

U.S. Bishops Meet/Bishop Malone's Address

The Church: Its Strengths and Its Questions

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"Questions, serious questions, do not threaten our collective life," Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, outgoing president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in his presidential address opening the Nov. 10-14 meeting of the U.S. bishops in Washington. Malone cited a number of questions faced in the U.S. church today, among them the relationship of the local and universal church, roles of women, the shortage of priestly vocations, the relationship of bishops and theologians. But he also cited areas of strength for the church, including the exercise of collegiality as seen in a study of religious life, seminary visitations and the process of consultation used in the development of recent national pastoral letters. Another strength, said Malone, is the fact that Catholics have "moved into a new willingness to criticize our culture" — its economic inequality, military posture, foreign interventions and abortion of the unborn. Malone told the bishops that he had proposed a preparatory meeting between the pope, representatives of the U.S. bishops and perhaps members of the Roman Curia prior to the pope's 1987 visit to the United States. The meeting, Malone said, "would provide an opportunity for us to share with (the pope) information about aspects of the church which will be highlighted when he returns to this country." Malone's text follows.

My brother bishops:

The care of our lives is for the holiness of the church. Every other responsibility and function of the bishop converges in this: that our visible community, the church, incarnate the Spirit of Christ, that it continue into this time and place God's offer to the human race in Christ.

Our care is that this tangible, historical offer of grace which is Christ be embodied in the church. Bishops are at the service of this community. Our concern for unity is a concern that Christ be not divided. Our concern for orthodoxy is that our discipleship be authentic. Our concern for evangelization is that the eternal union with God — the longing of every human being and the promise of Christ — be made available also to the people of our time.

Our lives are hidden within this mystery which we serve. Only when we come before God will we see what our episcopal service has really been, only then will we emerge from shadows into truth.

Yet at such a juncture as this,

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On File

Jesuit Father John McNeill, who had been ordered to stop speaking on homosexuality issues, faces expulsion from his order after publicly criticizing the new Vatican instruction on homosexuality (Origins, current volume, pp. 377ff). His immediate superior, Jesuit Father David Toolan, said Nov. 10 that dismissal "was only a matter of time." McNeill said in an interview that the head of the Jesuits' New York province, Father Joseph Novak, had begun formal steps toward expulsion of the 61-year-old priest by asking him to sign a statement which acknowledged that he had been ordered not to continue to speak out on the issue. At Jesuit headquarters in Rome, Jesuit Father Paul Symonds, an undersecretary of the order, said McNeill "officially has not been expelled" but that there was a process under way. "At this stage, the matter has not gone beyond the New York province. The issue is between him and the New York provincial," Symonds said Nov. 10. McNeill was partially silenced in 1977 when the Vatican lifted the imprimatur on his book "The Church and the Homosexual" and told him to stop making public statements, in word or print, on the subject. McNeill had advocated a liberalization of church attitudes toward homosexuality. McNeill said Nov. 2 that he decided to speak out on homosexual issues despite an October meeting in New York with the head of the Jesuit order, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, who ordered McNeill to give up his public ministry to homosexuals or face dismissal. The priest said it was his understanding that Kolvenbach acted on

orders from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. McNeill said he had tried to stay within the Vatican's 1977 "partial silencing" as well as subsequent Vatican orders. However, the October directive forbade him "as a priest and psychotherapist to minister in any way to gay people"; it permitted him "the private ministry" of his psychotherapy practice "but no ministry that could come to public notice," he said. "As a Jesuit priest, as a moral theologian, as a psychotherapist, as a person who is himself gay, and as a human being I cannot obey that order in conscience."

Seminarians need training in the mass media, the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education said in a document sent to the world's bishops. Future priests must be trained in how to judge media messages and how to help others understand and use contemporary communications, the congregation said. The document, titled "Guide to the Training of Future Priests Concerning the Instruments of Social Communications," says "students should be given practical 'hands-on' exercises, possibly with the help of experts from outside, in the proper use of communications equipment." This should include "speaking to microphone, movie camera or telecamera, with special attention to performance in liturgical ceremonies, interviewing and being interviewed, writing news and feature articles and scripts for radio and television, and composing advertising copy."

Datebook

Nov. 24-25: Convocation: "The Economic Pastoral Letters and Economic Justice Advocacy." Sponsor: Interfaith Action for Economic Justice. United Methodist Building. Washington, D.C.

Dec. 2-3: Symposium: "Teaching and Preaching About Judaism in Christian Parishes." Sponsor: University of Notre Dame. University of Notre Dame. South Bend, Ind.

Dec. 5-6: Conference: "Ethical Issues in Reproductive Health: Religious Perspectives." Sponsor: Catholics for a Free Choice. Washington Hilton. Washington, D.C.

Jan. 1: World Day of Peace. Sponsor: Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission. Theme: "Development and Solidarity: The Keys to Peace."

Jan. 2-6: Eastern Study Week of the Catholic Campus Ministry Association. Theme: "Campus Ministry: Enriched by the Past, Empowered for the Future." Barry University. Miami Shores, Fla.

Jan. 6-11: Workshop on Hispanic Vocations. Sponsor: National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Theme: "In My Father's House." St. Thomas University. Miami, Fla.

Jan. 18-25: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Theme: "United in Christ, a New Creation."

Jan. 19-22: Convention of the Western Vocation Directors Association. Theme: "Vocation Minister: Bridge Between Candidate and Community." Malibu, Calif.

Jan. 22-24: National Conference on Implementation of the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy. Sponsor: U.S. Catholic Conference. Sheraton Crystal City Hotel. Arlington, Va.

Jan. 30-31: Workshop: "Vocations: Involving Community Members." Sponsors: National Conference of Religious Vocation Directors and the National Sisters Vocation Conference. Mother Boniface Center. Philadelphia, Pa.

Feb. 3-4: Annual Meeting of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. Theme: "Cultural Pluralism and Catholic Identity." Hyatt Regency Hotel. Washington, D.C.

Feb. 6-8: First of five regional consultations in preparation for the 1987 world Synod of Bishops on the vocation of the laity. Sponsor: U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Laity. Mercy Conference-Retreat Center. Burlingame, Calif.

Feb. 15: Conference on Faith, Family and Country. Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation. Registry Hotel. Dallas, Texas.

Feb. 20-22: Second of five regional consultations in preparation for the 1987 world Synod of Bishops on the vocation of the laity. Sponsor: U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Laity. Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows. Belleville, Ill.

Feb. 25-27: Ecumenical Consultation on the Diaconate. Sponsor: National Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission. Cathedral College of the Immaculate Conception. Douglaston, N.Y.

*signifies new listing

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MALONE — *continued from front page*

when the president of the conference of bishops lays down the charge given him, it is customary to attempt some statement about the church in the United States. It is as if there is a particular perspective given to someone who is saying goodbye, a slant on events which this moment of change affords. As in any assessment we need to recognize both light and shadow, success and failure, accomplishments and tasks left undone.

In these remarks, let me sketch this assessment, first in terms of answers we have grown into and, second, in terms of questions which stand unavoidably before us. Let me do it with all of the frankness and honesty which are part of our evangelical freedom and which form indispensable conditions for any prayerful self-assessment. Let me do it, knowing that both our answers and our questions stand under the judgment and mercy of God.

Answers

So many things rise before our consciousness in any rapid review, answers to the feelings of some that the church in the United States has regressed — that “it isn’t like it used to be,” that we have become soft and comfortable. Rather, I point to the general and increasing vitality of parish life in our country.

While the numbers are not as impressive now as in the past, Catholics in the United States stand proportionately among the highest number of Catholics anywhere in the Western world whose weekly lives entail the eucharist as their religious center. An increasing number of young men and women, recent college graduates, give over two or three years of their lives to the poor and the marginalized either in this nation or abroad. Hundreds upon hundreds of young lay men and lay women have chosen careers in theology, introducing into the church in the United States the new presence of lay theologians as we have never known it before. Increasingly the laity is taking its responsibility for the life and the energies of the church.

Parishes and dioceses have assumed new life through parish teams of priests, religious and laity, and both these parishes and religious communities in great numbers have entered seriously into programs of renewal, programs whose success can be measured in commitments to liturgy, community, Scripture and social justice.

I think of the dedication of the American hierarchy to ecumenical dialogue, a dedication formulated and continued during years in which many say that ecumenism has died. Some eight careful and scholarly dialogic structures now manifest something of our seriousness to this “second wave” of ecumenical interchange.

At the synod last year, I said that the church in this country is basically sound, not perfect but sound. I stand by that statement.

Now, among the signs of our vitality I should like to single out two developments within the episcopal conference itself: (1) collegiality and (2) a new critical cultural realism.

1. Collegiality

The years that we have lived together as bishops in the United States since the Second Vatican Council have provided striking evidence of a rebirth in collegiality. Let me recall three such events.

A. The study of religious life. Collegiality was “the first intention” of Pope John Paul II in his call to the bishops to give themselves over these past three years to “the special pastoral service” of apostolic religious in the United States. As an episcopate united with the Holy Father, we have given over many hours to “listening sessions” in which the experience and the desires of religious could be articulated, to “dialogue sessions” in which discussions conducted in evangelical frankness could explore some of the difficult topics in contemporary spirituality and to evaluations in which we as *testes fidei* bore witness to the general health of religious life in the United States. To my knowledge, nothing like this has been attempted in the church in any country, and it was by papal designation a realization of collegiality.

