

DAILY NEWS **MONDAY** JANUARY 10 2000

'Dawn of the African century'

By ELIJAH MHLANGA

CELEBRATING the ANC's 88th birthday at the Umkhumbane Multi-Purpose Centre in Cato Manor was "historically symbolic" because the residents there had experienced gross human rights violations in the past.

So said Minority Front (MF) leader Mr Amichand Rajbansi, whose party enjoys a close working relationship with the ANC. He told the gathering that it was never thought that the area would one day host an event of this magnitude.

He referred to the brutality of the police when people protested against injustices during the 1960s. The colourful celebration was punctuated with multi-cultural dances and singing of freedom songs.

KwaZulu-Natal ANC chairman Mr S'bu Ndebele addressed a crowd of supporters at celebrations in Durban on Saturday morning.

The ANC was formed on January 8 1912 and grew to become Africa's biggest and oldest liberation movement. At the 88th celebration, with the theme "The Dawn of the African Century", Ndebele promised that the ANC would ensure that the year 2000 marked the dawn of the African century.

Ndebele thanked the SA Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of SA Trade Unions for their support. He also read a statement from the national executive committee, simultaneously read out by ANC President Mr Thabo Mbeki in Thohoyandou, Northern Province.

Ndebele credited the SACP for playing a part in turning the ANC into a party of "action".

He said residents in KwaZulu-Natal should reaffirm their commitment to peace in the province. He said he would raise the possibility with his party's leadership of members of the ANC and IFP carrying dual membership cards openly, since the groups were no longer at war.

Those attending the celebrations included national MPs, MPPs, mayors, councillors and representatives from the SACP, South African National Civic Organisation, ANC Youth and Women's Leagues, Cosatu and the MF.

IFP no to ANC's dual membership 'ploy'

By Mbongeni Hlophe

INKATHA Freedom Party has scorned the idea of dual membership for its members, saying it was just a ploy by the African National Congress to undermine the strength of other political parties and kill them from within.

This comes amid a proposal by ANC KwaZulu-Natal chairman Mr S'bu Ndebele who called on his party's lifelong political foes - the IFP - to allow their members to join the ANC while maintaining their loyalty to the IFP.

Ndebele had said the ANC had no qualms about its members joining the IFP as a gesture of strengthening the peace process.

"The idea of dual membership is just impractical. It is like having one player registered with both Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs and when the crucial game between the two teams comes, what will he do? He might end up scoring home," said IFP spokesman Reverend Musa Zondi.

He said this would create unnecessary confusion among the supporters and they would not know who their real leaders are.

"The utility of having a dual membership is just impossible because a person has one vote to cast during elections since politics is about voting and delivery," said Zondi.

He said the IFP was comfortable

with the kind of cooperation it was getting from the ANC at national level but this should not translate into it (IFP) being swallowed and becoming part of the alliance that ANC has formed with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress for South African Trade Union (Cosatu).

"We can never accept to be swallowed. We believe we have power to stand on our own and we have proved it. We should not forget the differences we have with the ANC when it comes to policies of governance," said Zondi.

But, he said, these differences should not stand in the way of delivery the two organisations have to provide to their supporters.

Amakhosi fear loss of authority

TRADITIONAL LEADERS GATHER TO VENT FEARS OVER PROPOSED RESHUFFLING OF BOUNDARIES

An imbizo called by traditional leaders in KwaZulu-Natal is likely to oppose the proposed new demarcations for municipalities, write Daily News Reporters Eric Ndiyane and Jani Meyer

MORE than 200 traditional leaders in KwaZulu-Natal will meet in Umlazi at the weekend to discuss issues

such as the demarcation of municipal boundaries and the continued faction fighting.

The key issue on their agenda will be the proposed new demarcations of municipalities. Many *amakhosi* in KwaZulu-Natal are opposed to the new boundaries because they feel they will interfere with their authority.

