would be more interested in the views of Vatican officials than in the views of their fellow bishops. The following year, however, Archbishop Mahony was elected chairman of the committee on international affairs.

International Responsibilities

American bishops are involved with issues that affect the Catholic church throughout the world. Individually and through their national conference, they have been supportive of local churches experiencing difficulties in Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. They normally avoid saying anything on a topic affecting these churches without checking with them. For example, they wanted to know what the bishops of South Africa thought about divestiture before they made a statement. They also give financial assistance to poor churches around the world individually or through agencies such as the Catholic Relief Services and the Propagation of the Faith. Bishops have also sent their priests to mission lands.

The American hierarchy frequently interacts with the Holy See, which is responsible for central governance in the church. Those who were bishops during the Second Vatican Council acted, with the pope, as the supreme governing body of the Catholic church. They played an important role at the Council in pushing through the decree on religious liberty. For most of the American bishops, the Council was an educational and spiritual experience that influenced the rest of their years as bishops.

Although councils are extremely rare, the synod of bishops, which advises the pope, meets every three years or when called to Rome by the pope. Four American bishops are usually elected by their peers to attend the synod. In addition, the pope usually appoints two or more Americans. Attending the 1987 Synod on the Laity as elected representatives were Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishops Weakland and May, and Bishop Ott. Appointed to the synod were Archbishop Mahony and the-Bishop Bevilacqua.

In the past, other archbishops elected to synods have included Carberry, Dearden, Flores, Krol, Quinn, Roach, Sanchez, Stafford, Whealon, and Wright. Papal appointees have included cardinals Baum, Cooke, Krol, Law, Manning, Szoka, Wright, and archbishops Martin O'Connor, Quinn, and Weakland (when he was an abbot). Cardinal Bernardin has attended almost every synod since 1974 and has been elected by those at the synod to plan future synods as a member of the council on the synod.

Although the synodal meetings are closed, press briefings and leaks reveal some of what goes on. In 1980 at the synod on the family, American bishops were especially concerned about defending their tribunals, which were under attack for granting large numbers of annulments. Archbishop Quinn also came under attack when he gave a speech that was interpreted as calling for a rethinking of the church's prohibition against artificial birth control. At the 1987 synod on the

laity, American bishops were joined by bishops from around the world in urging a greater role for women in the church, but their views did not make it into the final document.

American cardinals and a few archbishops serve on Vatican congregations that help govern the whole church.⁴ Cardinal William Baum, prefect of the Congregation for Seminaries and Institutes for Study, is the only American cardinal working full time in Rome. He is a member of a number of Vatican congregations, councils, and agencies. In addition, Archbishop Paul C. Marcinkus is involved in administering the Vatican bank and the Vatican state. Archbishop Justin Rigali is president of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, and Archbishop John P. Foley is president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

Despite the Vatican bank scandal, Archbishop Marcinkus is still one of the most influential Americans in Rome. Cardinal Baum and Archbishop Rigali are also important Americans in Rome. Archbishop Rigali worked closely with the pope on the speeches he gave while visiting the United States in 1987.

Cardinals residing in the United States also serve on Vatican congregations and councils, but their involvement is less than those who work full time in Rome. As mentioned in chapter 1, Cardinal O'Connor of New York is on the Congregation for Bishops and the Council for Social Communications. Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago is on the congregations dealing with liturgy and evangelization and the Council for Christian unity. Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia is on the congregations for clergy and the oriental churches. He also advises the office of economic affairs. Cardinal Law of Boston and Cardinal Manning of Los Angeles served on the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life. Cardinal Law is also on the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples. Cardinal Hickey of Washington is on the Congregation for Seminaries and Institutes of Study and the one for canonization of saints.

A few archbishops also serve on congregations: Archbishop O'Meara of Indianapolis is on the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples, Archbishop Mahony of Los Angeles on the pontifical councils for justice and peace and for migrants.

The actual work of non-Roman members of the congregations is not great. "They have periodic meetings and you have to prepare for those meetings, but there isn't a lot of ongoing work," says Cardinal Bernardin. Members not residing in Rome usually attend only about one meeting a year. "The one that really requires more," says the cardinal, "is the Council of the Synod, because you have to meet two or three times a year, and you have to prepare for it."

In fact, the American archbishops have devoted more time to ad hoc work for the Holy See than working on permanent Vatican congregations. For example, while an archbishop, Hickey conducted the visitation of the Seattle archdiocese for the Vatican. And as chancellor of the Catholic University of America, he has been prominent in dealing with Rev. Charles Curran, the moral theologian. Cardinal Bernardin, Cardinal O'Connor, and Archbishop Quinn spent countless hours resolving the Seattle controversy which will be explained below. Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco also worked tirelessly as chairman of the papal commission on religious life in the United States of which Archbishop Kelly of Louisville was also a member.

Other bishops spent months visiting seminaries and reporting on their condition. Cardinal Krol has been an advisor to the pope on Vatican finances and has worked raising money for Poland. Cardinal Law is on the papal commission responsible for writing an international catechism. Archbishop Kelly chaired the committee that planned the pope's 1987 visit.

Relations with Rome

But most archbishops' experience with the Vatican is as the governed rather than as participants. When appointed, all bishops take an oath of loyalty to the pope. "I take that very seriously," says Archbishop Kelly. "I also take seriously my responsibilities to the pastoral needs of my people. I am the bishop here. I am not an animated instrument of someone else. But I look to him for example, and he gives forceful example to me by the way he preaches and by his personal holiness. I wish I could be as good as he is."

Some archbishops stress that they are responsible to the pope and not to Vatican officials. "One of the secrets of the Catholic church is how independent the bishop is," says Archbishop Whealon of Hartford. "And he should be, he is a successor of the apostles. He really isn't under Peter's advisors, or Peter's helpers, he is under Peter." In fact, however, when Peter's helpers say they are speaking for the pope, an archbishop has little recourse.

There is a natural and inevitable tension between those concerned about the universal church and those concerned about their local churches. Bishops rarely speak on the record about problems in their relationship with Rome. In his final address as president of the bishops' conference in November 1983, Archbishop Roach of St. Paul spoke of the problem of communications between the United States and Rome. Three years later, in his final address as president, Bishop James Malone of Youngstown spoke of "a growing and dangerous disaffection of elements of the church in the United States from the Holy See." How do Rome and the church in the United States communicate and what issues have been controversial?

Ad Limina Visit

Every five years, the American diocesan bishops make an ad limina visit to Rome where they meet with the Pope and various Vatican officials.⁵ It is called an ad limina visit from the Latin "ad limina apostolorum" by which the church refers to the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul in Rome which the bishops visit. While this book is being written, the bishops are making their 1988 visit.