B. Process for pastoral letters. Together as a national hierarchy, we have found a new and collegial method of teaching. For centuries, hierarchies have been publishing pastoral letters, but for the first time the people of God have been involved in their formation in a more intense manner. For the first time, the church has taught not simply through a finished product, but through the process that led to the finished document. Teaching is not a unilateral activity. One is only teaching if someone is being taught. Teaching and learning are mutually conditional. Too often pastoral letters in the past taught little, not because they said nothing but because few were listening. We have found a method in which our collegial teaching engages and gathers into community all sectors of the church and many of those outside the church, men and women of good will who are as concerned as we about nuclear war and economic injustice.

During our days together we will consider a major pastoral letter on Catholic social teaching and the American economy. This should be seen by Catholics and others as a sign of our strong collegial commitment to continue to address issues vital to society. We do so as those committed to moral analysis, as teachers. We do so with an unwavering sense of duty to both society and church.

C. Seminary visitations. Another essay in collegiality was the evaluation of the seminaries of the United States. The mandate was from the Holy See, but its accomplishment was the collected efforts of bishops, theologians and educators in the United States. We note with satisfaction the generally positive readings of seminary education submitted to the Congregation for Catholic Education by these teams of investigators and the interim response of the congregation. But what I wish to underline is that what we have done we have done together and that it is the Holy See which has either called us to this collective action or which has encourag-

On the second day of their Nov. 10-14 national meeting in Washington, the U.S. bishops elected Archbishop John May of St. Louis to a three-year term as president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and U.S. Catholic Conference. May, 64, has been archbishop of St. Louis since 1980. He has been NCCB-USCC vice president for the past three years and succeeds Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, as president. Presidents of the NCCB-USCC serve one term and may not succeed themselves.

Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati was elected vice president of the NCCB-USCC. Pilarczyk, 52, is chairman of the NCCB Committee on Liturgy and has been widely recognized as an educator.

May was elected on the second ballot with 164 votes. The nine other nominees combined received 126 votes.

Pilarczyk won a runoff with Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston by a vote of 159-116.

For a recent past text in Origins by May, see: “The U.S. Bishops and the ERA,” in vol. 14, pp. 475ff.

For recent past texts in Origins by Pilarczyk, see: “Dissent in the Church,” the current volume, pp. 175ff; “The Changing Image of the Priest,” a report to the June 1986 Collegeville assembly of the U.S. bishops, the current volume, pp. 137ff. In addition, a letter by Pilarczyk was included within the body of a statement by Msgr. Daniel Hoyer that appeared in the current volume of Origins on pp. 217ff. It discussed the reasons for affirming the appointment of Jesuit Father Michael J. Buckley as executive director of the NCCB Committee on Doctrine.

During their November meeting in Washington, the U.S. bishops were scheduled to complete action on a national pastoral letter on the economy. *Origins* has published the first three drafts of the pastoral letter. As this edition of *Origins* went to press, the bishops were just beginning final deliberations on the document. The final text of the document will appear in *Origins*.

Archbishop Rembert Weakland, OSB, of Milwaukee presented a report on the pastoral on the opening day of the bishops' meeting. Weakland chaired the drafting committee for the pastoral.

In his report, Weakland urged that the completion of the pastoral not be viewed as the end of a process. "In a very real way it is but the beginning. Our letter is an important teaching document and serves as a call to the whole church," he said, "but it indeed must become an integral part of the teaching of that church. If that teaching is to be effective and if that call is to be heard, then we must be certain that the process we have initiated will continue into the future. We also sense that there are many aspects of the document that are still incomplete and demand continued research. We reiterate the call to our academic institutions and to Catholic experts to continue the studies that we have here begun."

Weakland stressed that the pastoral letter "does not offer a blueprint for all of economic life or propose a 'third way' between capitalism and socialism. Rather it is the basis for fundamental moral principles that should guide every economic system."

ed our communal investment in a work which touches us all.

2. Critical Cultural Realism

Together with this rebirth of collegiality, I would cite a new critical cultural realism as a second indication of the vitality of the church. We Catholics have grown beyond the need to prove ourselves to the nation of which we are a part. We have moved into a new willingness to criticize our culture in its economic inequalities, its military posture, its foreign interventions and in its countenance of a massive slaughter of the unborn.

We are insistently willing to respect genuine difference and the rich pluralism of our nation, but this allegiance has not stopped whatever isolated but prophetic stand the Gospel demands. Some of these will be popular with one group, some with another. But there is scarcely another group in the United States which couples a horror at abortion with a preferential option for the poor, a concern for a more generous immigration policy with a recognition of what easy divorce has done to the family, the resettlement of refugees from Southeast Asia with a condemnation of military aid to the contras. The church in the United States has become something of a sign of contradiction, and this may well be one of the signs of her health.

Questions

If collegiality and a critical realism are answers into which the church has grown, into which we believe that the grace of God has led us, a critical assessment also raises questions that confront the church and whose resolution we do not yet enjoy.

1. Relationship Between Local and Universal Church

Among those questions I number the relationship between the local church and the governance of the universal church. The local church is not a department of the universal church, nor is the universal church a federation of local churches. We are a *communio* in which the Spirit of the churches is present to each and all and in which the successor of Peter represents Christ's care for the entire church. No Catholic can deny any of that; it is of the substance of our ecclesiology.

But no one who reads the newspapers of the past three years can be ignorant of a growing and dangerous disaffection of elements of the church in the United States from the Holy See. Some people feel that the local church needs more freedom. Others believe that more control is in order. Some feel that appeals to authority are being exercised too readily. Others applaud what they perceive to be a return to needed central control. Wherever you stand, this division presents the church in the United States with a very serious question: How will we move to address this developing estrangement, to strengthen the cognitive and affective bonds between the church here and the Holy See? We do not exist

alone. We cannot exist alone. We are a *communio*. We are a church.

We all know that in recent weeks the situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle has exemplified these concerns. Tomorrow we shall take up this matter in our executive session. Let me be very clear about the reasons for doing so.

We recognize that our conference of bishops has no competence to interject itself into the special relationship between the Holy Father and a local bishop. Nor have we any intention of engaging in a retrospective review of events which have already occurred and which have been placed on the public record.

The purpose therefore of addressing this matter in our executive session is simply this: to offer fraternal support to Archbishop Hunhausen and Bishop Wuerl in their future efforts to minister to the church in Seattle. We look to this as a constructive expression of the collegial spirit which unites us with one another and with the Holy Father.

"Too often pastoral letters in the past taught little, not because they said nothing but because few were listening. We have found a method in which our collegial teaching engages and gathers into community all sectors of the church and many of those outside the church."

2. Women

The second area of investigation or questioning I would mention is the position of women within the church. *Inter Insigniores*, the 1979 declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, reminded Catholics that among the principal affirmations of the church stands the equality of all of the baptized. Increasingly voices are raised, insisting that more needs to be done to effect this equality. Father Karl Rahner emphasized shortly before his death that women in the church do not yet possess "practically and institutionally that importance which as such (they) ought to have." The years given to us to recognize this inequality and to remedy it are not limitless.

As Catholic bishops we do not and cannot stand with those who argue that the only response to this inequality is ordination of women to the priesthood. The teaching of the church is clear on this point. To pretend that it is not clear is unjust and not helpful to our legitimate inquiry into this issue. At the same time we must recognize the need to continue our efforts to promote the legitimate roles women can assume in society and the church.

I am aware of the efforts many of us are making to listen to women in our dioceses. If your experience is anything like mine, we recognize there are many voices and points of view. I look forward to the continuing efforts

of our conference to develop a pastoral statement responding to the concerns women have both as members of society and as vital members of our church.

3. Eucharist

The third area of investigation I would cite is the centrality of eucharistic worship in the life of the church. From the earliest documents of Christianity and reaching its contemporary emphases in the leadership of Pius X, Pius XII and the Second Vatican Council, the Christian church has been recognized as one which gathers around the eucharist. Now with the declining numbers of priests, this episcopal conference is faced with a very serious issue: How are the bishops of this country going to provide for the eucharistic worship of the church in the United States? Emphases upon spiritual communions and upon communion services have great value, but they cannot substitute for the Lord's Day.

Part of our response must be continuing our increased efforts to encourage vocations to the priesthood. I fear, however, that this alone will not respond to the pastoral situation which will confront us in the coming years. We need to explore creative and legitimate ways to address the issue of declining personnel. Is it finally the time to take the redistribution of clergy seriously? How are we to deal with the shifting population centers and the need to close or merge certain parishes? The research in this area is clear. If trends continue, by the year 2000 we will have half the number of active priests serving the church in this country. What are we doing as local bishops and as a conference of bishops to address this issue?

4. Theological Investigation

The fourth question or area of inquiry I would raise is the issue of the teaching office within the church and theological investigation. Over the past few years this question has emerged in one form or another. The teaching office of the bishop must be clarified and distinguished from that of the theologian. The gradations of authentic teaching and our common service of the word of God must be stabilized and incorporated in an inquiry into the nature of the episcopate's responsibility for authentic doctrine with and under our chief pastor, the pope. At the same time, dissent in its various meanings must be distinguished and not be confused with scholarly questioning or all forms of open, honest discussion.

What makes questions of dissent all the more complicated in our local church is the passion we have in this country to let all persons have the freedom to give their point of view. As citizens we will die to protect this freedom of speech. As Catholics we must further defend the revelation given us in Christ and the church's responsibility to continue that revelation in its care for authentic teaching.

The Holy See, of course, rightly exercises a special ministry in caring for this authentic teaching. So the question remains: How can the

church ensure the stability of its teaching while at the same time encouraging that freedom of conversation which, even in theological terms, makes for its testing and development? We need to continue to probe this question together as bishops and as a conference with the Holy See in the years ahead.

"The local church is not a department of the universal church, nor is the universal church a federation of local churches. We are a 'communio,' in which the Spirit of the churches is present to each and all, and in which the successor of Peter represents Christ's care for the entire church."

