



Charles Liteky renounces Medal of Honor. (NC photo from UPI)

Vietnam veteran gives up medal in protest move

By Joe Michael Feist
National Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A former Catholic priest who in 1968 was awarded the Medal of Honor for valor under fire in Vietnam has renounced the medal to protest U.S. policies in Central America.

Charles Liteky, formerly of Jacksonville, said it was "ironic" that "conscience calls me to renounce the congressional Medal of Honor for the same basic reason I received it — trying to save lives."

In Central America "the art of diplomacy has given way to the artless use of brute force," said Mr. Liteky, believed to be the only recipient of the nation's highest military honor to relinquish it.

Mr. Liteky, 55, was an Army chaplain in Vietnam in 1967 when his company, participating in a search and destroy operation in Bien Hoa province, came under attack. During the battle, Mr. Liteky repeatedly braved intense fire in order to reach and pull to safety about 20 wounded soldiers. Mr. Liteky himself was slightly wounded in the battle.

"U.S. involvement in Central America is Vietnam all over again," Mr. Liteky said. "Our advisers are there, our weapons are there, our logistical support is there, our money may soon be there in super abundance. And waiting in the wings for a cue from the president are U.S. combat troops."

Following a press conference, Mr. Liteky went to the black granite Vietnam Veterans Memorial and placed an envelope containing the medal against the base of the monument.

Ordained in 1960 for the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity order, Mr. Liteky served in the military from 1966 to 1971 and was a chaplain in Vietnam for two and a half years.

Mr. Liteky said he asked for a dispensation from his vows in 1974 and was laicized in 1975. He married in 1983.

He currently serves as coordinator of the National Federation of Veterans for Peace in Washington.

Sisters return from Nicaragua with warning message for U.S.

By Dave Finnerty
The Florida Catholic

APOPKA — The U.S. should "get out" of Nicaragua's affairs and stop funding contra forces, Sisters Ann Kendrick and Teresa McElwee say.

Sister McElwee, director of the Justice and Peace Office in Winter Park, charged the Reagan administration with "not wanting Nicaragua to succeed" under President Daniel Ortega.

The U.S. had supported the governing Somoza family (father and two sons) for 45 years before Mr. Ortega became president after the Sandinistas overthrew the Somoza government in 1979.

Sisters Kendrick and McElwee visited Nicaragua July 3-13 with 14 other Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Nuns of their order work in Nicaragua.

The Nicaraguan people do not want America to interfere in their country, the nuns said.

"The war there is not a figment of the imagination," said Sister Kendrick, of the Orlando diocesan Office of Farmworker Ministry here.

"I saw young people — 14, 15 years old — with machine guns," said Sister McElwee. "That's who was protecting the towns."

On July 3, the first day they were in the country, contra forces used U.S. mines to blow up a civilian bus, the nuns said. Half the people on the bus were women and children.

Sister McElwee said that though there are



Sister Kendrick



Sister McElwee

ted to the people." Sister McElwee said Catholics in Nicaragua are very strong in their faith, but the Church there is not meeting their needs of support.

"The Church needs to stand with the poor," she said. "Side-by-side."

Sister McElwee thinks it is ironic that while celebrating the Fourth of July in America and saying "Give us your tired and your poor," U.S.-supplied bombs were being used to destroy a bus in Nicaragua.

"I was ashamed to be an American citizen there," she said.

Now, she said, the U.S. is "toying" with the people there. "John Deere tractors are sitting on the sides of roads needing parts," Sister Kendrick said. She thinks the U.S. should replace those parts so the tractors can be used to help feed Nicaragua's starving people.

The sisters also think the Catholic Church should be "taking a strong stand for the people."

"The Church needs to exercise a more pastoral role to the people," said Sister Kendrick. "It needs to be committed to the people."

Church oppression by Sandinistas worsening, Bishop O'Malley reports

National Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops' conference turned down a meeting with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega during Mr. Ortega's late July visit to the United Nations, citing recent Nicaraguan government actions against Catholic clergy.

Meanwhile, Bishop Sean O'Malley of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands said the Nicaraguan government's oppression of the Catholic Church is worsening quickly and there is little prospect for improvement.

Also, Mr. Ortega and a bishop he exiled differed on the reasons for that move.

A spokesman for the U.S. bishops noted the Sandinistas' recent exiling of the vice president of the Nicaraguan bishops' conference, Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega of the Juigalpa Prelature, and Msgr. Bismarck Carballo, director of communications for the Managua archdiocese, influenced their decision not to meet with Mr. Ortega.

"The decision not to meet with President Ortega was based on the conference's concern" over the

clergymen's "unresolved" situation, said the bishops' public affairs chief, Russell Shaw.

Speaking July 28 at Riverside Church in New York, Mr. Ortega said Bishop Vega was exiled not for opposing the government, but for acting outside the law in "an outright campaign on behalf of those who are killing our people."

Bishop Vega has denied Sandinista allegations that he supports the Reagan administration's backing for anti-Sandinista rebels, the so-called "contras."

"The Nicaraguan situation is deteriorating very rapidly," Bishop O'Malley said in a six-page report on a visit he made to Nicaragua and other Central American nations in mid-July.

In his report, Bishop O'Malley said:

- Mother Teresa was denied entrance into Nicaragua after her recent visit to Cuba.

- The Sandinista government will not allow any priests or religious into the country unless they come to work for the government.

- Several Nicaraguan Capuchins who were sent to Honduras for their novitiate were not readmitted.

Blasphemous movie a bizarre rumor

Q. Through one of our Protestant churches we learn that a company is making a blasphemous movie on the sex life of Jesus. What can be done about this? Why do we not hear about these things in our own Church?

A. Possibly the main reason you have not heard about it in your own Church is that, contrary to numerous rumors such as the one you heard, the story is not true.

The story surfaced eight or 10 years ago in Illinois and has since traveled around the world several times.

In one year alone, the Illinois attorney general's office received more than 180,000

letters from organizations and individuals urging legal action against the reported motion picture about the sex life of Jesus.

The rumor persists in spite of efforts even by many church organizations to declare it false.

How did the rumor start in the first place? An investigation by National Catholic News Service traced the story to a late-1970s report that a Danish film director wanted to produce a film on this subject but scrapped his plan.

A Chicago gossip magazine reported his project. People confused the magazine with the producer and began demands for legal action.

As with so many bizarre rumors, there is, as nearly as I can determine, no factual basis to this one at all.

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Question
box

Father
John Dietzen



BROTHER JUNIPER