Before the visit, each bishop prepares for the Congregation for Bishops a quinquennial report describing in detail the state of his diocese. This report is divided into thirteen sections asking for information on (1) the pastoral and administrative organization of the diocese, (2) the general religious situation, (3) the economic situation of the diocese, (4) liturgical and sacramental practice, (5) the clergy, (6) religious and secular institutes, (7) cooperation with the missions, (8) seminaries and universities, (9) Catholic education, (10) the life and apostolic action of the laity, (11) ecumenism, (12) social assistance, (13) other pastoral questions. In addition, the report asks for statistical data on advisory councils, the tribunal, publications, the clergy, and educational

institutions. After being received by the Congregation for Bishops, the various parts of the report are distributed to the Vatican congregations specializing in the particular concerns.

Although they get a written response some months later, some archbishops expressed disappointment that, when they reached Rome, they found no one who had read their reports. One archbishop describes his experience in 1983:

I really worked hard on it. I made up my mind this was going to be my chance to put down on paper where I think my diocese really is. I put down some tough stuff. What I thought was really true about it. Well, I didn't hear from anybody.

And although the document is in Rome before you go for your ad limina, you know that nobody looked at it. So there's no input, and there's no feedback. You kinda wonder, is it worth all that effort of trying to get through somewhere?

Since there are so many American bishops, they come to Rome in groups, usually by geographic region, for the ad limina visit. The bishops meet with Vatican officials in groups and, in the past, were mostly lectured to. One bishop complained that when a bishop questioned an official at one such meeting, the official noted down the bishop's name, which killed any further questioning.

Recently there has been more dialogue as bishops have expressed their views on church issues and tried to explain themselves to Rome. The bishops have also used their visits as an opportunity to question Vatican officials about their actions. For example, in 1983 Cardinal Oddi, prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, while visiting the United States, was interviewed in *The Wanderer* and spoke before a conference sponsored by Catholics United for the Faith (CUF), two conservative organizations that have been highly critical of the bishops.⁶ According to an archbishop who was present,

some of the bishops were pretty indignant about some of the things he had to say about American bishops and the American church. They asked Cardinal Oddi whether he read *The Wanderer*. Did he know the kind of newspaper it is and how it makes people neurotic and maybe psychotic about some of the things in the church today? Well, he said he didn't know anything about *The Wanderer*.

The bishops also met with cardinals Baum (prefect of the Congregation for Seminaries and Institutes for Study) and Ratzinger (prefect of the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith). One of the items the bishops brought up with Cardinal Ratzinger and the pope was the "very, very slow" rate of dispensations from celibacy for priests who have left the ministry. "You can talk to Cardinal Ratzinger and you can talk to the Holy Father about things that concern you," says one archbishop.

Each bishop also meets individually with the pope for about fifteen minutes. Although the bishops look forward to these meetings, they are not very productive. "The pope has no resume of your quinquennial report," one archbishop explains. "He asks you all the questions over again

that were on it. Silly questions--how many people in your diocese, how many priests, and so on--which is pure fact."

Archbishop Hurley of Anchorage, however, reports, "You were free to say what you wanted." In 1983 he wanted to speak to the pope about ecumenism and about the positive things religious were doing in his archdiocese. He felt parish priests needed encouragement for ecumenical work, and he felt that religious women were being unfairly criticized.

When I went in he started the usual thing about your diocese, size, all that type of thing. I cut in on him to bring up what I wanted to bring up. Which turned out to be the way it had to be done. The pope doesn't know me, doesn't know anything about Alaska really. What kinds of questions can he really ask? So you really have to take the lead.

Women religious also came up when Archbishop O'Meara of Indianapolis met the pope, who asked him how he got along with the religious in his archdiocese. "I think I get along with them pretty well, Holy Father," Archbishop O'Meara responded. "Better you should ask them that question, because their view of it is more meaningful." Some bishops felt that the Vatican was surprised by the generally positive view of religious women expressed by the bishops.

Sometimes the pope may have something very specific to say to an archbishop. For example, Pope Paul VI told Archbishop Casey of Denver during his ad limina to tell his auxiliary, Bishop George Evans, to stop publicly supporting the ordination of women.

After meeting with the pope individually, the bishops in groups of about twelve have lunch with the pope, where various topics are discussed. "There were no topics barred," says one archbishop. "We didn't get organized to have prepared topics, they just came up casually. The Holy Father is open to discussing any topic."

The pope is the center of attention, but "he made sure that every man spoke," says Archbishop Hurley who describes the lunch he attended in 1983. As they sat down, the pope identified each bishop by the name of his diocese, not necessarily by the bishop's own name. Then, the archbishop recalls,

we went through an unstructured conversation.

The pope said, "I have learned two new words: undocumented and unchurched." So we talked about that and pointed out that unchurched in the U.S. does not mean atheistic. We were able to point out to him that atheism is not a major force in the U.S. in a formal way. Mark [Hurley of Santa Rosa] said to him that there was no place in the U.S. where any avowed Communist has won a political campaign.

We talked about the poor, what do we do about the poor. I said, "One of the things is to work cooperatively with government, because we do not have the funds ourselves." I gave a quick reference to my own experience. He wanted to know about working with the

government, is that a problem? Not in the United States. There are lots of examples of it as they help us to do our work.

We went on for an hour and a half, two hours. That part was very good.

In the last part of the visit, the bishops as a group meet with the pope. The senior bishop, usually a cardinal, briefly addresses the pope on their behalf, and then the pope addresses the visiting bishops. The speeches of the pope appear to be written before the bishops gather in Rome. As a result, one archbishop complained, "He did not seem to reflect, in what he said, what he had heard from the American bishops."

The Issues

The pope's ad limina addresses are one of the few public indications of what the pope thinks about the American church and its hierarchy. When one bishop asked the pope what he thought of the American church, the pope responded, "Read my ad limina talks." These speeches are therefore worth examining to see what he says to the American bishops.

Three popes addressed the American bishops during their 1978 ad limina visit.

Paul VI spoke to the New York bishops on the importance of the sacrament of penance.⁷ He explicitly asked for "faithful observance of the norms" limiting general absolution to extraordinary situations of grave necessity. "General absolution is not to be used as a normal pastoral option, or as a means of confronting any difficult pastoral situation." He also insisted on the practice of First Confession before First Communion. He repeated a statement he had made to other bishops: "The faithful would be rightly shocked that obvious abuses are tolerated by those who have received the charge of the 'episcopate,' which stands for, since the earliest days of the church, vigilance and unity."

In a very positive address to the bishops of Ohio, Michigan, and Minnesota, Paul VI spoke of his closeness to them in "the splendid efforts, the sustained efforts, the united efforts that you have made on behalf of life..."⁸ He supported them in "protecting life in its multiple facets" including "efforts directed to the eradication of hunger, the elimination of subhuman living conditions, and the promotion of programs on behalf of the poor, the elderly, and minorities" and human rights and their struggle against abortion.⁹ He also noted initiatives sponsored in the United States to explain natural family planning.