There are many more areas of investigation that are part of our experience, but four are enough for a single talk! Questions, serious questions, do not threaten our collective life. From Aristotle to John Dewey, the question is a spur to that kind of conscious life that marks human being. A person or a community without questions is dying. If bishops fail to recognize the questions that the whole world knows we have, the plausibility of the church becomes lessened and its life becomes paralyzed. If we attempt to short-circuit the questions we have because the inquiry is too threatening or too painful, in the long run, the church suffers.

Before bringing these remarks to a close, it would be impossible to talk about the future of the church in our country without reference to the pastoral visit of the Holy Father to the United States next September. Given current tensions and controversies, we all know that there are some persons who question its timeliness and utility. But they are mistaken.

The Holy Father's pastoral visit is a welcome, timely opportunity for us to affirm our unity with him, while also bringing forward, for his information and that of the world at large, the good news about the contributions to ecclesial and civic life in the United States of a host of church-sponsored apostolates and ministries. "Unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ" has been designated as the theme of the papal visit. It directs our attention to the fundamental unity among the people of the church even in times of misunderstanding and tension.

I look forward to the papal visit as a graced occasion for the Holy Father to confirm the church in the United States, and for dialogue and reconciliation within the Catholic community in our country. It can and will be this if we truly work to make it such.

I am therefore pleased to tell you that I have recently suggested to the Holy See that a preparatory meeting take place in Rome, perhaps in the late winter or early spring. It would involve the Holy Father, perhaps members of the

He discussed "three important moments" in the development of the pastoral. One, he said, was the decision of the committee to "limit its analysis to the current U.S. economic picture as a concrete manifestation of capitalism and examine it in the light of Catholic social teaching." He said this step was taken with some trepidation, since the committee realized it would be impossible today "to analyze the economic picture of the United States without also being aware of its ties to the global economy."

Another key moment in the document's development was the "decision to limit the areas of detailed analysis to five": employment, poverty, food and agriculture issues, international questions and collaboration in economic life. The five areas finally selected "are given as examples." Weakland said the limitation "was wise, even though it led to misinterpretations and confusions on the part of some."

The third point mentioned by Weakland was the decision to treat Collaboration in economic life as a separate chapter because of its very special nature and because it provided a different kind of analysis than the other four areas. In this way the document developed a special chapter called "A New American Experiment: Partnership for the Public Good."

Weakland said that it is important to note that "even before we vote on the final document the process itself has already had a most significant effect." He explained:

"Within the church the process has involved thousands of Catholics in a diverse and open discussion about their faith and its implications in their daily lives in the marketplace. One of the wishes of the document on the laity of the Second

Vatican Council was to break down the gap between the role of faith in personal life on the one hand and its role in the workplace on the other. This document has forced all of us to reflect on that gap and begin to close it in our personal and ecclesial lives.

"Within the broader society," Weakland added, "this process has been a catalyst for a lively and a fruitful discussion of moral values as they affect public policies and economic decision making. It has brought to the fore the important point that economic life is not separate from social life but has a tremendous impact on the values of our entire society. It has also brought to the fore issues that could easily be overlooked, such as the needs of the poor, the global responsibilities of the United States in its economic life and decision making, the renewed importance of the common good in all aspects of our society and public life. It was especially pleasing to the committee to sense the ecumenical collaboration in this project and to find so much consonance between the workings of our own committee and similar enterprises within the Protestant and Jewish communities."

Weakland said that "the writing of this letter can be a special moment in the history of the church in the United States. It can be the beginning of an ongoing discussion about moral values and economic choices. It can be a call to personal renewal and a challenge to bring the benefits that have been ours as citizens of this country to an even wider number of people, so that they too can live their lives in freedom and dignity."

Curia and members of our conference, and would provide an opportunity for us to share with him information about aspects of the church which will be highlighted when he returns to this country. Our colleagues who would represent us might include the officers of the conference, the ordinaries of the host dioceses which the Holy Father will visit, the active U.S. cardinals and Archbishop Kelly as chairman of the Papal Visit Committee. While a final decision has not been reached, the initial reaction of the Holy See to this proposal has been positive.

Permit me to end on a personal note. With this meeting my three years as president of this conference of bishops comes to an end. I am grateful for the trust you have placed in me, for the cooperation you have given me, for the op-

portunity you have afforded me to be of service.

I have learned much in these three years. The presidency of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Catholic Conference is difficult and demanding. But there are many factors which lighten the burden: the collaboration of a competent and dedicated staff led by Msgr. Hoyer, the support of you, my brother bishops, the cooperation of the pronuncio, close interaction with the Holy Father and the Holy See, and constant exposure to the reality and the vitality of the church in the United States. These are difficult times certainly, but they are also challenging and good times. I believe I have grown in the last three years. I thank you for allowing me to do so. ■

Pope's Message to U.S. Bishops' Meeting Universal Church/Local Church

"I would like at this time to reflect with you, the pastors of the particular churches in the United States, on some aspects of (the) Petrine ministry," Pope John Paul II said in a message to the U.S. bishops. His message was presented Nov. 10 by Archbishop Pio Laghi, apostolic pronuncio to the United States. In his introductory remarks, Laghi said that "helping in the process by which the Holy Father makes his decisions concerning episcopal appointments is one of the most important responsibilities of the office I hold." Laghi said that as he looked out over the assembly of bishops, it was satisfying to see "so many who have been appointed to the hierarchy during my tenure as papal representative. We have not yet reached the 'magic number' of 100, but we are not very far from it." Pope John Paul said in his message that it is his role "to promote the universality of the church, to protect her legitimate variety, to guarantee her Catholic unity, to confirm the bishops in their apostolic faith and ministry, to preside in love." Laghi's remarks and the pope's message follow.

Archbishop Laghi

Bishop Malone, my dear brother bishops and friends:

This is the sixth year of my service as papal representative in the United States, and this marks the sixth time I have taken the floor of this general assembly. As always, it is a pleasure for me to be with you. I wish particularly to express gratitude to the leadership of the conference, especially to Bishop Malone as he prepares to leave office. I congratulate him on the work he has performed in the past three years and I thank him for his many kindnesses to me.

As I look out over this assembly, permit me to express satisfaction at the presence of so many who have been appointed to the hierarchy during my tenure as papal representative. We have not yet reached the "magic number" of 100, but we are not very far from it.

Helping in the process by which the Holy Father makes his decisions concerning episcopal appointments is one of the most important responsibilities of the office I hold and one of its most important services to the church. I am gratified, as you must also be, by the rise in the number of Hispanics and blacks among the bishops of the United States in recent years. And now your ranks even include a Native American! The pastoral needs of the church are well served, I believe, by this reflection among the bishops themselves of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Catholic community in this country united with the See of Peter.

One of the great hallmarks of the church in the United States has been its constant union with the See of Peter's successor. Cognizant of and deeply grateful for that loyalty, our Holy Father wishes to be present in spirit during this meeting. To that end, Pope John Paul has asked me to bring the following message to you.

Pope John Paul II's Message

To my dear brother bishops in the United States of America:

1. As you are gathering in Washington for your annual meeting, I wish to be spiritually present with you in order to support you in your pastoral ministry. I wish to assure you of my fraternal solidarity with you as you work and toil, day in and day out, to bring the Gospel to

your people. At the same time I wish to encourage you, in the midst of the challenges and difficulties, to place all your trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, "the chief shepherd" (1 Pt. 5:4), who is always with his church. My desire in addressing you is motivated by my own ministry as successor of Peter and therefore as the first servant of the church's unity and universality.

I would like at this time to reflect with you, the pastors of the particular churches in the United States, on some aspects of this Petrine ministry. Although it is indeed burdensome, it is made lighter by God's grace and by your fraternal collaboration and your prayers, and for all of this I am deeply grateful.

The very mystery of the church impels us to recognize that the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic church is present in each particular church throughout the world. And since the successor of Peter has been constituted for the whole church as pastor and as vicar of Christ (*Lumen Gentium*, 22), all the particular churches — precisely because they are Catholic, precisely because they embody in themselves the mystery of the universal church — are called to live in communion with him.

Our own relationship of ecclesial communion — *collegialitas effectiva et affectiva* — is discovered in the same mystery of the church. It is precisely because you are pastors of particular churches in which there subsists the fullness of the universal church that you are, and must always be, in full communion with the successor of Peter. To recognize your ministry as "vicars and delegates of Christ" for your particular churches (*Lumen Gentium*, 27) is to understand all the more clearly the ministry of the chair of Peter, which "presides over the whole assembly of charity, protects legitimate variety and at the same time sees to it that differences do not hinder unity but rather contribute to it" (*Lumen Gentium*, 13).

To promote the universality of the church, to protect her legitimate variety, to guarantee her Catholic unity, to confirm the bishops in their apostolic faith and ministry, to preside in love — all this is what the successor of Peter is called by Christ to do. This Petrine service by the will of Christ is directed to the good of the universal church and all the ecclesial communities that compose her.

For this reason I endeavor to be of service to all the bishops of the church, so that together as one college, each of us having a different role, we can all serve the church of Christ in the distinctive ministry assigned to us as bishops.

It is an awareness of my own role in the church, and especially in regard to her unity and universality, that has prompted me to do everything possible

to confirm my brother bishops throughout the world in their own collegial ministry. In several specific ways I have tried to be of service to you, my brother bishops in the United States, placing my full trust in you and counting on your collaboration.

