

Year Of Scrutiny For Church In US

N.C.W.C. Bureau
of Information

Washington — The Catholic Church in the United States was subjected to greater public examination and publicity in 1960 than ever before in its history.

At the beginning of the year, the communications outlets were still reporting the controversy stirred by the Bishop's statement attacking birth control in November of 1959.

As the year progressed the candidacy of Sen. John F. Kennedy for the Democratic presidential nomination and then for the presidency itself, put an even more intense spotlight on the Church he belonged to.

THE CAMPAIGN was the occasion in some quarters for vigorous attack. Millions of thousands of pamphlets were distributed, some of them trying to maintain that a man may have divided loyalty if he is Catholic as well as American.

Church officials, faced with the decision whether it engaged in open controversy to answer the attacks, or the most part chose silence. Even diocesan newspapers had to wait, during those deliberations, respecting the timeliness of the charge.

The silence proved beneficial since Protestant and Jewish leaders moved forward to repudiate the attack, and repeatedly noted that the man and his policies rather than his religion was the deciding factor in determining the vote.

When the vote came, the political maxim that a Catholic could not be elected to the presidency had died — and Catholics, whether or not they voted for Kennedy, were gratified.

Almost unnoticed, amidst the political storms, were two events that would be most significant throughout the 1960's.

The first was an organized effort by United States Catholics to aid in preserving the faith of the last third of the world's Catholics who live in Latin America. A Latin American Council, not yet part of the international network of ecclesiastical associations in Washington, the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Under the direction of the bureau plans were made to send United States lay men and women to Latin America to train Catholics there. This, requested by the Holy See, the first volunteers responded to be in the field by the end of next year, helping to relieve a critical shortage of priests in the Latin American countries.

The second event was appointment of almost 50 U.S. Churchmen and women to aid in preparations for the worldwide meeting of bishops in Rome, probably in 1962.

The appointment of so many United States Churchmen to the preparatory agencies guaranteed that this country would make a substantial contribution to a meeting that will very likely be the most important event of the Church in the twentieth century.

During the year a United States cardinal died and another was appointed in Philadelphia. John Cardinal O'Hara, C.S.C., died on August 28 after nine years as Archbishop of the see. In December Pope John XXIII named Joseph Ritter of St. Louis to the cardinalate, again raising the number of Cardinals to six.

The cardinals were included among the 220 American bishops who met in Washington in November for their annual meeting. At its close they issued a statement urging reemphasis on the importance of individual responsibility in all segments of American life.

The bishops were disturbed at a report of the Legion of Decency that objectionable films had dropped from 15 per cent of total Hollywood production in 1959 to 23 per cent in 1960. In a subsequent statement a bishops' committee urged protest, but called

for reform of what they maintained was an ineffective Hollywood Production Code administration.

The ecumenical movement that has been gathering force in recent years seems to be strengthened rather than hurt by the troubles of the political campaign. In December the Catholic and Protestant religious leaders gathered at St. John's Abbey to discuss the issues separating and uniting them. Among Catholic participants was Fr. Georges Gavriloff, a French priest-scholar who gave a nationally publicized lecture during the campaign denouncing conflict between the religion of a Catholic and his public office.

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The well-preserved rooms are described as probably the most complete example of domestic decorative development in the country. The restoration will be paid for through a \$100,000



Epiphany Honors 3 Kings

Family religious fairs—common for centuries in Europe—are taking root in America, as these photos show. Epiphany, feast of the wise men next Friday, Jan. 6, will be marked by the Richard Shindell family of Ridgefield Park, N.J., with a cake decorated with a gold-dipped crown. Hidden in the cake is a bean. Whoever finds it in his slice of cake will be family "king" for the day. On the door post, the initials of the three kings, Caspar, Melchior and Baltazar, are written in chalk with the numerals 1961 to ask the holy kings blessing. The pageant (lower photo) is enacted by patients of the Sisters of Christian Charity at their Metuchen, N.J., convent. The cake is not from the Sahara but the handwork of the nuns. (R.N. Photos)

Orthodox Prelate Predicts

Church Unity In Fifty Years

Atlanta, Ga.—(R.N.)—Christian unity must be achieved within the next 50 years, declared the head of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, in an interview.

"The time is opportune," he said, "with the very positive mind disposed," he observed, "to ward this question."

"THE POPE was favorably disposed," he observed, "and with a very positive mind to ward this question."

Theological and dogmatic differences between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches separated in the 1964 schism are still, the archbishop declared.

"What distinguishes both big," he explained, "is the psychological distance between the two. It is the viewpoint of the people that is the most important."

"I don't think God is completely indifferent and strange to this movement," Archbishop Iakovos commented. "In very hopeful."

He recalled that when he visited Pope John XXIII in 1959 and the Pontiff and he spoke of a

"Theology can't be transmitted to the grass roots. We must remake the attitudes of the people of the Church, and the present time is most favorable to do this."

"It is definitely a step in the right direction," the Orthodox

archbishop said, "but before speaking about theological unity we must break the ice. It is hard to evaluate the situation immediately. But, for its end, we must work to see a change. I am sure there is going to be one."

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He also cited the historical visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Pope, which, he said, made him "very happy" as another move toward unity.

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