However, members of the Qadi tribe, claiming to be the biggest in the province, said yesterday that they supported the proposals of the Demarcation

Board and viewed them as "a new turn" in their lives.

The *imbizo*, to be held at Mangosuthu Technikon on Saturday, should reach a unanimous decision by the *amakhosi* on the proposed new boundaries. The subject of faction fighting will also be raised as the fighting predominantly takes place in the areas controlled by traditional leaders.

Inkosi Ndabakayise Gumede said the *imbizo* would help clarify the position of the *amakhosi*

on the issue of demarcation and how they would be affected by it.

"Some of us do not want this demarcation because it will interfere with our authority. We were not consulted when they decided to earmark our areas for themselves."

Gumede said that the traditional leaders were disturbed by the killings taking place in their areas and it was important to find solutions.

Inkosi Hambanathi Mchunu said the gathering was important and

would enable the *amakhosi* to speak with one voice.

"We decided that this issue needed to be looked at by all the *amakhosi* because we do not know what it means to us and the people we are leading. They talk about expanding municipalities, but they do not say anything about the *amakhosi* in those areas.

"As long as the *amakhosi* are not consulted on issues concerning land, it will cause problems. That is why we need our repre-

sentatives in government to explain these things," he said.

Mr Petros Mnyandu, of the department of traditional affairs, said those attending would include the head of traditional leaders in KwaZulu-Natal, *Inkosi* Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and the provincial minister of traditional affairs, *Inkosi* Nyanga Ngubane.

In a statement, the Qadi tribe said it was instructed to denounce the proposals of the board and to "fight for their land

or be robbed of it" and "to use every type of weapon".

However, at a meeting of the Qadi Tribal Court, the "concerned members of the Qadi tribe" said the meeting was a "testimony to the bondage under which people under the *amakhosi* live"

"Enough is enough: let the democratic transformation of tribal areas take its course unhindered." The members said they supported the proposed structures in rural areas.

Leaders say no to new boundaries

By Mfanafuthi Mhlongo

THE wrangle between the municipal demarcation board and AmaKhosi in KwaZulu-Natal over the board's proposed new boundaries for metropolitan and district councils intensified at the weekend.

This followed a mass meeting last Sunday at the Emaqadini Tribal Authority, north of Durban, where a local leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party urged the community to resist any attempts by the board to incorporate them into the new municipal structures.

Umzinyathi IFP branch chairman Mr Jubilee Gcabashe said: "I urge you to be ready to fight for your land and prepare whatever weapon you'll use to fight when the war breaks out over these proposed demarcations."

He urged residents to join a march at Umlazi's Mangosuthu Sports Ground on Saturday.

The proposed boundaries will see some

of the tribal areas being incorporated into the newly demarcated municipal structures.

The plan infuriated 28 AmaKhosi from KwaMaphumulo on the North Coast, who have also planned a protest march.

"If we allow this demarcation, our ancestors' graves and tombstones will be destroyed and dug out and that is against our tradition," Gcabashe said.

He said if people allowed the plan to go ahead, poor people who can't afford to pay will be evicted from their homes and join scores who slept in the streets of Durban.

"There will be many streetkids and adults roaming the streets and this is uncalled for," Gcabashe said.

Amaqadi chief Inkosi Mzonjani Ngcobo said the proposed demarcations were going to bring suffering to ordinary people.

"The proposed municipal demarcation will cause people to rent their homes for dwellings that are new and unacceptable to us," Ngcobo said.

**I urge you
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There appears to be general applause for the Catholic Church's public pardon move, writes Elijah Mhlanga.

THE universal public pardon sought by Roman Catholics, who gathered in their thousands for a special Jubilee 2000 mass at Kingsmead cricket stadium in Durban yesterday, has been widely accepted by the communities to whom this was directed.

Political parties and religious organisations applauded the "bold step" taken by the Catholics publicly to admit their mistakes.

IFP national spokesman Reverend Musa Zondi said what the church had done deserved "very high praise", because the situation in the church was still embarrassing.

