



The Cincinnati Enquirer

Cincinnati, Ohio • Mon, Aug 11, 1975

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Archbishop Discounts Reports Of Exorcisms By Pentecostals

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Enquirer Reporter

One community of young adults may have indulged in unauthorized exorcisms, but that is no reason to "indict" the whole Catholic Pentecostal movement, Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati warned Sunday.

"The Holy Father has given his support to the movement," he said, and relations with Catholic Pentecostals in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati have been "quite positive. Let's not indict the whole movement because of the aberrations of one group."

The archbishop was responding to questions arising from internationally circulated allegations against True House, a community of about 60 young adults in South Bend, Ind., which played an important role in the growth of the controversial Catholic Pentecostal movement in the last decade.

A damning dossier has been circulated by a former leading Pentecostal, University of Notre Dame theologian Dr. William Storey. One copy of his allegations was sent to Archbishop Bernardin as elected president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB).

HE READ it and sent it on to the head of the new NCCB committee for liaison with Catholic Pentecostals, Bishop Gerard L. Frey, Lafayette, La.: "I have no way of judging what happened there (at South Bend)," Archbishop Bernardin said, and any initial NCCB response is "up to" Bishop Frey's group.

In this country, Storey's allegations have been printed by National Catholic Reporter, an unofficial lay-edited weekly newspaper.

There are an estimated 100,000 Pentecostals among almost 50 million Catholics in the United States. The movement has real strength, cutting across racial, age and class lines as in the Cincinnati area where clergy and laity are deeply involved in prayer groups.

Catholic Pentecostals stress the renewed role the Holy Spirit plays in their lives, disclaiming any superiority because of this while trying to help others share the evident joy they experience.

Critics accuse them of being theologically shallow, of unacceptable ecumenical worship with Pentecostals of other churches, and of one-upsmanship deriving from "gifts" they say they receive from the Holy Spirit.

Usually associated with Protestants, Pentecostalism troubles some Catholics because of its ecstatic worship style, with bodily movements and "speaking in tongues," which detractors say is babbling and Pentecostals say is a true gift, pointing to the Book of Acts as proof.

Dr. Storey assembled the charges against his former colleagues, including statements of five members of the True House community, after dropping out of the movement. He describes a tightly knit community of young people, mostly Notre Dame students, who submitted to autocratic leadership of their peers. Alleged abuses include pressuring students to lower their grades out of "humility" to a "break-through ministry" designed to cure members' "problems" through high-pressure late-night sessions that included general confessions of sins and highly emotional and unauthorized exorcisms conducted by lay persons.

Members were told *not* to mention the sessions to outside priests during confession and the local bishop was kept ignorant of goings-on, he said.

"If a person's parents were suspicious of his involvement in the community, he would be required to curtail his communication with home," one leader of the group wrote for Storey's dossier.

STOREY SENT a copy of the charges to Ft. Wayne Bishop Leo Pursley, claiming the now-defunct True House was "in many ways typical . . . of the movement as a whole." Storey called for "the kind of canonical and theological investigation that might bear fruit before more serious harm is accomplished." South Bend is in the Ft. Wayne Diocese.

Bishop Pursley agreed: "I would hope that an appropriate committee of bishops would make a presentation asking the bishops (NCCB) to vote on whether they think Storey's proposal is a good one."

Archbishop Bernardin said that even if Bishop Pursley was kept in the dark by True House members, the "primary responsibility" for an investigation still rests with him as local bishop.

Crash Kills Mother, 25, Injures Daughter, Five

A Withamsville woman was killed and her five-year-old daughter critically injured in a car-truck crash at 6:30 p.m. Sunday at 6001 Kellogg Ave., East End, Cincinnati police said.

Dead at the scene was Mrs. Linda A. Ellis, 25, 688 Winding Way. Her daughter, Angela, was undergoing surgery at Children's Hospital late Sunday. Her husband, David, 27, escaped injury when thrown from the car, police said.

Witnesses told police a panel truck, driven by Paul Carter, 27, 710 Ten Mile Rd., New Richmond, was

going west and crossed the double-yellow centerline.

Mrs. Ellis tried to swerve away from the oncoming truck but the truck smashed into the driver's side door spinning it into a utility pole, police said.

Carter has been charged with vehicular homicide and crossing a double yellow line, police said.

The accident registered the first traffic fatality in Cincinnati since July 13. It was the 44th traffic fatality in 1975, compared with 41 by the same date last year.