In his last address to the American bishops, Paul VI spoke on the Eucharist as the summit of Christian life and noted that extraordinary ministers of communion should be used only where there is a genuine lack of priests.¹⁰

In his only address to the American bishops, John Paul I talked about the Christian family with many references to Vatican II but without mentioning *Humanae Vitae*.¹¹ He reiterated the

indissolubility of marriage but said that people with difficulties "must always know that we love them."

In his first address to the American hierarchy, pope John Paul II articulated the two issues that have continued to mark his pontificate: fidelity to doctrine and church discipline.¹² Quoting from John XXIII, he said that the great concern of the Vatican II and "my own deepest hope" was "that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be more effectively guarded and taught." His second hope was "for the preservation of the great discipline of the church." He went on to say it was his "ardent desire today that a new emphasis on the importance of doctrine and discipline will be the postconciliar contribution of your seminaries."

In 1983, John Paul II returned to these themes and made them more explicit. Speaking to the New York bishops, he repeated Paul VI's warnings on general absolution. Citing canon law, he said, "General absolution is not envisioned solely because of large numbers of penitents assembled for a great celebration or pilgrimage." He asked for their zealous pastoral solicitude "to help ensure that these norms, as well as the norms regulating the First Confession of children, are understood and properly applied."¹³

To the second group of American bishops he said that they must be holy and a sign of Christ's love, but "there can be no dichotomy between the bishop as a sign of Christ's compassion and as a sign of Christ's truth."¹⁴ As part of that truth, the pope wanted the bishops to proclaim "the indissolubility of marriage..., the incompatibility of premarital sex and homosexual activity with God's plan..., the unpopular truth that artificial birth control is against God's law..." and "the rights of the unborn, the weak, the handicapped, the poor and the aged...."

The bishop must also explain the church's teaching on the exclusion of women from priestly ordination and "give proof of his pastoral ability and leadership by withdrawing all support from individuals or groups who in the name of progress or compassion, or for other alleged reason, promote the ordination of women to the priesthood."

In a later address to a third group of American bishops, the pope spoke on the priesthood whose identity is found in the ministry of the sacraments of the Eucharist and reconciliation. He also confirmed the "general exclusion of priests from secular and political activity."¹⁵

To the next group of bishops, he referred to his June 1983 letter asking the American bishops to exercise special pastoral service to the religious.¹⁶ This letter announced the formation of a papal commission on religious life headed by Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco. The pope explained his action as an example of collegiality and asked the bishops to give to religious "a call to holiness, a call to renewal, and a call to penance and conversion." In his address, he stressed the importance of prayer and union with the magisterium as essential aspects of religious life.

Finally, to the last group of American bishops, he spoke of the church's "mission of proclaiming Christ's good news about Christian married love, the identity and worth of the family, and the importance of understanding its mission in the church and the world."¹⁷ As bishops, they are

"called upon to help couples know and understand the reasons for the church's teaching on human sexuality," including the church's teaching on natural family planning. He commended the bishops for the concern shown for needy families through their social service agencies.

Papal Visits 1979 and 1987

During these *ad limina* addresses, the pope speaks to groups of bishops from various parts of the United States. He addresses all of the bishops together only when he comes to this country. In 1979 he spoke to the U.S. bishops in Chicago, who were kept waiting for over an hour because he was running late. Although the press received copies of his talk in advance, the bishops did not. Complaints were also heard because the bishops had no real opportunity to dialogue with the pope.

In his speech, he noted the "long tradition of fidelity to the Apostolic See on the part of the American hierarchy."¹⁸ He urged them to lives of personal holiness. He repeated his favorite quotation from John XXIII about guarding and keeping the deposit of doctrine. Then in a long section he commended them for doing this in their pastoral letter "To Live in Christ Jesus." He also referred to a pastoral letter on racism and one on homosexuality by individual bishops.

He encouraged the bishops to work for Christian unity but noted that "intercommunion between divided Christians is not the answer." He asked them to safeguard the sacrament of reconciliation, referring to the limits of general absolution. He also spoke of the Eucharist and of the communion of the local church with the universal church.

On his 1987 visit, his meeting with the American bishops in Los Angeles began in the morning so that the bishops would not be kept waiting, but once again the press and not the bishops received advance copies of his talk. The meeting was structured as a dialogue. He was addressed by four archbishops whose speeches had been given to the Vatican in advance so that the pope could prepare a response.¹⁹ Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago spoke of the church as "a *communio*: a communion of particular churches in which and from which exists the one and unique Catholic Church; a communion which is not fully the church unless united with the Bishop of Rome."

The church in the United States, he said, is situated in American culture "where everyone prizes the freedom to speak his or her mind.., to question things," and to "want to know the reasons why certain decisions are made, and they feel free to criticize if they do not agree or are not satisfied with the explanation." Since the church "values both its unity and diversity, there are bound to be misunderstandings and tensions at times." The ministry of the bishops is "to provide for the unity of the particular churches, and the Petrine ministry to promote and protect the unity of the universal church."

The practical question is "how to maintain our unity while affirming the diversity in the local realization of the church; how to discern a proper balance between freedom and order." He made some suggestions, including the following: "We must be able to speak with one another in complete candor, without fear. This applies to our exchanges with the Holy See as well as among ourselves as bishops. Even if our exchange is characterized by some as confrontational, we must

remain calm and not become the captives of those who would use us to accomplish their own ends." Also, "we must affirm and continue to grow in our appreciation of the conciliar vision of collegiality as both a principle and style of leadership in the Church," and he pointed to the NCCB as a visible expression of collegiality.

In his response, John Paul II did not directly react to the cardinal's comments on American culture or on the need for candor between bishops and Rome. He picked up on the description of the church as a *communio* but stressed the "vertical dimension" of communion--communion with God and communion of the local churches with the pope. Without explicitly disagreeing with the cardinal, the pope made clear that the tension between unity and diversity should be resolved in favor of unity.

Next Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco spoke on the state of moral theology in an address that is not easily summarized. He defined moral theology as "human wisdom struggling to understand God's revelation about how we live." He said "the revolutionary changes which have occurred in personal and societal life in the 20th century are not grounds for dismissing church teaching as outmoded...."

But as pastors, the bishops must address new realities: the military role of the United States in the world, divorce and family instability, the high standard of living, new medical technologies, the insights of psychology and sociology into the nature of human sexuality, the sexually permissive climate, the changing social status of women, and the higher level of education among American Catholics. Archbishop Quinn said, "We cannot fulfill our task simply by an uncritical application of solutions designed in past ages for problems which have qualitatively changed or which did not exist in the past."

He cited the American bishops' pastoral letters on peace and on economics as examples of a moral pedagogy that distinguishes universally binding moral principles from specific applications and recommendations that allow for a diversity of opinion. He supported dialogue and discussion as an effective method of understanding moral questions and developing responses.