He said the church had not begun to address within itself the issues such as racism, which was rife.

"I just wish that all other churches could follow and do this because they still have problems. Some are dogged by division between blacks and whites.

The situation is very lamentable," Zondi said.

He said African people were "forgiving people", even though they had been stripped of their dignity.

Durban Jewish leader Rabbi Isaac Richards said that in the Rivonia trial - in which Mr Nelson Mandela and others were tried for political crimes - there were Jewish people involved.

Oppression

He said: "It is fine for the church to seek pardon because they were not outspoken when the oppression happened."

And ANC spokesman Mr Mtholephi Mthimkhulu said that the Roman Catholic Church's plea for pardon was appropriate and "we applaud it".

"This is going to take us a long way in the process of reconciliation, especially in this province where it is more important because of the political violence. This bold step to publicly seek pardon is applaudable and it challenges other churches to do the same."

He said they were doing this at the time termed the Dawn of the African century, in line with the

African Renaissance.

Led by Archbishop of Durban Wilfred Napier, Roman Catholic Church members publicly and loudly sought pardon for the first time from African societies for the part played by the church in the disruption and even destruction of their cultures, apartheid victims, women, Aids sufferers and their families, the

Jewish people, and other Christian churches.

The Catholics also sought pardon for all the failings of the church and its members going back 2000 years, and for the harm and pain this had caused in the communities.

"Repentance for past wrongs is certainly good, but they should include a firm intention

not to repeat anything similar in future which will oppress people politically or militarily. And if they are courageous enough to compensate what they took away from the people, they should give it back," said Moulana Abdoor Roaf Soofie, of the Westville Mosque.

Soofie said it was not enough to express in words a desire for

pardon if they were still in possession of other people's property. But he said the gesture was significant because "repentance is never late".

Wheelchair-bound Mrs Rose Mthembu, from KwaMashu, who joined the church in 1947, said she was touched by the move taken by the congregation because it had noticed its mis-

takes. "I hope that from today people will find the church a place of peace and freedom of the soul," she said.

Mr Clem Darne said: "Everybody has something to apologise for because at some stage we have all done wrong."

But he supported the church's decision taken to seek public pardon.

Approval for public pardon

'REPENTANCE NEVER LATE'