2. Because of the great importance of seminary training, and with the intention of assisting you in one of your greatest responsibilities for the church, I called for an apostolic visitation to the seminaries in your country. This project was entrusted to Bishop John Marshall of Burlington. He in turn shared the responsibility with many competent collaborators who visited seminaries throughout the country, consulting at length with the rector, the staff and the students of each institution. The aim of the entire project was to do everything possible to ensure the ever more faithful application of the Second Vatican Council to seminary training.

"It is precisely because you are pastors of particular churches in which there subsists the fullness of the universal church that you are, and must always be, in full communion with the successor of Peter."

The visitation met with splendid cooperation and interest, beginning with the bishops of the seminaries visited. Bishop Marshall has conferred with the Holy See on a number of occasions and I wish to thank him again for all his dedicated work. My thanks go also to the different teams that worked so generously with him, and to the seminaries themselves.

Already the first phase of the visitation has been completed. The Congregation for Catholic Education has made its suggestions and comments, and has expressed great satisfaction for all the good that has been accomplished in the process. Cardinal Baum has informed you and myself of all the positive results and of the recommendations made. There are still other phases to be completed, and further implementation to be made, but the manner in which the visitation was conducted renders honor to the church in the United States and gives great hope for the future. I am convinced that many people were open to the grace of the Holy Spirit and that our collegial enterprise has been blessed by the Lord.

3. Another way in which I endeavored to be of service to the church in the United States was through the Pontifical Commission for Religious Life that I established in 1983, naming Archbishop John Quinn as pontifical

delegate and Archbishop Thomas Kelly and Bishop Raymond Lessard as members. The task of these bishops, as I explained in my letter titled "In This Extraordinary Holy Year," was "to facilitate the pastoral work of their brother bishops in the United States in helping the religious of your country whose institutes are engaged in apostolic works to live their ecclesial vocation to the full."

I asked "the commission to consult with a number of religious, to profit from the insights that come from the experience of religious life lived in union with the church." I likewise asked the commission to be concerned for the decline of religious vocations and "in collaboration with religious, utilizing the prayerful insights of individual religious and major superiors, to analyze the reason for this decline in vocations." All of this was requested "with a view to encouraging a new growth and fresh move forward in this most important sector of the church's life." Although it was my decision to undertake this work, it had also been suggested to me by American bishops who had foreseen its usefulness.

This commission worked very hard to help you "to render special pastoral service to the religious of your dioceses and your country," as I had requested. As it worked closely with you, the commission reported to me on various occasions. I am very grateful to Archbishop Quinn, Archbishop Kelly and Bishop Lessard for their protracted and devoted collaboration. I am likewise deeply thankful to all of you, the bishops of the United States, for your own response. It was indeed a wonderful response of personal generosity and collegial collaboration toward the pastoral goal of encouraging "the religious, their institutes and associations to live fully the mystery of the redemption, in union with the whole church and according to the specific charism of their religious life." My deep appreciation goes also to the religious themselves who have so generously worked with you in response to the church's call.

After over three years of constant work by the pontifical commission, I have now received its final report. I have likewise received the many letters that you the bishops wrote me as *testes fidei*, concerning religious life in your dioceses. This report and these letters will continue to be studied, and I shall be subsequently in a position to give you a response.

Although the work of the pontifical commission has been completed, the pastoral ministry and responsibility of the bishops for religious life remain, and I would ask all of you to continue to exercise this mission of yours in accordance with the above-mentioned letter of mine and the document attached to that letter, "Essential Elements,"

which is a summary of the church's teaching on religious life. In thanking you for your solidarity and collaboration in this question of immense importance for the church in the United States and for the universal church, I also thank our Lord Jesus Christ who has permitted us, working together in the pastoral ministry, to be of service to his church.

4. With great joy I am now looking forward to my pastoral visit to the United States, which is to take place Sept. 10-18, 1987, and which will include Miami, Columbia in South Carolina, New Orleans, San Antonio, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Monterey and San Francisco. I regret that I am not able to accept at this time the many other invitations that I received. I shall, however, be deeply united spiritually with all your particular churches at the time of my coming.

The aim of my pastoral visit is to celebrate with you our unity in Jesus Christ and in his church, to proclaim

Jesus Christ and his Gospel, and to confirm you all in faith and love. I look forward to being with all the priests, deacons, religious, seminarians and laity; and I shall rejoice in seeing once again firsthand "your work of faith, and labor of love, and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 1:3). I look forward to visiting your fellow Christians, your fellow believers and all Americans of good will.

Meanwhile, dear brothers in the episcopate, let us continue to reflect on the great mystery of the universal church and all the particular churches that share her life and unity. It will be for all of us a source of joy and strength, of courage and confidence. Let us thank the Lord Jesus who has called us to shepherd his people in his name, and with him "to gather into one all the scattered children of God" (Jn. 11:52).

Once again I commend you and all your people to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, patroness of the United States, and in the love of Christ Jesus

I send you my apostolic blessing.
From the Vatican, Nov. 4, 1986
Pope John Paul II

Archbishop Laghi

In our Liturgy of the Hours for the feast of the Chair of St. Peter, we read the following words of Pope St. Leo the Great:

"Whatever Christ has willed to be shared in common by Peter and the other leaders of the church, it is only through Peter that he has given to others what he has not refused to bestow on them...It is not without good reason that what is bestowed on all is entrusted to one. For Peter received it separately in trust because he is the prototype set before all the rulers of the church."

In the days that lie ahead you have much to accomplish. I wish to assure you that you and the important task entrusted to you will constantly be in my prayers. ☒

Bishop James Malone/Bishops' Meeting

The Situation in Seattle

On the afternoon of Nov. 11 and the morning of Nov. 12, the U.S. bishops met in a closed executive session to discuss the situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle that led to the transfer of authority from Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen to Auxiliary Bishop Donald Wuerl in five areas of church life. After the session Nov. 12, Bishop James Malone, outgoing president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said the U.S. bishops had authorized him to release a statement. In it, he said that the decision reached by the Vatican regarding Seattle "was in accord with general principles of church law and procedures. The decision reached at the end of the process was made by proper church authorities. As such it deserves our respect and confidence. While there appear to have been misunderstandings at one point or another along the way, the need now is to look to the future, not the past, and carry out the decision." Malone said he is "deeply convinced that the degree of pain which has been felt and enunciated in Seattle, but far beyond Seattle, really is the kind of pain that can only be felt by members of a family." That analogy suggests some "directions in which we must go," he said. Among other things, he said, a family comes together and support is expressed for the persons as persons and for the responsibilities they bear. And, he said, that analogy implies "working to find creative ways of presenting the

church's teaching in the best light possible, but also seeking mechanisms of responding when confusion or error occurs." His statement follows.

In recent weeks all of us have felt much concern for those involved in the situation in Seattle. The pain of Archbishop Hunthausen and Bishop Wuerl, our brothers in the episcopacy, the abuse directed at the Holy Father and the Holy See, the dismay and confusion experienced by many good people — these things are deeply troubling.

Not only is there suffering in the church in Seattle though; the controversy has spread via the media and in other ways and has affected Catholics throughout the country. It is unusual for the conference of bishops to address such a matter, but these are unusual circumstances.

The issues raised here touch on the relationship between the local churches and the universal pastor. Bishops exercise their office in communion with him and under his authority. On this occasion the bishops of the United States wish to affirm unreservedly their loyalty to and unity with the Holy Father.

The conference of bishops has no authority to intervene in the internal affairs of a diocese or in the unique relationship between the pope and individual bishops. By universal church

law and the conference's norms the conference is not able to review, much less judge, a case involving a diocesan bishop and the Holy See.

Based on experience, bishops are conscious that in such matters the Holy See proceeds carefully and charitably, employing procedures developed over many years to protect the rights of individuals and promote the common good of the church. With specific reference to Seattle, while we are not authorized to judge the facts of the case, I believe it is clear that the process employed by the Holy See was in accord with general principles of church law and procedures. The decision reached at the end of the process was made by proper church authorities. As such, it deserves our respect and confidence. While there appear to have been misunderstandings at one point or another along the way, the need now is to look to the future, not the past, and carry out the decision. The best assistance I or anyone can give is to offer precisely this counsel.

We could address the issues involved in this situation all week, but we would deceive ourselves if we thought that such discussion would solve all the problems, heal all the hurt. We need to do some additional things.

Is it paradoxically possible that what has happened in the Archdiocese of Seattle has given, and continues to provide, a vivid demonstration of the

unity of the church, perhaps the best demonstration we have seen in many years? I am deeply convinced that the degree of pain which has been felt and enunciated in Seattle, but far beyond Seattle, really is the kind of pain that can only be felt by members of a family. At least that is how it feels to me.

If my analogy is correct, it suggests some of the directions in which we must go. There are certain things that a family must do when it wants to resolve a problem.

A family comes together. Each member expresses the pain, the anxiety, the doubts they feel. These things are

listened to with respect and sympathizing with, deeply and in the heart. Then support is expressed, for the persons as persons, and for the responsibilities they must bear. This we bishops have done together in these days. Archbishop Hunthausen and Bishop Wuerl have been given a job to do by the Holy See. We are prepared to offer any assistance judged helpful and appropriate by the parties involved.

A family also takes steps to see that, insofar as possible, a painful situation does not happen again. In our case, that means working to find creative ways of presenting the church's teaching

in the best light possible, but also seeking mechanisms of responding when confusion or error occurs. We must be seen as committed to hearing and solving the problems.

