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Catholic Criticism On Orphans

Vatican City

An official of the main Roman Catholic relief organization said yesterday the "mass expatriation" of orphans from South Vietnam is "a deplorable and unjustified mistake."

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles Grange of France, head of the Asia department of Caritas International, said his organization opposes the airlift of war orphans to North America, Australia and some European countries. Caritas is a federation of Catholic relief agencies.

Monsignor Grange said orphans in Vietnam generally are placed "in the custody of other relatives or taken care of by the community in villages or districts, and adoption by strangers has seldom been considered in the past."

"Caritas has deplored the mass expatriation of the babies and it has instructed all its regional branches and all Catholic organizations to stay out of the airlift program. The Catholic Church has nothing to do with this plan.

"We feel the airlift is a deplorable and unjustified mistake which does not solve the problem. It was originated by an unmotivated hysteria which appears to have fortunately faded."

Reuters