The pope picked up on Archbishop Quinn's statement that the church wishes to remain faithful to the moral teaching of Jesus. He said that claiming "that dissent from the magisterium is totally compatible with being a 'good Catholic' and poses no obstacle to the reception of the sacraments...is a grave error that challenges the teaching office of the bishops of the United States and elsewhere." He did not comment on the new realities moral theology must deal with. He ignored the distinction between principles and applications. The impression given was that the magisterium has clear and definitive answers to the issues raised by Archbishop Quinn, and these answers must be proclaimed more forcefully and courageously by the bishops.

Archbishop Weakland of Milwaukee spoke on the role of the laity in society and the church. He noted their increased education and increased participation in American society. They look at the intrinsic worth of an argument rather than accept it on the authority of church teachers. As a result, "an authoritarian style is counterproductive, and such authority for the most part then becomes ignored." The faithful look for a spirituality that integrates their lives, and they want to

contribute their skills and knowledge to the life and growth of the church. Women want to be equal partners in the church's mission.

John Paul II acknowledged the growing role and education of American Catholics, but he asked what has been their impact on American culture. The bishops should provide the laity with a comprehensive and solid program of catechesis so that they can bring the gospel's purifying influence to the world of culture. He spoke of the need for pastoral care to families and of natural family planning. He quoted Paul VI's 1978 *ad limina* address commending the bishops on their work for peace and justice. He spoke of the "equal human dignity of women and their true feminine humanity."

Finally, Archbishop Pilarczyk of Cincinnati spoke on lay, religious, and clerical vocations in the United States. He noted the decline in religious and priestly vocations and the rise of lay ministry. Mandatory priestly celibacy is questioned as is the church's teaching on the ordination of women. As positive points, he noted the broadening concept of church ministry and the increasing appreciation of prayer, Scripture, and liturgy. While admitting to plenty of problems and loose ends to deal with, he felt that the Holy Spirit was hard at work in the dioceses and parishes of our country. What is happening "is not the turmoil and crisis of death and decay, but of development and of life."

In responding, John Paul avoided the term lay ministry but spoke of the "active participation of the laity in the mission of the church." He stressed the vocation of the laity in the world rather than in the church.

Finally, he mentioned some things not brought up by the bishops. He asked the bishops "to be vigilant that the dogmatic and moral teaching of the Church is faithfully and clearly presented to the seminarians, and fully accepted and understood by them." Once again he returned to his favorite quotation from John XXIII that the greatest concern of Vatican II is that "Christian doctrine should be more effectively guarded and taught."

He also asked the bishops to make every effort to ensure that the norms for the use of general absolution are observed. He encouraged pastoral care to homosexuals that included a clear explanation of the church's teaching, "which by its nature is unpopular." He referred in a positive way to the California bishops' pastoral letter, "A Call to Compassion," which spoke of the need of the recovery of the virtue of chastity.

But as opposed to his address in 1979, what was striking in Los Angeles was the lack of any reference to the American bishops' pastoral letters on peace and the economy, although they were cited by Archbishops Quinn and Weakland. He never mentioned the peace pastoral during his visit and referred to the economic pastoral only twice in passing. Many believed that he disagreed less with the substance of the letters than with the widely consultative public process that was involved in their writing.

Ad Limina 1988

While this book is being written, the American bishops are making trips to Rome for their 1988 ad limina visits. By the end of September, seven groups of bishops had visited Rome. Four more groups will visit before the end of the year. Early in 1989, there will be an additional meeting of a representative group of American bishops with the pope. The Brazilian bishops had a similar meeting at the end of their ad limina visit in 1986. At this meeting, the Brazilians discussed liberation theology with the pope and Vatican officials. The Brazilians were pleased with the meeting and felt that the Vatican had a better understanding of them after this visit.

The pope's talks to the American bishops during their 1988 ad limina visits were more positive tone than those given previously. Bishop Michael Pfeifer of San Angelo, TX, reports that the pope said that after his 1983 trip to the United States "he had a different view of the American Catholic" than he had previously "because he was given some rather negative publicity before he came that he didn't find true."/20 The pope noted that the demonstrations against him predicted in the press did not happen.

In March 1988, the pope spoke to the first group of visiting bishops about his 1983 trip to the United States. He noted that "One of the great riches of the church in the United States is the way in which she herself incarnates universality and catholicity in her ethnic makeup, taken as she is 'from every nation and race, people and tongue' (Rv. 7:9)."/ 21He said he was "convinced of the openness of the church in the United States to challenge, of her good will and, above all, of Christ's grace active within her." He noted the church's response to the farm crisis and "the panorama of charitable works and health care that was presented to me" during the visit. He challenged the bishops not to forget the missions and cited their 1986 pastoral statement on world missions.

In his address to the second group of American bishops, which included the Texas bishops, the pope recalled "my recent visit to San Antonio, the wonderful welcome given me and the impressive faith of the people."/22 He also cited the Texas bishops' pastoral statement on human sexuality as "a much appreciated pastoral effort to present the church's teaching on chastity without fear or reticence." The rest of the address spoke of the pastoral vision needed for the third millennium, a topic relevant to the entire church. But he did ask "in a special way" that the bishops of the United States promote "the centuries-old practice of individual confession." He expanded on this theme with the third group of bishops whom he also asked to enforce the church law limiting general absolution to cases of grave necessity./23

In June the pope spoke on the importance of prayer to the fourth group of bishops. As in 1983, he noted the "superb history of eucharistic participation by the people"/24 of the United States which has a higher rate of church attendance than most other countries. To a group of bishops in July he spoke about catechetics. He complemented the bishops for calling "your people to a sense of solidarity with those in need," for standing "by all those who are struggling to live in a way consonant with their human dignity," especially migrants and immigrants, and for "sustained dialogue and fraternal collaboration in projects of service to humanity."/25

In September, John Paul surprised everyone by speaking positively of the draft of the bishops' pastoral letter on women. First he spoke of human rights in general and thanked the bishops for their persevering efforts in "defense and support of human life."/26 Then in speaking of women's

rights, he said that the draft letter showed a "sensitivity" in dealing with women's issues. "You are rightly striving to eliminate discrimination based on sex," he said.

A week later, for the first time, he spoke favorably of the bishops' pastoral letters on peace and economic justice. He cited them for their support of solidarity and development in the face of global interdependence. He noted that "great openness to others has been characteristic of the church in the United States."²⁷ He commended the solidarity of men and women in the United States "pledged to the defense and service of human life." And he cited Catholic Relief Services as "one extraordinary example of the creative solidarity of American Catholics."

A number of bishops noted the change to a more positive tone in the pope's speeches to the American bishops. Some explained this resulted from the favorable impression he received while visiting the church in United States. Some also felt that the pope had changed speech writers because he recognized that his U.S. speeches, especially his response to the American bishops, did not go over well. The pope appears to be relying less on Archbishop Justin Rigali, the American prelate who is president of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy. In addition, informed observers pointed to the replacement of Archbishop Eduardo Martinez Somalo with Archbishop Edward Cassidy as assistant secretary of state. Somalo, who was promoted to cardinal, has a negative view of the church in the United States. The Australian Cassidy appears to be more open to the American situation.