There is at least one more thing a family of faith does when it is in difficulty, and that is pray. We of all people cannot give short shrift to this. Let us bring our people together in prayer for the church in Seattle, so that what has happened may be an occasion of grace and of growth, there and in the church universal. ☒

Archbishop Hunthausen to the U.S. Bishops

During a closed executive session Nov. 11 at the national meeting of the U.S. bishops in Washington, Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle discussed the situation in that archdiocese where, after an apostolic visitation, the Vatican ordered the archbishop to transfer authority in five areas of church life to Auxiliary Bishop Donald Wuerl. In the prepared text of a speech distributed to the bishops, Hunthausen discussed the process used in deciding to conduct the visitation, the five areas of ministry singled out as areas of serious concern, important issues he feels the matter has brought to light and some of his thoughts for the future. During the session, Hunthausen only spoke briefly. But his prepared text was released by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops at the conclusion of the session Nov. 12. It follows.

Once before I had the privilege of addressing this assembly. It was at the time we came together in our common quest for peace in a nuclear world. Today I come before you again in the quest for peace, but for a different kind of peace: peace for the Archdiocese of Seattle, peace for the church in this country, peace within this conference, peace for the church throughout the world, and my own personal peace with the Holy See.

I want to tell you right at the outset that I am personally very distressed by all the turmoil that has come about in our church because of what has transpired in Seattle. I wish it would all go away. How I wish that! And I want to tell you also that I am particularly distressed about any anguish or even division that may have come about among you, my brother bishops. If I could have done anything in good con-

science to spare you this moment I would have.

Most of you probably know me well enough to realize that I did not accept the invitation to make a presentation this afternoon because I personally relish speaking in a forum like this. I accepted it only because I believe with all my heart, as I have from the very beginning, that in many respects the issues of the Seattle visitation are not just issues that touch the life of the church in Seattle: They are issues that touch the lives of each of our churches in one way or another to a greater or lesser degree. For that reason they are really our issues. In what I have to say I will try to show you why I believe this to be so.

In making this presentation, I have a number of hopes that will become clear as I proceed. One underlying hope is that you will come to understand that the apostolic visitation of the church of Seattle and its aftermath is not simply my own personal struggle, nor is it, as some have suggested, some sort of battle of wits between a maverick archbishop and the Holy See. Those who suggest this do not really know me or my attitude toward the church I love and try to serve. It is my hope that you will see the apostolic visitation of the church of Seattle as an ecclesial matter with serious theological implications which touch very directly and profoundly on our individual role as bishops and on our corporate responsibilities as members of the college of bishops.

And let me acknowledge at the start that it is surely not mine to presume to lecture the members of this body on such subjects. Most of you know that I am not a professional theologian. Many of you know far more about these matters than I do and can surely ar-

ticulate them better. Nonetheless the experience that has been mine over these past years can perhaps serve as something of a laboratory for viewing, studying and probing the issues in some way other than the purely theoretical. If that be so, then I honestly believe that this sad experience which has been the source of such pain and confusion for the church of Seattle and beyond — even to the point of causing serious scandal for many — will not have been in vain, but will have been a path to a new moment of life and growth.

You have already received in printed form my somewhat detailed response to the chronology released by the apostolic nunciature. I put that response together in a respectful spirit — in the hope that it would answer some of the questions the chronology may have raised in your minds. Obviously, it raised some in my own mind, but I suppose it should be expected that there would be differing perspectives in a matter such as this. In what follows I will refrain from making any further commentary on the chronology itself and concentrate, rather, on four main areas:

a. The process used in deciding to conduct the visitation as well as the process followed in carrying it out.

b. The five areas of my ministry singled out by the Holy See as areas of serious concern.

c. The identification of the important issues which this entire matter has brought to light.

d. Some thoughts and suggestions regarding the future.

1. First, the visitation and its process. In my printed response I have already made reference to the visitation process and to my dissatisfaction with the manner in which the decision was made to undertake an apostolic visita-

tion in the first place. I also alluded to the manner in which the visitation was conducted and followed up on. Please know that my reference here is not a personal one with regard to Archbishop Hickey who carried out his duties as visitor in a gracious and gentlemanly manner. My reference has to do with processes, not persons.

My printed remarks allude to the matter of the secrecy that was intended to surround the visitation. I need to tell you that in agreeing to that, I feel I compromised my principles as a bishop committed to the deep and powerful reality that we are all the church and that we can only live out our common call as members of that body of Christ if we do so in a manner that respects the rightful role of each member of that body, from child to mature and committed adult. I would hope that in the future, if the weighty decision is made to undertake an apostolic visitation for the good of the church, at least two lessons will have been drawn from this aspect of the Seattle experience: (1) that secrecy does not work in matters of this sort, and (2) that secrecy should not work.

I realize that that is a value judgment. But it is a very considered one. And even though I acknowledge that in some extraordinary circumstances secrecy might be warranted, the presumption should nevertheless be against it because open disclosure and candor are far more consistent with respect for persons in a mature church.

And secrecy in situations like this has further inimical effects: Secrecy is responsible for the fact that there was a total absence of dialogue with me as to whether a visitation was needed in the first place, and if so, why and according to what specific ground rules. I was simply informed of the fact and given no opportunity whatever to object or even to respond. In other words, I was presented with a fait accompli.

Yet another consequence of secrecy has to do with the concerns which prompted the decision to undertake a visitation in the first place. On the good advice of the then-president of this conference, I asked at the very beginning for a bill of particulars specifying the reasons for mounting the apostolic visitation and the concerns to be talked over between Archbishop Hickey and any persons he might choose to interview. I was never given such a list. Rather I was told that it was not necessary because what was to take place was in no sense in the nature of a "trial," that the visitor himself was in no sense a "judge" and that what was involved was nothing more than a thorough and fraternal exchange of views and information.

In place of a Bill of Particulars, I was formally questioned by Archbishop Hickey about a range of issues touching on matters both doctrinal and

disciplinary, several of which were clearly based on simple misunderstandings or miscommunications of facts, others of which had already been dealt with in what I had been led to believe was a satisfactory manner, and one or two of which admittedly needed further attention on my part. It is important to remember, however, that all of this took place several months after the decision had already been taken to mount a full-scale apostolic visitation. From my point of view, had the kind of exchanges I had with Archbishop Hickey been allowed to take place before that decision had been made, a great deal of harm could have been avoided and the demands of justice would have been better served.

The shroud of secrecy spread even further — to what I have to regard as one of the most devastating points of all. I have never been allowed to see the formal visitation report including the testimony against me and the appraisal made by Archbishop Hickey. All the witnesses were placed under secrecy, not just guaranteed confidentiality. And, of course, once that stricture was made, it had to be respected. I must state emphatically, however, that such unwitnessed, private questionings with no opportunity for the subject of the questionings to face his accusers, to hear or to be informed of their allegations, or to defend himself are not a just manner of proceeding. This kind of an approach seriously wounds the community of faith and trust that is the church.

The allegations, findings, judgments and conclusions made during the visitation must surely be contained in a formal report, yet, no matter how many times I have asked, I have never been allowed to see that report. Instead, I have been left with some generalities and a few particulars received in subsequent letters from the Holy See, conversations with the pronuncio and, later, from comments appended to the special faculties I was directed to give to Bishop Wuerl. To this I would have to add that each time a conversation has taken place, or a letter or document issued, I seem to have learned something new, something which, I presume, must have appeared in the visitation report in one form or another, but which I was prevented from seeing for reasons still unknown to me. In my printed response to the chronology I have already alluded to some very recent learnings, so I will not dwell on them any further at this point.

My brothers, I hope I have reported enough to make it clear why I feel that the visitation was so badly flawed from the very start, not, as I have said, due to bad faith on anyone's part but due to a process that seems extraordinarily inadequate given the kind of open church we have become since the Second Vatican Council.

Before I proceed any further,

there is still one more note that needs to be added here. It has to do with the assurance I was given from the very beginning that nothing punitive was envisioned by the visitation, only a fraternal exchange of views for the purpose of gaining better information and understanding. Nonetheless, the action taken as a result of the visitation could hardly be interpreted as anything other than punitive and, indeed, a recent public statement issued by a Vatican official in this regard made specific reference to the fact that the action taken as a result of the visitation was meant to be "disciplinary." If this be the case, and I have no doubt whatever that it is, I have to wonder why certain formal church processes were not followed, processes that would have better guaranteed the rights of all concerned. I have to wonder, too, why this change of attitude and intent was not communicated to me much more directly.

Perhaps from all I have said, you will now begin to understand the level of confusion and anger that exists among the priests of the archdiocese as well as among all the ranks of the faithful. That this confusion and anger should have heated up and even ignited to the point that it has spread to many areas of our country at this moment is not surprising to me. Nor, perhaps will it be to you. But it is surely distressing because, as I have maintained from the very first, it need not have happened this way.

2. Let me now pass on to those five areas of concern which finally became enshrined in the special faculties I was directed to give to Bishop Wuerl. I will deal with these concerns under four headings for the purpose of clarity, but you should understand that some of them overlap a bit, especially that of "pastoral judgment," something that was involved in nearly every case. The four headings under which I will deal with the concerns are these: (1) matters of history (i.e., matters already addressed); (2) matters of pastoral judgment; (3) ongoing concerns; and (4) matters I do not understand.

Let me begin with those that are matters of history. Under that heading I would include the issue of some confusion that existed at one time in the archdiocese with regard to the use of the so-called internal forum solution; the lack of a plan to employ degreed personnel in the archdiocesan tribunal; and the practice in one hospital of the archdiocese of permitting sterilization even for contraceptive purposes in some limited cases. (For the record, the teaching of the church in this matter was never under question, only a longstanding pastoral practice at one hospital, a practice that predated my arrival in Seattle.) I can honestly say that none of the above listed problems exists in the

Archdiocese of Seattle today. They haven't for some years now.

