

'Restoration' Of Confession In Protestant Churches Urged

Geneva, Switzerland — (NC) — Should architects plan for confession boxes in Protestant churches of the future? This is one of the questions prompted by a recent book, "La Confession," published in Switzerland, which calls for the "reintroduction" of the practice of auricular confession in the Reformed or Presbyterian churches.

Author of the book is Max Thurian, founder of the Protestant monastic community of Cluny at Talze, France, who upholds confession as a sacrament. Published by the well-known Protestant firm of Delachaux and Niestle of Neuchatel, the book includes a preface by Pastor Marc Boegner, president of the Protestant Federation of France.

AMONG THOSE who have supported the book's argument is a leading Swiss Protestant theologian who set forth what he said were clear citations demonstrating that Calvin, the Father of fundamental necessity of sacramental confession.

He is Professor Jacques Courvoisier, dean of the Protestant Theological Faculty of the Uni-

versity of Geneva, who wrote in the Journal de Geneve that it was the obligatory character of penance that the early Reformers denied, adding that the Protestant churches subsequently "threw out the baby with the bathwater."

Dean Courvoisier is definite on the point. He said "In the minds of the leaders of the Reformation, confession is not only an essential factor for self-control, a necessary means for moral health, but it is an indispensable element in the life of the Church, without which the Church is enfeebled and fettered in accomplishing its mission."

"Confession," the Protestant theologian added, "is not only a psychological necessity but a spiritual and ecclesiastical one as well, for without the personal and collective acknowledgment of sin there is no way open to pardon, and the idea of forgiveness is forgotten. The Church is by nature visible as well as invisible. It has need to have God's forgiveness made manifest to the individual and the group in express words."

As a result of abandoning the practice of auricular confession Protestant Churches are losing their members to Catholicism, or to psychiatry, Professor Courvoisier declared. He said that "the believer who wants to unburden himself to his pastor often leaves the interview disappointed, indicating a serious gap in the Protestant system afflicting both cleric and laity, even if neither can put their finger on the source of their distress."

ON THESE BASES, Professor Courvoisier went on to urge that the practice of confession be restored in Protestant churches, apparently maintaining that they actually have a valid authority to forgive sins in the name of God.

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Canadian Bishops Deplore Marital Morality Decline

Ottawa — (RNS) — The Roman Catholic Hierarchy of Canada adopted a statement here deploring the "decline in marital morality" which the bishops said was "undoubtedly due to the unwillingness of so many to accept marriage as a sacred institution."

The statement, issued at the close of a two-day meeting of the Canadian Catholic Conference, said:

"The very well-being of our country depends on the maintaining of high standards of conjugal and marital morality."

THE BISHOPS struck at social conditions which hinder wholesome family life and warned parents against permitting their teenage children to "go steady."

On teenagers, the statement said:

"We call upon parents to discourage, as far as lies in their power, the pernicious custom of boys and girls in their early teens forming permanent and exclusive 'steady' associations which are so often an occasion of sin."

The Hierarchy said "many social conditions force marriage partners to be hercule if they are to keep aloft the sacred ideas of marriage."

Specifically cited by the bishops were "inadequate" wages, the "prohibitive" cost of home ownership, discrimination against tenants with children, and "a host of other similar hardships."

"PUBLIC LEADERS and land-

World Movement Seeks To Liberate Cardinal Mindszenty

New York — (RNS) — Plans are under way to start an international movement for the liberation of Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, imprisoned Primate of Hungary who is serving a life sentence on charges of anti-State activities.

The plans were announced here by Magr. Bela Varga, president of the Hungarian National Council in exile, who is spearheading the movement.

Magr. Varga said it was proposed to form a Central Committee for the Liberation of Cardinal Mindszenty which would unite and coordinate the work of various groups already in existence in free countries.

He said that during a recent tour of Europe he observed the existence of these committees and realized the potential impact of their efforts on an international basis.

"The Cardinal's fate has become a symbol of the fate of all Iron Curtain nations," Magr. Varga said, "and his name is synonymous with the resistance and the martyrdom of the people suffering under Soviet tyranny."

Tito Reds Forbid Clergy To Mention Polish Cardinal

Graz, Austria — (NC) — Croatian and Slovenian priests in Yugoslavia have been "requested" by local Communist committees to refrain from any mention of His Eminence Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Red-ousted Primate of Poland, in sermons or other pronouncements, it was learned here.

At the same time, Bishop Anton Vovk, Apostolic Administrator of Ljubljana, provincial capital of Slovenia, has been warned to stop at once the offering of special prayers in the Diocese for the persecuted Church in Poland.

BISHOP VOVK was informed on behalf of Miho Marinko, Chief Minister of the Slovenian provincial government, that he had better "mind his own business" and leave "irrelevant things" in Poland alone.

According to reports reaching here, heavy fines for publicly condemning the Communist persecution of the Church in Poland have been imposed on two Slovenian priests from Maribor, and on Croatian priests from Dubrovnik and Split. The reason given was that their words provoked "anti-Titoist feeling."

Meanwhile, the Croatian government has seized copies of an alleged letter from His Eminence Aloysius Cardinal Stepinac, semi-imprisoned Archbishop of Zagreb, destined for the Zagreb clergy and said to deal with the case of Cardinal Wyszynski.

COMMUNIST leaders throughout Yugoslavia were reported to

Woman Appointed CU's Postmistress

Washington — (NC) — For the first time since its establishment, the branch post office at the Catholic University of America is headed by a woman, Mrs. Elizabeth S. Cahill. The post office, called Cardinal Station, is located in the basement of McMahon Hall in the heart of the campus. It is staffed by five persons.

Mrs. Cahill, a member of St. Anthony parish, has been a member of the post office staff for seven years. Her appointment as postmistress fills the vacancy made by the retirement of Henry Bannan, who served as postmaster since 1937.

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