At their lunches with the pope, the American bishops discussed a number of current concerns: women's ordination, peace and unity in the world, the alleged Marian apparitions at Medjugorje (Yugoslavia) and the case of French conservative Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre who was excommunicated for ordaining bishops. The bishops also discussed various issues with the Vatican curia, including a statement on AIDS by the NCCB Administrative Committee.

Letters from Rome

In between ad limina visits and papal visits, communications between Rome and the bishops is usually by letter. Most archbishops say that they are rarely bothered by Rome.²⁸ The communications from Rome they receive are mostly of a general nature distributed through the NCCB. "There would be very, very little addressed specifically to this diocese," said Archbishop Donnellan of Atlanta. Archbishop Gerety of Newark said that he got letters from the Vatican "fairly frequently, and sometimes they don't amount to a hill of beans." Most of the letters were responses on marriage cases that he just forwarded to the tribunal.

"I don't get a lot [of inquiries from Rome]," reports Archbishop Roach of St. Paul.

I don't feel that the Holy See is bugging me. Over a period of years I have gotten some letters that irritated me and have responded to them. It was dropped, and so we let it go at that.

Considering the climate of critics which we've got here [St. Paul is the headquarters of a number of conservative Catholic organizations], apparently the Holy See has been pretty

good, because I don't get a lot of it back. They don't make me defend positions. Periodically things come, but it is not a major problem.

The impact of negative letters on Rome is a much debated issue. "I get many letters from the United States," reports Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith. Most of the letters are from those in "deep loyalty" to the Holy See, he said, adding that they deal frequently with controversial issues in the news. He mentioned as an example the case of Father Charles Curran, who has been criticized for his views on moral theology. "I think that the letters provide us with a reflection of typical Catholics," he said. "They are people who are preoccupied with the thought that the Catholic Church should remain the Catholic Church."/29

But many people fear that letters from right-wing Catholics have tarnished the Vatican's view of the American church and its bishops. The vicar general of Denver reports that Cardinal Baggio, prefect of the Congregation of Bishops, told Archbishop Casey in 1983:

Would you please get across to your people that if things are going right we would like to hear about them, because all we get is "hate mail." If we get a lot of this negative mail, then we think the diocese is in trouble, and we have to check up on it. So if you can get the word around, let us know both sides.

When an archbishop receives a letter from a Vatican official inquiring about a controversy or problem, frequently the Vatican learned about the problem through letters from America. These complaints usually come from disaffected conservatives complaining about something in the archdiocese, especially alleged liturgical abuses by priests.

Archbishop Gerety of Newark explains:

The Vatican gets all sorts of people writing in. There are more writing in than there used to be because of the changes. It's gotten to be the fashion these days to go over the head of the local bishop and appeal to the nuncio and send a copy to the pope and this office and this cardinal and all the rest.

So they write back and say, "We have this letter from so and so; give it the pastoral attention you think it deserves."

When I interviewed Archbishop Gerety, he had on his desk a letter from Cardinal Mayer, prefect of the Congregation for Worship. A man in the archdiocese had written Rome complaining that the only way of receiving the precious blood in the archdiocese was by the cup while he preferred intinction, where the host is dipped into the chalice before it is given to the

communicant. "Cardinal Mayer is just saying that he replied and [is] bringing it to my attention," explains Archbishop Gerety.

Mayer just says, from the cup "is the most desirable form, but it is not the only way" and "expressing the hope that this matter does not cause your Excellency any inconvenience, I remain...." That means Mayer can now say that he has replied.

Archbishop Pilarczyk of Cincinnati agrees that often the Vatican official will simply forward the letter to the bishop saying, "We received this letter, will you please give it the attention that it deserves."

And we do, we always give it the attention that it deserves. Sometimes it deserves very little attention.

Occasionally I will get letters from the Holy See saying, "So and so said that Father so and so said such and such. Would you please look into that." Or, "this article was published in your diocese, and we would like for you to explain what this is all about." I have found that by and large it's not unreasonable.

Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco says that he rarely receives letters forwarded from Rome. "The experience I have had," he says, "has to do with a parishioner writing Rome about something the parishioner regards as liturgically abusive. Then Rome may write back directly to that parishioner or may write to me and inquire about it. But that is very rare."

When a Vatican official answers the writer directly without notifying his bishop, the results can be embarrassing to the local bishop. One archbishop reports,

There has been a real problem when an individual writes the Holy See and gets a letter back from the Holy See and then goes running to the bishop and says, "See you are wrong."

"What are you talking about?" [the bishop asks.]

"I got this letter from Cardinal so and so." Sure enough, there is a letter from the cardinal or the congregation with no notice whatsoever to the bishop. Several bishops raised hell over that. Really blasted them.

An example of such an embarrassing incident occurred in 1986 when Cardinal Edouard Gagnon wrote a Milwaukee member of CUF (Catholic United for the Faith) describing "New Creation," a sex education series used in about eighty dioceses, as "a travesty of sex education." His problem appears to have been with explicit pictures of the human anatomy. In a subsequent letter, he wrote that he had consulted the pope and "expressed the judgment of the Holy Father."

When the letters became public, Archbishop Kucera of Dubuque, who (together with his predecessor) had given the series an imprimatur, stated, "At no time had Cardinal Gagnon contacted me about the material contained in his letters." He first learned of the letters when they were sent to him by someone other than the cardinal. Nor had the publisher been contacted by the Vatican about the series. The archbishop noted that catechetical books were under the jurisdiction of the Congregation of Clergy, not the Pontifical Council for the Family, which Cardinal Gagnon heads. More than a year after the letters were made public, the archbishop had still not heard from anyone in the Vatican about the series, which still has his imprimatur.

Liturgy is another area where the bishops have been repeatedly embarrassed by Rome. In many dioceses, the pre-Vatican II Tridentine Mass had been offered by dissident priests associated with Archbishop Lefebvre or other priests not in union with Rome. After fighting conservatives over the Tridentine Mass, the American bishops were caught off guard when Rome decided to permit it. Many bishops felt betrayed by this action. Under the new Vatican norms, the local bishop would determine when the Tridentine Mass could be offered. But one archbishop, who would not allow the Tridentine Mass on Sundays, complained that someone from his archdiocese called Cardinal Mayer, who told him that they could have the Tridentine Mass on Sunday. The archbishop was even given a transcript of the telephone call. More recently, Cardinal Mayer has objected to the faculties or powers given by the bishops of Michigan to their priests.

On the other hand, Archbishop Virgilio Noè, who works in the Congregation for Divine Worship, sent Archbishop Hurley a copy of a letter he had received complaining about a priest in Anchorage. He also sent his reply to the complainant. "If you think it is proper to forward my letter, feel free to do so," Archbishop Noè wrote. "So I did," reports Archbishop Hurley who was pleased with this approach. "I got the pastor, the pastor went to see the couple. We took care of it. Everyone lived happily ever after."