Others of the concerns come under the heading of pastoral judgment, something I scarcely need to tell you that every pastor comes to recognize rather early on in his ministry as a rather imprecise "science" at best, even when carried out prayerfully under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with every due regard for church tradition and law. We all know well that matters of pastoral judgment are always open to further understanding and that in such matters we never really get beyond the possibility of making a mistake no matter how hard we try to faithfully discern the Spirit. Among such pastoral judgments for which I have not only been called to task but deprived of my episcopal responsibilities are the allowing of general absolution when the crowds of the faithful are so very large, the numbers of available confessors so very small and the opportunity for providing suitable opportunities for the worthy celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation for each of these people so demonstrably distant that general absolution seemed a prudent decision for the pastor on the spot to make.

Another is the practice of preparing children for First Communion before undertaking the formal, structured catechesis for First Confession — a practice we have for some time been studying in light of the revised Code of Canon Law and in dialogue with many other dioceses and archdioceses. Now that directives are clear, I am committed to implementing them in fidelity to church law, but this will have to be done in a pastorally sensitive manner.

Still another area has to do with the matter of ministry to homosexuals, something that recently called forth an instruction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for the benefit of the entire church. From this, I would have to gather that the church at Seattle is not alone in the sincere efforts it is making to deal with the delicate matter of how best to minister faithfully and lovingly to these members of our flock. Each of us bishops is faced with the same question and each of us, I suppose, on the basis of careful and prayerful discernment, has arrived at a pastoral judgment in this regard. That it will now be guided and influenced by the most recent instruction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith I have no doubt, but I am equally confident that, although church teaching is abundantly clear on the matter of the specific immorality of homosexual acts — and I have always made it plain that I stand in full accord with that teaching — church practice with regard to the best way to minister to these members of our community is nowhere near as clear and, I suppose, it never will be. Again, we find ourselves in the oftentimes gray

area which we call "pastoral discretion."

In this context, I should make mention of my decision back in 1983 to allow the members of the Dignity group to celebrate Mass in our cathedral church. My public statement at the time reaffirmed church teaching and described my decision as a pastoral judgment. I have subsequently been informed that it was an ill-conceived judgment. Perhaps it was. I am willing to stand corrected. But my decision does not differ in kind from the decision made by many bishops to allow local Dignity groups to celebrate Mass in one or another church on a regular basis. Again, pastoral practice will now need to be looked at carefully in light of the most recent document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, but I do not deem it fair to be placed under a judgment, even to the point of being deprived of significant pastoral responsibilities, because of the conclusion contained in a document that was not issued until some three years after my own conscientious, carefully studied pastoral judgment was made, a judgment, by the way, which I shared very openly with the Holy See in timely fashion.

"We are not dealing with a matter of dissent in the church. The news media have sounded this theme and I suppose I can understand why, given other currents presently flowing in the church. But I am not a dissenter from the church's teaching."

Under the heading of an ongoing concern I would mention the employment in teaching positions and for service in the liturgy of priests who have left the active ministry and/or who have been laicized. I believe I have erred in this matter on one or another occasion since coming to Seattle. My doing so was never a purposeful defiance of church regulations, however. In one case it involved an oversight with regard to the employment of the wife of an unlaicized priest; in two other cases it involved the well-accepted service as lector and eucharistic minister by a laicized priest, a practice that had been going on long before I learned of it and one which, to have discontinued it, would have caused *admiratio* of the most severe kind. I am unaware of any other cases beyond these.

Under the heading of matters I do not understand I would have to list that of the admissions process we use for

accepting candidates for the priesthood. The process we use was carefully reviewed and approved by an NCCB visitation team and, as I understand it, has become something of a model for many other dioceses in this country. Under this heading I would also include the whole question of continuing education for clergy, something I already dealt with in my response to the chronology. Last, I would also list here the inaccurate statement that I have permitted non-Catholics to receive communion at our Masses or, conversely, for Catholics to receive communion at Protestant services. Our diocesan regulations governing *communicatio in sacris* are clear and unequivocal. It is, of course, impossible for me to oversee the pastoral implementation of those regulations in any but the most global fashion. But I can assure you that when abuses have been brought to my attention I have promptly and appropriately dealt with them, as the records will show.

3. I have spent considerable time addressing the concerns singled out by the Holy See. Now I believe I have come to the point in this presentation where I can more clearly move toward delineating for you some other very important issues which have been brought to light by the visitation and its process.

As I do so, however, let me first say a word or two about what is certainly not at issue here:

a. First of all, we are not dealing with a matter of dissent in the church. The news media have sounded his theme and I suppose I can understand why, given other currents presently flowing in the church. But I am not a dissenter from the church's teaching. I hold with the magisterium conscientiously and I make every effort — personal and professional — to deepen my understanding of the teaching of the church so that I will be able to present it to my people as the vital and living tradition it is — the very gospel message of Jesus proclaimed throughout the ages and in our own time in ways that reflect both its enduring significance as well as its perennial relevance.

What I am is what each of us in this room is — or, perhaps I should say, what I strive to be is what each of us in this room strives to be: a teacher, a pastor and a servant of the Lord and of the church. I think we all struggle to teach in a manner that is both faithful and compelling; and we all strive in our own lives not only to find the right words to call our people to service but to make the servant attitude of Jesus the most identifying mark of our own lives. But I suppose there is no greater challenge given to us than the one to be good pastors.

The Lord himself must have grappled with this challenge as he reached out with love and compassion to those weak in faith as well as to those

involved in sin. Never did he compromise the truth he had come to reveal, but neither did he fail to extend to all he encountered the warm and compassionate embrace of a loving God. That's the challenge I face day after day in my ministry to the church in Seattle, and I know it is the struggle of each of us in this room. I would never even for a moment maintain that I have always succeeded in carrying it out, or deny that I have made many mistakes along the way. But I have never stopped trying and, please God, I never will.

b. Another important point about what this matter most surely is not: It is not a case of personal obduracy or obstinacy on my part. I suppose I am a strong-willed person (my priests would probably bear me out on that!) but I have always striven to be a loyal son of the church and a faithful member of the college of bishops. From the very start, I have always made it clear to the Holy Father and to everyone I have dealt with in the Roman Curia that I would happily resign if my doing so would help this situation, and that I would sooner resign that bring dishonor to our church in any way.

The voluminous correspondence between me and the Holy See these past three years will make it clear that my attitude has always been a cooperative and obedient one. But my understanding of the virtue of obedience, coupled with my role as a bishop with a responsibility not only for my own archdiocese but with a shared responsibility within the episcopal college for the entire church — my understanding of the virtue of obedience has never allowed me simply to acquiesce. It has, rather, prompted me to engage in a process of dialogue, one which, to the best of my ability, I have always carried out in a respectful, docile and faith-filled manner.

c. Perhaps I also need to acknowledge the extremely widespread publicity which has surrounded this entire case, to the point of causing confusion and serious scandal for many of our people. I am grieved by this, and I think it could have been otherwise. I have already told you that, and why. Our people have "come of age" and they deserve to be treated as adults. They are capable of dealing maturely with problems where they exist and they take seriously the "ownership" of the church that is their birthright as baptized members of the body of Christ.

In view of this, I honestly believe that the current waves of adverse publicity could have been avoided had the decision regarding the visitation, the process followed in the visitation and all that has ensued since been dealt with more openly and forthrightly. Had this happened, I know that the people in our archdiocese who have been so badly hurt, scandalized and even outraged by these events would have found themselves in a far dif-

ferent place. Much adverse publicity could have been avoided from the very start and the same outcomes intended by the Holy See could have been achieved; the careful evaluation of my stewardship, my ministry as archbishop of Seattle, something which I would have warmly and enthusiastically welcomed, as I am certain each of us here would.

4. Having tried to set forth those matters which, in my judgment, have most assuredly not been at stake in this whole case, may I attempt to conclude this overly long presentation by suggesting some of those which most certainly are involved in it? I will list them only briefly because they are, it seems to me, the sort of things that need to be addressed carefully and systematically by this conference.

"I believe, too, that it is the proper role of a conference such as this to address the issue of the legitimacy as well as the limits of local adaptations which are truly reflective of a particular church, its history, traditions and lifestyle, not to mention its special characteristics and problems."

a. The first has to do with a relationship: the absolutely essential and life-giving relationship that exists between an individual bishop and the Holy Father himself (and, I would have to add, to those who assist him in the day-to-day administration of the church). The Second Vatican Council addressed this relationship in depth from a scriptural and theological perspective, one that gave great hope to all of us I think — certainly to me, a bishop who got his first "on-the-job training" during the council itself.

Subsequently, this relationship has been dealt with in documents such as *De Episcoporum Muneribus* and, most recently, by the revised Code of Canon Law. But very real practical questions remain and those better equipped than I am need to address them. The most obvious way of putting the question, to my way of thinking at least, is simply this: How does a diocesan bishop who is himself the vicar of Christ in his particular church carry out his role with the degree of independence which this role implies while at the same time doing so in full union with and under the rightful authority of the Supreme Pontiff? I do not mean to suggest for a moment that we are dealing here with polarities, but they are surely values that sometimes find themselves in tension.

