

X/13 W GER -- GERMAN CATHOLIC DAYS CONGRESS BEGINS TODAY IN ESSEN

BONN, SEPT 4 (RFE SPECIAL/MARSH) -- THE 82ND "GERMAN CATHOLIC DAYS," A FIVE-DAY CONGRESS OF CATHOLIC CLERGYMEN AND LAITY, BEGINS IN ESSEN THIS EVENING, WITH THE ENCYCLICL ON BIRTH CONTROL EXPECTED TO BE ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL THEMES OF DISCUSSION.

MORE THAN 20,000 PARTICIPANTS ARE SCHEDULED TO ATTEND THE DAILY SESSIONS OF THE CONGRESS, AND AT LEAST 100,000 WILL ATTEND THE CONCLUDING RALLY SUNDAY.

A CONGRESS OFFICIALS SAID NO DELGATIONS FROM EAST EUROPE WILL TAKE PART. HOWEVER, A FOLKLORE GROUP FROM POLAND AND ONE FROM THE SOVIET UKRAINE WERE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE SATURDAY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE "ABEND DER FREUDE" THAT EVENING.

THE CONGRESS WILL FOCUS ON CURRENT PROBLEMS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CHURCH, THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY IN GENERAL. WORKING GROUPS WILL PROBE A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES, AND EACH OF THE DELGATES WILL BE GIVEN AN OOPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HIMSELF ON A TOPICAL PROBLEM.

CONGRESS ORGANIZERS SAID THE PAPAL LETTER ON BIRTH CONTROL WILL BE DISCUSSED, BUT NO RESOLUTIONS WILL BE ADOPTED. DR. ALBRECHT BECKEL, PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF GERMAN CATHOLICS, SAID THE CONGRESS WILL ATTEMPT "TO PRESENT QUESTIONS, PRESENT THEM ACCURATELY, INSTEAD OF TRYING TO PRESENT QUICK AND SMOOTH ANSWERS."

OTHER TOPICS WILL INCLUDE PROBLEMS AFFECTING WAR AND PEACE, AND THE SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, BIAFRA AND VIETNAM WERE CITED BY CONGRESS SOURCES AS PROBABLE THEMES.

OPPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CHURCH WILL ALSO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS. WOLFGANG BEITZ, CHAIRMAN OF THE GERMAN CATHOLIC STUDENT UNION, YESTERDAY CALLED ON CATHOLIC ASSO-CIATIONS INTHE FEDERAL REPUBLIC TO RE-EXAMINE THEIR AIMS, AND HE URGED A REORGANIZATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND LAY GROUPS, GIVING THE LAITY A GREATER VOICE IN IMPORTANT ISSUES.

PROMINENT PROTESTANT GUESTS ATTENDING THE CONGRESS WILL BE BUNDESTAG PRESIDENT GERSTENMAIER, EVANGELICAL CHURCH DAYS PRESIDENT WEIZSAECKER, AND THE PRAESES OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN THE RHEINLAND, BECKMANN.

TWELVE WEST GERMAN AND TEN FOREIGN BISHOPS WILL ATTEND THE CONGRESS.

THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER AT THIS EVENING'S OPENING CEREMONY WILL BE BERNHARD VOGEL, MINISTER OF CULTURE OF RHEINLAND-PFALZ AND PRESIDENT OF THE 82ND GERMAN CATHOLIC DAYS.

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