Another area of Roman concern has been the American tribunals, which grant more annulments than all the other tribunals in the world put together. When visiting Roman congregations, Archbishop May, president of the NCCB was asked about the tribunals.

They get all these complaints that the tribunals are nothing but divorce mills; constant letters going over there from people here. A lot of it is organized mail, mostly right wing.

Most of the countries of the world, very frankly, don't even have functioning tribunals. If they exist, they might have half a dozen cases a year. And in this diocese [St. Louis] there might be 1,000, and this is just one diocese.

Well, we go over there, and they look upon us as having caved in on the divorce mentality. They don't understand that we are simply trying to serve these people with their needs, which are not the same as those in other countries.

The American bishops have defended their tribunals against Roman attack. They argue that their tribunals produce more annulments because they are better staffed with canon lawyers and secretaries, better equipped with computers and other office equipment, and because they work

longer hours. "We are open 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M." explains one archbishop. "In Rome they don't open until 10:00 or 10:30, and we work without a long lunch and a siesta."

More recently, the bishops have been having trouble getting indulgences (dispensations) for people without canon law degrees to work in the tribunals. One archbishop tried to get an indulgence renewed for a sister.

They wrote back and said no. I wrote back and said, "You said no, but didn't say why." They wrote back and said no and still didn't say why. I wrote back and said, "You said no, but still didn't say why." Then they wrote back and told me why, and still didn't say why.

Archbishop Hurley had better luck getting an indulgence for a lay woman by visiting the Signatura, the office in Rome responsible for such indulgences. "The first thing I learned was nobody speaks English in the Signatura," recalls the archbishop, who finally found a part-time person to translate. He found that, although sympathetic, they were not persuaded by the great need and lack of priests in Alaska. What the Signatura wanted to know was how much theological training she had. Luckily, she had gone through the same training program as her husband who is a deacon. After sending the Signatura a description of the courses she had taken, her indulgence was extended for five years.

Hunthausen Case

The most extreme intervention in a U.S. archdiocese by the Vatican was in Seattle, where an auxiliary was appointed who was supposed to have final authority over important areas of diocesan life including the tribunal, liturgy, former priests, priestly formation, medical ethics and ministry to homosexuals.

Such interventions are rare, but in a few other dioceses, auxiliaries or coadjutors have been appointed with special powers. Bishop Francis J. Furey had full powers when he came as coadjutor to the bankrupt diocese of San Diego in 1963. Likewise, Bishop Norman F. McFarland had special faculties when he went to the bankrupt diocese of Reno-Las Vegas in 1974. In 1983, a coadjutor was appointed to Lafayette, LA, with powers over the clergy after a scandal involving child abuse. Finally in 1986, Bishop David Foley was appointed auxiliary in Richmond, VA, although the extent of his powers was never revealed.

The Hunthausen case is worth examining because it shows what concerns Rome has about the American church. In addition, it shows how Roman procedures and American concepts of due process come into conflict.

It all began in May 1983 when Archbishop Laghi approached Archbishop Hunthausen at a meeting of the American bishops in Chicago and told him that the Vatican wanted to have a visitation of Seattle. Hunthausen, not having the slightest idea what a visitation was, said, "Fine, we have all sorts of wonderful things going on in Seattle." Archbishop Hickey of Washington, DC, was appointed visitor.

Later, Hunthausen began to question the visitation when it became clear that its purpose was to evaluate criticisms about his ministry as archbishop. He objected that he was never given any specifics about what was to be investigated so that he could defend himself. In addition, the Vatican wanted the visitation to be secret, but he argued that was impossible. When the fact of the visitation became known, Seattle officials insisted that the leak occurred in Washington, DC.

In November 1983, Archbishop Hickey spent a week in Seattle conferring with the archbishop and over seventy priests, religious, and laypersons, many of whom were suggested by the archbishop. He also examined documents issued by the archbishop or the archdiocese. Hunthausen was never given a copy of the report sent by Archbishop Hickey to the Vatican. The Vatican argued that those interviewed were promised anonymity, and therefore he could not see it.

In September 1985, the archbishop received a letter from Cardinal Ratzinger concluding the visitation and outlining its findings.³⁰ The letter is important because it shows what things worry the Vatican, not only in Seattle, but in other dioceses in the United States.

The six-page letter begins by complementing Hunthausen: "You have striven with heart and mind to be a good bishop of the church, eager to implement the renewal called for in the decrees of the Vatican Council II." It also commends him for bringing into existence consultative bodies, for his efforts to involve the laity in the work of the church, and for his concern for justice and peace. "You have given clear evidence of your loyalty to the church and your devotion and obedience to the Holy Father." The letter notes that he has "suffered from exaggerated criticisms and routine misunderstandings" and disassociates itself from "extremist groups."

The letter then goes on to list the abuses that Ratzinger said exist in Seattle.

First, the letter deals with marriage and divorce, citing the "rather widespread practice of admitting divorced persons to a subsequent church marriage" without an annulment. "Catholics have been advised that after divorce and civil remarriage, they may in conscience return to the sacraments." "A clear presentation of the sacramentality and indissolubility of Christian marriage should be made to all your people." And the tribunal should conform to the prescriptions of canon law.

Second, some doctrinal problems are listed. Concern is expressed about those "who seem reluctant to accept the magisterium as capable of giving definitive direction in matters of faith and morals." The church should be portrayed not simply as a sociological entity "in opposition to its divine origin, mission and authority." Faulty Christologies lead to these misunderstandings. Stress should be put on Christ's divinity, humanity, salvific mission, and union with and lordship over the church. A correct appreciation of the priesthood and role of the laity should be inculcated in the seminary program. Policies and programs of the archdiocese should reflect a vision of the human person based on the gospel and not just on human sciences. The authoritative teaching of the church has a valid claim on the Catholic conscience. "No bishop should hesitate to overrule advisors who propose opinions at variance with the authentic teaching of the Holy See."

Third, the letter states that Archbishop Hunthausen has taken steps to correct the practice of contraceptive sterilization in local Catholic hospitals.

Fourth, "first confession should precede first communion."

Fifth, "the use of general absolution must be strictly limited." Large crowds of penitents at Christmas and Easter do not constitute the necessary condition required by canon law.

Sixth, "Routine intercommunion [non-Catholics receiving Communion at Mass] on the occasion of weddings or funerals...should be recognized as clearly abusive and an impediment to genuine ecumenism."

Seventh, practices not in accord with liturgical directives should be eliminated.

Eighth, priests who have left the ministry and not been laicized by Rome cannot be employed by the church. When a priest is laicized, that is returned to the lay state, he is often prohibited from doing certain things by his rescript of laicization, the Vatican document by which he is laicized. This frequently means they may not teach in Catholic schools or act as lectors or extraordinary ministers of communion. Cardinal Ratzinger complained that these prohibitions were not being observed.