And, second, what is the proper

role of national bodies of bishops such as this one, mandated by the documents of the council, yet variously interpreted as being anywhere from essential to collegial church governance to merely useful in carrying out certain forms of non-binding consultation? This question has far-reaching implications, to be sure, but it has particular relevance to the whole matter of the decision to undertake the visitation of the church of Seattle and to how such a visitation ought to have been carried out. I am firmly of the opinion that it ought to have been carried out in close collaboration between the Holy See and this conference. I am further of the mind that this conference should have been the very agency for carrying out the visitation. That is why, from the very beginning, I chose to keep the leadership of this conference apprised of each major development as it unfolded, and why I am gratified that the moment has finally arrived for it to be dealt with by the entire active membership of this conference. I believe that this will ultimately be of benefit to the whole church.

b. I believe, too, that it is the proper role of a conference such as this to address the issue of the legitimacy as well as the limits of local adaptations which are truly reflective of a particular church, its history, traditions, and lifestyle, not to mention its special characteristics and problems. You hardly need me to remind you of the role of legitimate diversity within a church that is called to be one — one in itself, one among all the local churches and one with the See of Peter. We all know this. I mention it here because I believe it has applicability with regard to our own apostolic visitation and to the reasons which prompted it in the first place.

c. My third overarching concern has to do with another question which touches us as a conference. Following the lead of our Holy Father who has repeatedly sounded the call for peace, not for peace at any price but for peace with justice, we have all labored hard these past many years, under some very able leadership and thanks to the incredibly generous and gifted contributions of our members, to speak out publicly and forcefully on some of the most delicate, complex and compelling moral and societal issues of our times. Our work this week is only one case in point. We have often paid a price for speaking out honestly and without concern for our own selfish interests. It is clear that each of us here has a deep and passionate concern for a more just and Christian social and economic order, and that each one of us is committed to doing all he can to bring about this order.

I think our record is impressive, even if incomplete. At the same time, our ongoing commitment cannot only be toward the order of things outside

the church. It must embrace as well the very church we are trying to be and to become. Our people expect this of us. They will listen to us even more attentively, I think, if they see mirrored in our own honest relationships and just treatments of one another the same kind of loving and just relationships to which we are calling them. I make this observation not in an accusatory fashion. Indeed, I must first speak these words of challenge to myself and acknowledge innumerable ways in which I fail in this respect.

I have mentioned three rather overarching issues that I feel we must deal with. I would now like to mention a concern that applies only to the church of Seattle. It is this: I need some help, some direction in coming to understand just how we in Seattle — bishops, priests and people working together — are to address the issues identified by the apostolic visitation, and to satisfy the concerns of the Holy See, in a situation and according to a methodology that I, quite frankly, have to acknowledge as being all but impossible, even to the point of being unworkable. I honestly do not know the answer to that question, but I must state it. And I must go even further, especially in this setting, and say that with all due respect for the provisions of church law, I believe that the very concept of special faculties — at least of the sort and extent we are dealing with here — is already on somewhat shaky grounds from a theological point of view. Given the present situation in Seattle, however, the theological problem seems an academic luxury in the face of the pressing practical problems that are involved.

I have talked overly long and I apologize for that. I guess a lot has built up within me during the past three and a half years in which these events have taken place. But it is not me I am con-

cerned about. I am concerned about the church. And I guess my realization that each of you shares that same concern just as deeply as I do has given me the courage to say more than I normally would in a situation like this. Thank you for letting me.

At this point, I suppose, it is likely that the question on the minds of many of you is. What does he want us to do, anyway? Let me attempt to answer that by reminding you that there are really three sets of issues here.

"We need not look upon this as a win/lose situation. I do not feel the need to win so that others will have to lose. Winning or losing is not what this is all about. The good of the church is what is at stake here."

First, there is the question of my ministry, my stewardship over the church entrusted to me. I have been found wanting in some ways. Seriously wanting, it appears. And even though I object to the methods that were used to arrive at this conclusion, I have to take to heart the need I have to be evaluated, and I accept the fact that I must work very hard with my priests and people, and as conscientiously as possible, in order to address and correct any areas in which I have been found wanting. I am committed with all my heart to doing just this.

The second set of issues has to do with what surely seems to be an unworkable situation as far as Bishop Wuerl's special faculties are concerned. And the problem here has nothing to do with Bishop Wuerl personally. He is my

brother and my friend and my heart aches for him when I consider the ordeal he has had to suffer during this past year. But in view of the situation in which we find ourselves, I would hope that this conference would be willing to afford some positive assistance in helping Bishop Wuerl and me to address this issue with the Holy See. For the good of the church in Seattle and beyond, I am absolutely convinced that the matter of the governance of the church of Seattle needs to be returned to normal as soon as humanly possible. I would even say at once.

The third set of concerns are those I labeled "overarching" toward the end of this presentation. There are some major questions which will not go away no matter how much we might wish they would. They are questions which will severely test our mettle as a conference of bishops. But we have been tested before and we have almost always come through well. Amazingly well. And united, too. I firmly believe that the present moment will be no exception.

A final word: My friends, we need not look upon this as a win/lose situation. I do not feel the need to win so that others will have to lose. Winning or losing is not what this is all about. The good of the church is what is at stake here. Nothing less. We are all united in our commitment to that goal, and for that reason I have no doubt that we will find a way to address all the questions I have posed and others like them.

And I have no doubt, either, that we will do so courageously — in a spirit that is truly and fully Catholic, with all that word implies: a spirit that is at the same time faithful to the Lord and his Gospel, loyal to our Holy Father and true to the people of God whom we serve and who look to us now, perhaps, more than ever before, for guidance, inspiration and leadership. ☒

Archbishop Hunthausen's Response to Vatican Chronology

Among materials released by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops after the conclusion Nov. 12 of an executive session on the situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle was a written response by Archbishop Hunthausen to a chronology of events in Seattle issued by the Vatican Embassy in Washington. Hunthausen gave his written response to the U.S. bishops. (The Vatican's chronology appeared in Origins, the current volume, pp. 361ff, along with a brief, earlier response to it from Hunthausen. The chronology and the brief response were also made available by the NCCB Nov. 12.) The longer response by Hunthausen was dated Nov. 11. It follows.

Your Eminence/Your Excellency:

Because of necessary time restrictions limiting my presentation about the apostolic visitation of the Archdiocese of Seattle and related matters, I have decided it will be best for me to convey to you in printed form my response to the "Chronology of Recent Events in the Archdiocese of Seattle," released Oct. 24, 1986, by the apostolic nunciature.

As you know, I chose to make a generic response at the time the chronology was released. My respect for Archbishop Laghi and for the position that is his made it difficult for me to do otherwise. I was convinced that a point-by-point response at that time would only have escalated an already tense situation and that it would cause further confusion for our people. Also, I had been offered by Bishop Malone, our president, the opportunity to present a further response at this meeting.

I hesitate to burden you with further reading material at this time. I do so only because I think the record demands it and because, from my perspective at least, what follows will shed light on an extremely complex situation.

I want to say too that it frankly embarrasses me to be engaging in this form of exchange of information. I have the greatest respect and admiration for Archbishop Laghi and appreciate his time and efforts to resolve this matter. I trust you will understand, then, that the matters which I will set forth herein are in no sense an attack upon his person or his integrity. That our recollections and interpretations differ in some important respects should not be so sur-

prising when one considers that we are both attempting to present in capsule form a very long and complicated series of events.

In the first place, it is probably important for you to know that after I first read the chronology, I asked Archbishop Laghi not to publish it because I felt it would raise more questions than it could possibly hope to answer. I feared it would generate a whole new round of publicity in a setting in which accusations and counteraccusations rather than the voices of reason would dominate and that, in the minds of many, it would ultimately reflect unfavorably on the Holy See, the very thing both Archbishop Laghi and I had striven to avoid all during this time.

From the very outset of these events, which now go back some three and one-half years, I have been concerned about adverse publicity for the Holy See. I expressed this concern in my earliest correspondence and in all my conversations with the Holy See, with Cardinal Ratzinger, Archbishop Laghi, Archbishop Hickey and even with the Holy Father himself. It was always my deepest desire and my strongly expressed wish that, whatever steps might be taken to address certain concerns in Seattle, they be taken in a way that would strengthen and cement our relationship with the Holy See, and not in any sense detract from it.

As far as the chronology itself is concerned, let me say that I believe it either attempts to do too much (i.e., to tell the whole story in too brief a space) or to do too little (by that I mean that it doesn't really get to some of the deep underlying problems which are at stake here).

As to particulars which are set forth in the chronology, I must say that I find that the chronology contains some misleading things, some things that are quite new to me, some rather disappointing things and some real inaccuracies. I will address each of these four headings in sequence:

The chronology contains some misleading things.

For example: Reference is made early on to "substantial complaints" against my teaching or with regard to certain pastoral practices in the Archdiocese of Seattle. My observation is that if there were substantial complaints I was never told who made them or who substantiated them and on what basis.

Nor was I told till considerably after the visitation was decided upon and announced to me (and then only in the most generic manner) what some of those complaints were.

The chronology goes on to indicate that certain responses I myself gave to inquiries were primary among the causes that led to the decision to mount a visitation. That may be so. But I would have to state clearly (and our files certainly bear this out) that if certain responses I provided to inquiries made by the Holy See — some of them as far back as 1978 — were viewed as unsatisfactory, then I must ask why I was never informed of this fact at the time I made those responses. Why, instead, was I politely and routinely thanked for the information I provided, only to hear nothing further at all until the major decision was made to undertake the extraordinary step of an apostolic visitation?

If my responses were inadequate, surely some dialogue on the matters in question should have taken place before a decision was made that only an apostolic visitation could set matters straight in Seattle. So, for anyone to review that correspondence now and to suggest that it was the cause of the visitation troubles me greatly.

Another misleading point: The chronology states that at the time I announced the granting of special faculties to Bishop Wuerl I indicated that they were "mandated by Rome" when, in fact, a more precise description would have been that this was the "agreement" reached between the Holy See and myself. As a matter of fact, in my letter to our priests and people, I made no reference to a "mandate from Rome." I spoke only of carrying out "the wishes of the Holy See," which was manifestly what was at stake here. That I "agreed" to go along with those wishes is clear too, although I did not do so with any sense of freedom since the consequences of my not agreeing to do so had been made clear to me on more than one occasion.