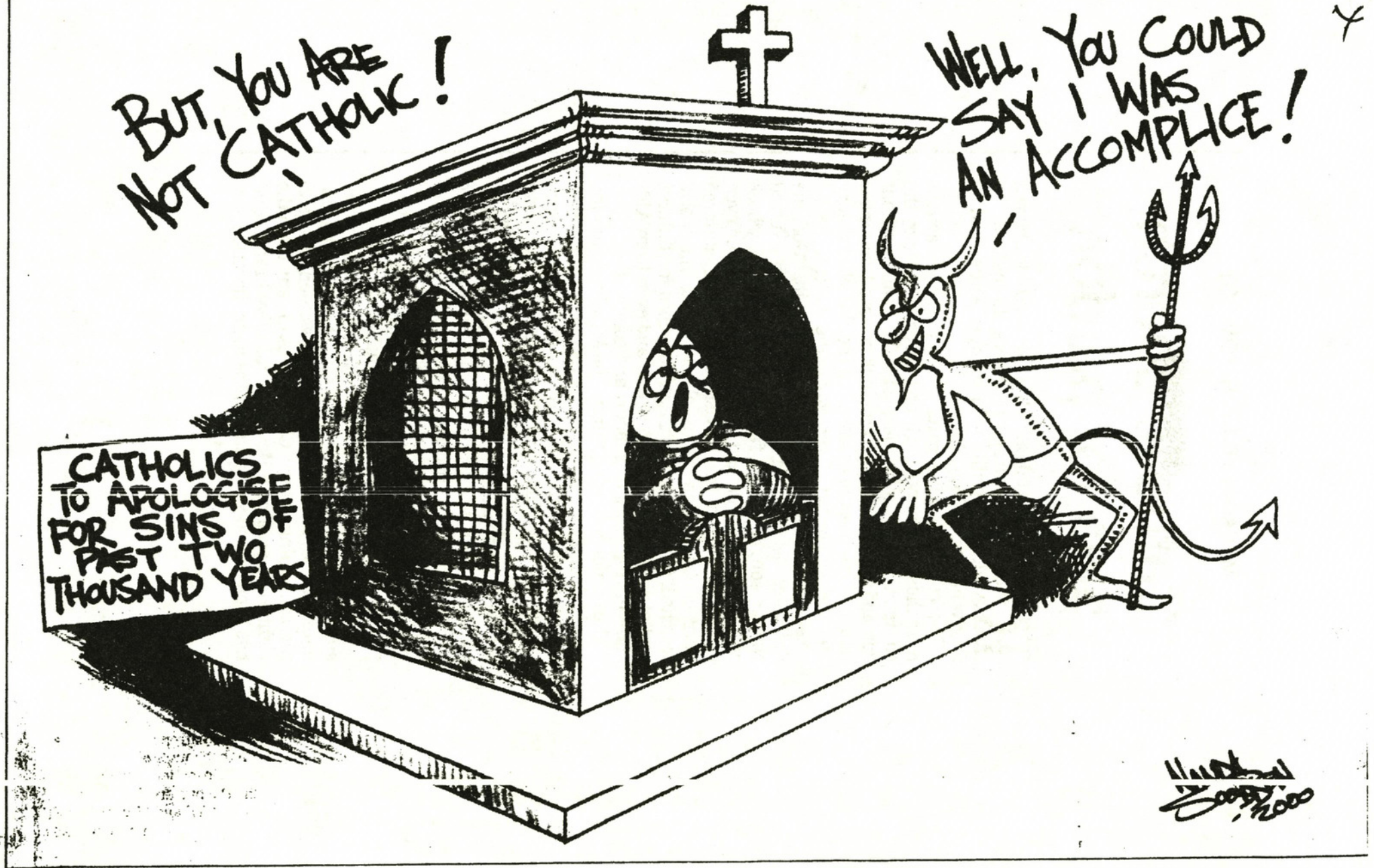
WE BEG YOUR PARDON: Archbishops Dennis Hurley (left) and Wilfred Napier at Kingsmead Stadium with thousands of worshippers, where they made a historic public request for pardon for the church's past failings

PICTURE: STEVEN NAIDOO

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MANAGING EDITOR: TOM ROY

Catholic church plea for pardon

KWAZULU-Natal Catholics this weekend showed their fellow church members throughout the world – one billion in number – the road to forgiveness and reconciliation.

The comprehensive pardon the Catholics sought from those who may have been hurt or offended by the church's actions over the past 2 000 years, without demanding anything in return, is ground-breaking if not, at this scale, unsurpassed in the church's history and may still be felt all the way to the Vatican.

Seeking pardon for their own sins against God, the Catholics, lead by Archbishop of Durban Wilfred Napier, sought pardon from African societies whose cultures the church had a role in disrupting or even destroying; from the Jewish people who suffered horrendous human rights abuses while the world watched; from other Christian churches for failures in dialogue and unity of purpose, and even from Aids sufferers for a lack of support and compassion.