Ninth, in 1976 and 1979 the archdiocese distributed a questionnaire that revealed deficient doctrinal understandings and led some to believe it "to be a kind of voting process on doctrinal or moral teachings."

Tenth, the exclusion of women from the priesthood should be explained unambiguously.

Eleventh, "The archdiocese should withdraw all support from any group that does not unequivocally accept the teaching of the magisterium concerning the intrinsic evil of homosexual activity... A compassionate ministry to homosexual persons must be developed that has as its clear goal the promotion of a chaste life-style."

It is noteworthy that five of the issues listed in the letter (general absolution, first confession, women priests, intercommunion, homosexuality) were mentioned by the pope in talks to American bishops. The Vatican also emphasized privately that the visitation had nothing to do with Archbishop Hunthausen's vocal opposition to nuclear weapons or his refusal to pay some of his taxes as a protest. His authority on social justice and peace issues in his archdiocese was never challenged.

The Vatican did not want this letter made public, but Archbishop Hunthausen insisted that some public report was necessary lest he be accused of misrepresenting its findings. In November 1985, a letter to the archbishop from Archbishop Laggi was published that summarized the contents of the Ratzinger letter. Archbishop Hunthausen said that he was firmly committed to dealing with the areas of concern listed in the letters. But he and others in Seattle asked for

specific instances of when and where these abuses had taken place. Many of the abuses, he said, never occurred or had been dealt with.

In December 1985, Donald W. Wuerl was appointed auxiliary bishop in Seattle. Seattle sources insist that from the very beginning the Vatican wanted to appoint an auxiliary or coadjutor with special powers but that Archbishop Hunthausen had refused to accept this. Bishop Wuerl was seen by Seattle as a compromise--an auxiliary without special powers but one not nominated by the archbishop. Vatican officials saw the compromise differently. Bishop Wuerl did not have special powers from the Vatican, but Archbishop Hunthausen was supposed to give him these powers himself.

By Easter of 1986 it became clear that Bishop Wuerl and Archbishop Hunthausen had different understandings of the bishop's powers. When Rome was questioned, Archbishop Hunthausen was told that he was supposed to delegate to Bishop Wuerl final authority over the tribunal, liturgy, priestly formation, former priests, medical ethics, and ministry to homosexuals. Again the Vatican did not want this made public, but the archbishop said that he could not pretend he had full power when he did not.

When it was made public in September 1986, most of the priests and religious of the archdiocese were outraged.^{/31} Some canonists argued that it was against canon law for a diocesan bishop to delegate final decision making authority to anyone, even an auxiliary bishop. Meetings were held, petitions were signed, protests were made. It soon became clear that no matter what his legal authority, Bishop Wuerl was, in fact, isolated, with the archbishop being one of his few defenders in Seattle.

Meanwhile, shortly before the November 1986 meeting of the American bishops, Archbishop Laghi issued a chronology of the case giving the Vatican's side.^{/32} It said that at least since 1978, "the Holy See sought the assistance of the archbishop of Seattle in responding to the high volume of complaints that were sent to Rome by priests, religious, and faithful in the archdiocese." After hearing a preliminary report on the visitation, "the Holy See considered him [Hunthausen] lacking the firmness necessary to govern the archdiocese." It also said that Archbishop Hunthausen had agreed to the delegation of powers when Bishop Wuerl was first appointed. In a closed session at the meeting of bishops, Archbishop Hunthausen gave his version of the events, which differed significantly from Archbishop Laghi's.^{/33}

Up until this point, most bishops had given Rome the benefit of the doubt, since they did not know the facts. Once the chronology gave the Vatican's side of the story, the bishops had to judge the case on the facts rather than on faith. The administrative committee of the NCCB recommended that the bishops support the Vatican action in Seattle as "fair and just." But after studying the chronology and listening to Archbishop Hunthausen, the bishops were confused and divided. They were asked to support the Vatican's actions in Seattle but refused. Rather they simply acknowledged the right of the Vatican to do what it did and offered their services to bring about a resolution to the conflict.

As it became clear that the Vatican solution was not working in Seattle and, in fact, was causing controversy across the country, the American bishops worked to settle the question before the

pope's visit in September 1987. The pope agreed in February 1987 to appoint a three-man papal commission "to assess the current situation in the archdiocese of Seattle."

In May, the commission, consisting of cardinals Bernardin of Chicago and O'Connor of New York and Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco, agreed with the Vatican's assessment of the situation in Seattle but recommended the restoring of Archbishop Hunthausen to full power. The commission reported, "No matter how personally firm in his teachings and practices the archbishop himself may be, without intending it, he is perceived as generating, or at least accepting, a climate of permissiveness within which some feel themselves free to design their own policies and practices."/34 They also recommended the appointment of a coadjutor, Bishop Thomas J. Murphy, who would not have special powers. Bishop Wuerl was to receive another assignment (ultimately he became bishop of Pittsburgh), and the commission was to continue in existence to help Archbishop Hunthausen deal with the problems identified by the Vatican.

Several significant lessons can be learned from this case. First, the Vatican could do to Archbishop Hunthausen only what he allowed it to do. If he had refused to accept the visitation, if he had refused to accept Bishop Wuerl, if he had refused to delegate to Wuerl any powers, there was little the Vatican could do. It could not send in the Swiss Guard to restore order. The power of the Vatican is based on its moral authority and the willingness of Catholics to agree and obey. All of the Vatican's efforts to deal with Cardinal Cody in Chicago or to deal with Archbishop Lefebvre failed because they simply ignored it. Ultimately Archbishop Lefebvre was excommunicated in 1988 for ordaining bishops without papal approval.

Second, misunderstandings occur when Roman procedures clash with American conceptions of fairness and due process. Roman procedures presume a benign, wise, and paternal authority that does what is best for the local and universal church. American concepts of due process institutionalize a fear that authority is not always wise and sometimes abuses its power. The desire for a bill of particulars giving specific and concrete charges, the right of the accused to face and cross-examine his accusers, the desire for an open process--all of these come from a tradition where power is suspect. Vatican officials argue that such procedures are not necessary and are counterproductive--They are no more needed in the church than they are in a family. In addition, differences in language and style can lead to misunderstandings, as appears to have happened in the appointment of Bishop Wuerl.

A third lesson from the case is the growing reliance by the Vatican on local church officials to deal with problems. First, Archbishop Hickey conducted the original investigation rather than a Vatican official. It is impossible to evaluate his role in the affair since the report was never made public. Second, the Vatican tried to get the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to endorse its actions in Seattle. This failed. Later, the three American prelates on the papal commission worked out the compromise that settled the controversy. The recent studies of seminaries and religious life were also conducted by American bishops. Rome refers to this as collegiality.

A final lesson of the case is the recognition that the Vatican is capable of changing its mind; its decisions are not always set in concrete, as many believe. The Vatican appears to have been convinced by right-wing letter writers that the people of Seattle were scandalized and upset by the actions of their archbishop. Wholesale repudiation of the Vatican's actions by the Seattle

priests and religious showed that Vatican intervention was not welcome and was, in fact, counterproductive.