The chronology contained some new learnings.

From the chronology, I learned for the first time that the problem with our formation program for seminarians (we have no seminary in Seattle) had to do with the admissions practices followed by the archdiocese. That was news to me. I had never before been told that.

I also learned that the rather all-encompassing theological concerns (embracing such things as the relationship of the local church to the universal church, the teaching of Christology and of a sound anthropology, the role of the magisterium, the nature of the church, of priesthood and moral theology) were apparently all concerns that related to the programs followed in the archdiocese for the continuing education of our priests. I do not find this particularly enlightening since our priests are certainly orthodox on these matters and our education programs employ the same personnel and deal with the same themes as those of dozens of other dioceses in the country, but I do find it revealing to discover that this was the context for all those serious theological concerns which I first learned of last year at this time in a letter from Cardinal Ratzinger.

Whatever the case, it would have been helpful to have this information during this past year when painstaking efforts were being made to understand the precise nature of Cardinal Ratzinger's concerns so that we could address them in a conscientious and responsible manner.

I would also have to say that it came as a surprise to me that I had been judged by the Holy See to lack the necessary firmness to govern the Archdiocese of Seattle. I had, of course, wondered out loud whether this might indeed have been the case. I had even speculated about it openly in a letter to Archbishop Laghi, but while I had learned from him that I enjoyed no credibility whatever in Rome, I had never been told until the publication of the chronology that the judgment had been made that I lacked the necessary firmness to govern my archdiocese.

The chronology contained some disappointing things.

I found very disappointing the intimation that in dealing with Bishop Wuerl and, specifically with regard to his special faculties, I did not carry out my promises, that I exhibited a certain intransigence or even that I acted in bad faith. This is simply not true. The misunderstanding that came to light regarding the nature and extent of Bishop Wuerl's faculties was a genuine one. Indeed — and I don't say this in any sense to be self-serving or contentious — it is difficult for me to believe how anyone who was present to the conversations and who saw the correspondence could interpret it in any way other than the way I did. From the start of the visitation and all during the long process that took place with regard to the appointment of an auxiliary bishop, I had made certain things abundantly clear. Among them was the fact that I would gladly resign the archdiocese should that be the wish of the

Holy See or, of course, of the Holy Father himself.

Second, I made it clear that I would never carry out a public charade by pretending to be something I was not. I am just not constitutionally capable of that. In other words, if significant or substantial powers were to be taken away from me (and here it goes without saying that if final decision-making authority for critically important areas of archdiocesan life and governance were to be taken away from me), I would choose to resign rather than to stay on and pose as the archbishop of Seattle when, in fact, I would scarcely be that except, perhaps, in some vague, legalistic and rather meaningless sense.

My thinking in this regard, incidentally, had nothing to do with any need I had to hold on to power. It had to do with my need for personal authenticity and my willingness to get out of the way entirely if it was perceived that I was the source of some grave problems in my archdiocese. I always presented these convictions to Archbishop Laghi as matters of conscience, for that is what they were. With him I tried to discern as best I could what was for the good of the church.

In a crucial letter dated Dec. 2, 1985, which I wrote to Archbishop Laghi, I agreed to give substantive authority without, however, relinquishing my ultimate authority. These are the words I used: "(This arrangement) will not impinge upon my ultimate authority as ordinary of the archdiocese." I went on to quote the Code of Canon Law to make the matter unmistakably clear. Archbishop Laghi's response stated: "While this does not lessen your authority as the local bishop, it is understood that this action is being taken at the specific instruction of the Holy See."

For this reason, it troubles me greatly not only that a great misunderstanding could have later ensued, one that in the end I was informed was mine, but also that it would later be suggested publicly that I might have acted in bad faith. I did not.

Perhaps it is at this point that I need to say a word about why in the end — this past July, to be exact — after the Holy See had given its decisive interpretation of the precise nature and extent of Bishop Wuerl's special faculties I agreed to accept the arrangement. Above, I indicated that, as a matter of conscience, I had always resisted such an arrangement, preferring the course of resignation to what would amount to pretending to be what, in fact, I was not. In the end, my very reluctant decision to remain as the archbishop of Seattle was made on the basis of what several trusted brother bishops and close advisers convinced me would be for the ultimate good of the church in the Archdiocese of Seattle.

The chronology also contains some very real inaccuracies.

The chronology speaks of my "insistence" that a public announcement be made at the time the apostolic visitation was undertaken. A more accurate statement would have referred to my earnest desire, expressed to Cardinal Ratzinger, Archbishop Laghi and Archbishop Hickey that if the visitation did indeed have to take place, I would like it to do so in as open and positive and constructive a spirit as possible. I took this position because I honestly recognize the value in my own life of careful, objective evaluation, and because I felt that our priests and people were mature enough to deal with such a process, particularly if they understood that I supported it — even welcomed it — as a step toward answering some of my more vocal critics and toward improving certain aspects of a church which is *semper reformanda*.

In addition, I repeatedly expressed my fear that to undertake the visitation under the cloak of secrecy would be a mistake for at least two reasons: First, it would smack of a method of operating that was more characteristic of the pre-Vatican II church than of the post-, and, second, it was clear to me that no amount of effort to maintain the curtain of secrecy would ever succeed, and that the embarrassment which would follow any disclosure by "leak" would be far greater than that which might accompany an open and honest disclosure from the start.

I made these points clear from the beginning, and I brought them personally to Cardinal Ratzinger during my 1983 *ad limina* visit. I even offered to personally and publicly invite him or his designees to come to the archdiocese so that the onus for the visitation would be on my shoulders. But my invitation and my point of view were not accepted. Secrecy was to be the rule, and I adhered to it.

As matters turned out, when the inevitable leak did come, it came not from Seattle but from the East Coast. Archbishop Hickey called to tell me about it and to say that, after consultation with Archbishop Laghi, he had decided that we needed to issue a news release that would be given out simultaneously in Washington, D.C., and Seattle. That is what, in fact, took place.

A second inaccuracy: The chronology makes reference to my "surprise announcement" at the time I granted the special faculties to Bishop Wuerl, the implication being that I did something that was outside of or contrary to prior agreement or understandings between myself and the pronuncio. The record will show, however, that I repeatedly made the point in my conversations and exchanges with Archbishop

Laghi at Collegeville this past summer that, in the then unlikely event that I would agree to accept the special faculties arrangement according to the manner in which they were being understood by the Holy See, I would have no choice but to make this matter known to all my priests and close collaborators since it would be absolutely essential for them to know to whom they were accountable and from whom they would receive orders and directives. I never left the slightest doubt about this matter since I knew that to have acted in any other way would have resulted in a chaotic situation with regard to the governance of the archdiocese.

For this reason I am simply unable to understand how my subsequent announcement about the special

faculties could have been the source of surprise for anyone who had been party to our conversations or how it could be stated in the chronology that my actions had never "been contemplated." I also find it difficult to understand how anyone could have believed that keeping the special faculties a secret could possibly have worked in the first place. If nothing else, the early history of the visitation to which I have just referred should have clearly indicated otherwise.

To the best of my ability, I have reflected on the contents of the chronology and presented my understanding of events. Since there seems to be such a divergence of opinion between my understanding and interpretation and that set forth in the chronology, I would certainly welcome

some sort of review of all these matters should that be the wish of the members of the conference.

In my oral presentation during the executive session, I will attempt to address these and other matters from a different perspective than that demanded by a response of this sort.

I am grateful to you for taking the time to read this rather tedious exposition. I sincerely hope you have found it helpful.

With warm and personal regards, I am

Fraternally yours in Christ,
Raymond G. Hunthausen
Archbishop of Seattle. ☒

Archbishop Hunthausen on the Executive Session

Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen said he supports the statement issued the morning of Nov. 12 by Bishop James Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, outgoing president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, at the conclusion of a closed executive session in which the U.S. bishops discussed the situation in the Archdiocese of Seattle. In a statement released the evening of Nov. 12, Hunthausen said Malone's statement "addresses the issues in a manner that respects our identity as a conference of bishops united with each other and with the Holy Father. It also indicates a genuine readiness on the part of the conference to offer any assistance judged helpful and appropriate by me and by the other parties involved. This is a very hopeful sign for me." The text of Hunthausen's statement follows.

In the first place, I would like to express my gratitude to Bishop Malone

and to the members of the Administrative Board for inviting me to speak to the body of bishops and to provide new information for them that had not previously been available. I am hopeful that this documentation has clarified matters for my brother bishops and, indeed, that it will now do so for all of our people who are trying to understand what is surely a very complex situation.

Second, I want to say that I support the statement Bishop Malone issued this morning. Like any statement, it will probably not please everyone, but it is, in my judgment, a good statement, one that has emerged from a very honest exchange of many different points of view.

It addresses the issues in a manner that respects our identity as a conference of bishops united with each other and with the Holy Father. It also indicates a genuine readiness on the part of the conference to offer any assistance judged helpful and ap-

propriate by me and by the other parties involved. This is a very hopeful sign for me. It is the kind of assurance I was seeking when I accepted the invitation to make a presentation to the conference in the first place.

I am particularly grateful for the conference's expression of fraternal support for Bishop Wuerl and me as we return to Seattle to continue our ministry, and for its acknowledgement of the pain and anguish suffered for too long a time by so many in the church of Seattle and far beyond.

It is my sincere hope that the direction taken by Bishop Malone's statement will help open the way to the kind of healing that is so badly needed at this moment, and that it will be seen as giving us not only the opportunity but the encouragement to address whatever problems there are that will need to be addressed. ☒