

Davis: Turmoil At An End

By A. W. MALDONADO

An angry Archbishop James P. Davis returned to Puerto Rico from the mainland last night with newly consecrated Bishop Alberto Mendez of Arecibo, and told reporters waiting for him at International Airport that his Chicago statement was meant "to end" the conflict of the church position over its stand against the Popular Party.

Striding purposefully through a small army of press that was waiting for him at the plane, Archbishop Davis said:

"I have made my statement and I have nothing to add. I have said what I am going to say."

At one point, Archbishop Davis, whose six foot plus frame towered over the reporters, pointed a

(See DAVIS, Page 45)

finger at one newsman and said:

"I have said enough and you better get that correct."

He then turned to another reporter and said:

"Why do you fellows want to drag this thing out? When I made a statement, it was to end it. It is not your function to drag it out."

Archbishop Davis was referring to a statement he made in Chicago this week in which he said the Catholic Church will not impose any punishments on Catholics who voted for the Popular Party. He said nobody would be denied the sacraments of the church for having done so.

He said a circular letter issued last Sunday by his secretary, Msgr. Rafael Grovas, which contradicted statements made previously by Archbishop Davis, was "not authorized" by him.

At the airport last night, though Archbishop said he would answer no questions, he did submit to one.

He was asked if somebody who had voted for the Popular Party had committed a venial or a mortal sin.

"That depended on so many things," he said, "that it would take too long to explain."

He said he would be willing to discuss the matter "some other time, but not now."

Bishop Mendez, who will be installed officially as the new bishop of Arecibo in ceremonies tomorrow, praised Archbishop Davis's Chicago statement as "in the great spirit of conciliation. I think it will go a long way to clearing things up," he said.

The two prelates were accompanied by the Most Rev. Edwin Byrne, archbishop of Santa Fe, N.M., who will take part in the Arecibo ceremonies. Archbishop

Byrne was formely bishop of Ponce.

Msgr. Grovas's letter branded as "public sinners" those who publicly stated not having repented for voting for the Popular Party. Citing canon law, the letter made clear that the Church would deny these people sacraments. It also stressed that these people could be excommunicated.