The commission constructed a compromise that withdrew Bishop Wuerl and restored Archbishop Hunthausen while at the same time supporting the Vatican's view that there were problems in Seattle--The diagnosis was correct, the cure was not working. The Vatican reversal was portrayed as tactical, not substantive. But even this compromise required intensive negotiations that would not have succeeded if the three American prelates had not been solidly united behind their recommendations when facing both Seattle and Rome. When finally presented with their recommendations, the pope responded, "If that is what you want, fine." In addition, he was undoubtedly pleased that this matter was settled before his trip to the United States.

Gerety Case

Another archbishop who came under fire in Rome was Archbishop Gerety of Newark. CUF (Catholics United for the Faith) attacked him because Renew began and is based in his archdiocese. CUF disapproved of its emphasis on community and claimed that it was doctrinally unsound. In addition, Rome forced him to withdraw the imprimatur of *Christ Among Us*, a very popular book used in adult catechesis. Archbishop Gerety's resignation was accepted two years early, shortly before the NCCB committee on doctrine gave a generally favorable report on Renew while also calling for more doctrinal and catechetical content to its materials.

After claiming victory in Seattle and Newark, conservative Catholic organizations like CUF targeted Archbishop Weakland as their next victim. He was especially vulnerable in Rome because, in what he thought was an off the record talk to the Milwaukee press, he had described the newly elected pope.

I had watched him once in Czestochowa with 200,000 people in the crowd. I said, he works that crowd better than any ham actor could. And I said, he's very bright, catches on fast, but he is stubborn. The press the next day had, "Archbishop says `Pope ham actor who is stubborn.'"

Despite CUF and the press, Rome has not moved against Archbishop Weakland. Having worked in Rome as abbot primate of the Benedictines, he knows Roman ways and has Roman friends. In addition, he is widely respected by the other American bishops who elected him one of their delegates to the 1987 synod. Many observers consider him the brightest member of the American hierarchy. If Rome tried to discipline him, the Seattle controversy would look, in contrast, like a tempest in a teapot.

The Man in the Middle

A number of archbishops described themselves as being in the middle between Rome and their archdioceses. "The hardest part of my job is to be sandwiched between Roman orders and my

people and priests' hopes and ideals," reports Archbishop Weakland. "I live that struggle day in and day out. I feel frustrated with no channels of communication and just kind of caught."

Archbishop Roach of St. Paul describes it in similar terms:

There is conflict between what is perceived as local need and universal teaching. A classic example would be the question of the order of penance and first Eucharist.

I feel a very strong responsibility to recognize what is the order in the universal church. I also feel a very strong responsibility to be sensitive to the pedagogical, psychological, catechetical needs as perceived by the people who are responsible for the preparation of youngsters. And that is always a stress, that's always a strain.

Another case where the bishops were caught in the middle between Rome and their flock was over the issue of altar girls. "I say no to altar girls," recounts Archbishop Lipscomb of Mobile. "Oh God, what troubles I get into by saying no to altar girls." Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago also wrote his pastors telling them not to have altar girls, but press reports indicated he did not discipline pastors who did not follow the directive.

Some archbishops feel that it is difficult for Rome to understand the American church. "The Vatican is predominantly European. It's Italian. It's Roman," says Archbishop Flores of San Antonio. "Very often they do not understand the realities out here. But I think they are making an effort, and we've been trying to dialogue individually and collectively." As an example, he cited Rome's desire that religious in his archdiocese live in community.

In the city, most of the nuns live in communities. But we have [poor rural] areas where sisters are living alone, and they're sixty or eighty miles from the nearest community. Well, we had to argue that point--that it's just not possible, and yet we need the service of a qualified sister way out there in the middle of nowhere.

Rome also wanted the sisters to wear habits. But many of the nuns were from Mexico where they had never worn habits because the government forbids it. In addition, as opposed to Europe, "here it is so hot that you just can't stand it," he says. "For the nuns to be modestly dressed is enough. The people respect them. Everybody knows they are nuns."

Another archbishop caught in the middle was Archbishop Sanchez of Santa Fe, who was asked by the Vatican to take over the University of Albuquerque when it was going broke under the administration of the Sisters of St. Francis. "We did so reluctantly because we knew that it was in tough financial condition," says Archbishop Sanchez, "but we hoped for the best." Two years later the school closed, and the archdiocese was stuck with its \$8 million debt.

Conclusion

Besides governing their archdioceses, archbishops are also involved in their provinces, their state conferences and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. A few play a role in the international church. All of this work involves travel and meetings outside the archdiocese, to say nothing of the time spent in the archdiocese preparing for these meetings. Archbishops who are prominent in national and international church affairs estimate that 20 to 30 percent of their time is devoted to work outside their archdioceses.

Chancery officials have mixed feelings about this work by their archbishops. They are usually proud that their archbishop is playing an important role in the larger church, but they also complain that the work makes him less available in the archdiocese. Many of the archbishops also complain that they have to spend so much time on matters outside of their archdioceses, but it rarely stops them from being involved in something they consider important.

Not only do archbishops have an impact on the church outside their archdioceses, that same church also has an impact on them. They cannot govern their archdioceses in a vacuum independent of what happens in other parts of the church. Decisions made by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops can sometimes bind the local bishop. Even what happens in neighboring dioceses can influence opinions and actions in their archdioceses.

But it is the Vatican that can have the most significant impact on the local archdiocese. The appointment of the archbishop and the parameters of his authority are mostly determined in Rome. While Rome is not a constant concern of the archbishops, it is ever present as a source of normative policies and procedures. After examining the *ad limina* and U.S. speeches of the pope (and the correspondence with Seattle), it is obvious that he wants the American bishops to deal with a number of issues.

The limits to general absolution were mentioned most consistently by Paul VI in 1978, by John Paul II in 1979, 1983, 1987, 1988, and in Seattle. First confession before first communion has also come up repeatedly, as have the indissolubility of marriage and prohibitions on intercommunion. While acknowledging the need for compassion, John Paul stresses that this is not incompatible with preaching the truth. All of this was summed up in his very first *ad limina* address to the American bishops when he called for fidelity to church teaching and discipline.

On the other hand, Paul VI and John Paul II both praised the American church for its concern for the poor at home and abroad. Both commended the bishops for programs like Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services. The bishops have also been praised for their concern for human rights, including the right to life.

The bishops give careful attention to the pope when he speaks, and when making decisions, the views of the pope are very influential. In the next chapter we will examine how archbishops make decisions.

Footnotes

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3. "Report from the Synod," Thomas J. Reese, S.J., *America* 143 (October 11, 1980): 199.
4. See Peter Hebblethwaite, *In the Vatican* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1986).
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See also:

Conclusion: Episcopal Decision Making

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