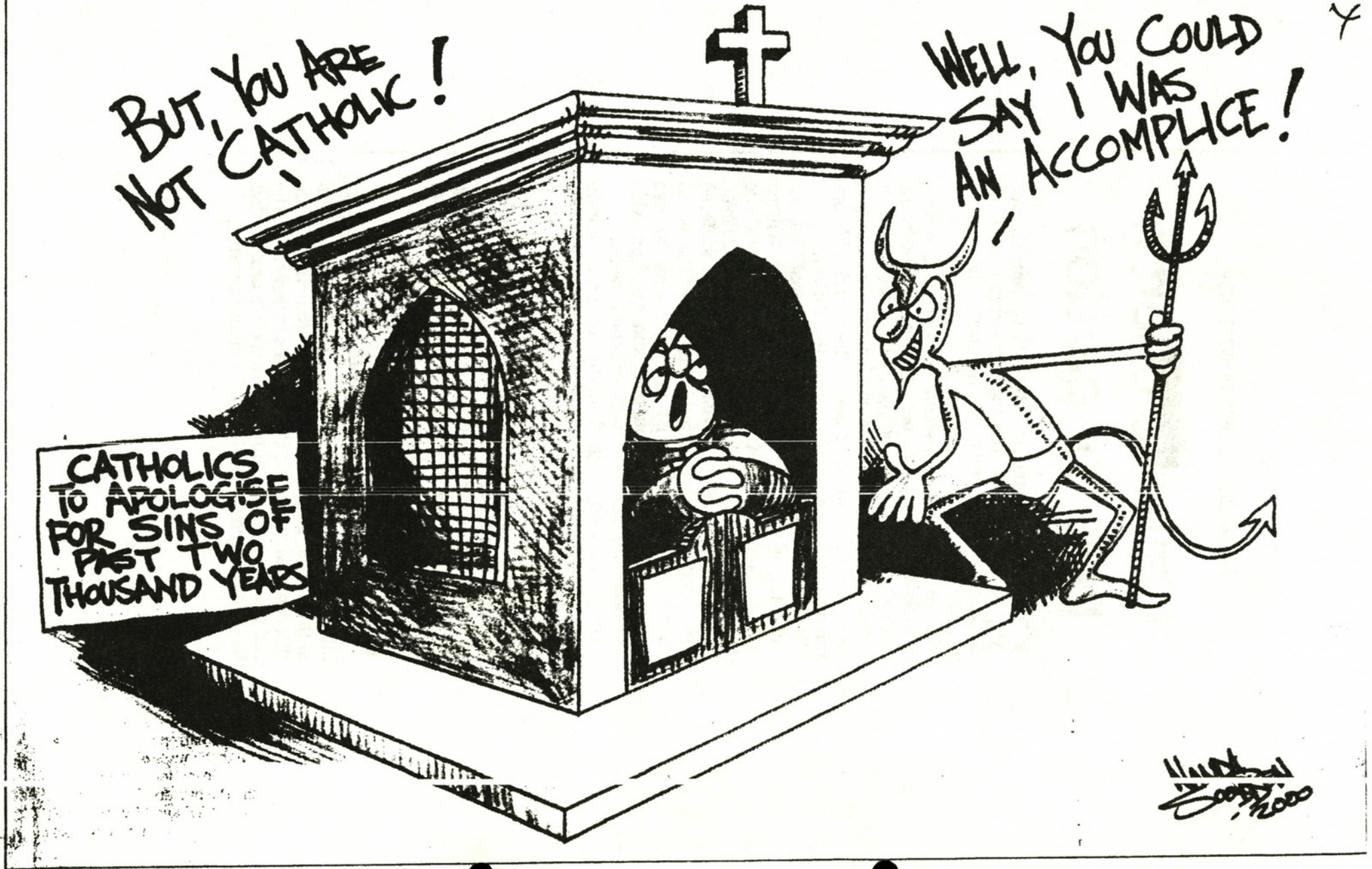
The pardon also sought from the Muslim community, which endured the brutality of the Christian crusades to capture sites of holy significance, appropriately came at a time when Muslims worldwide were celebrating Eid-ul-Fitr. But the pardon that Catholics sought from apartheid victims is of particular interest, for it was in fear of losing white members that the church did not act decisively against the policies of the previous apartheid regime. South Africa stunned the world by achieving a peaceful political transition and reconciliation against insurmountable odds.

We commend the Catholics for following this reconciliatory path, but critics will find it rather unfortunate that they still baulk at granting women equal status, continuing as their Church does to deny them the right to be ordained. However, this olive branch that has been extended is a step in the right direction.

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