

# Ecumenical Council Called Pope's Crowning Achievement

By DR. CLAUD D. NELSON  
(RNS Special Rome Correspondent)

Pope John XXIII, in some 60 discourses or other statements to date, has called attention to the forthcoming Second Vatican Council, which promises to be the crowning achievement of his pontificate.

More than once he has referred to the inspiration, like the sound of a bell, which he said came to him while at prayer during the 1959 Chair of Unity Octave. There were many cardinals, he said, who were "better fitted" than he to become Pope. But, he added, if God wished him to be chosen, it was surely in order that he might bring about the union of the Churches. In announcing the Council on Jan. 25, 1959, Pope John remarked that after two months or so of his pontificate, people were beginning to wonder what would be its character. It is clear that he wishes to be remembered as the Pope of the Council — the first, he it noted, after the promulgation of the doctrine of papal infallibility in 1870.

His general thesis regarding the Council, perhaps best expressed in the encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* (June 29, 1959) and repeated with almost no variation on many occasions, is this: The One True Church of which the successor of St. Peter is the Shepherd, must be purified in truth, charity and unity. It must be without spot or blemish and reinforced and made more relevant to the present age. Then one can say to those who bear the name of Christian but are outside the fold, "The way is open, this is our Father's House, take or retake your place in it."

I have seen no hint that "purification" would involve any change in doctrines notoriously unacceptable to Protestants. There are, in fact, indications that Pope John's more immediate concern is with the Eastern Orthodox, where the differences in doctrine constitute much less of an obstacle. Speaking of the Churches of the Orient to the clergy of Venice, Pope John indicated the steps to be taken: approach or making contact; encounter; and then "the perfect re-

union of so many brethren separated from the ancient common Mother." The Orthodox, constantly included with the Protestants, are also mentioned separately on six or seven occasions. Fraternal reference is made to their great Fathers of the early Church, especially Sts. Gregory Nazianzen and John Chrysostom.

It appears that Pope John sees the need for a less immediate and direct approach to Protestants. While he took pains to emphasize, on at least one occasion, that the internal affairs of the Church must be considered before "discussions" would be of any use, he was speaking of the Council agenda as such. But he has brought about the creation of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, whose contacts with non-Roman Christian bodies have very great possibilities (whether finally validated by the Council or not) and has emphasized the importance of the Secretariat.

On Dec. 7, 1959, Pope John announced that the forthcoming Council would be the Second Vatican Council; he has used that appellation occasionally

since, but usually refers to it as the Ecumenical Council.

Much of the Pontiff's concern for the Council is related to his consciousness of his own pastorate, both of the Rome diocese and of the whole Church of which he is the head. He has placed much emphasis on the pastoral duties of clergy and hierarchy. His several expressions of satisfaction with the Rome Synod of 1960 are doubtless based in a considerable degree on the attention which it paid to the character and the work of the parish priests. There is only occasional mention of the laity. The commission on the apostolate of the laity was not included with other commissions for the preparation of the Council in the published account of his report to the cardinals on May 30, 1959, although it was included when the official list was published six days later.

Several times Pope John has mentioned the civic results, and particularly the contribution to world peace, that would flow from a successful Council, and from the unity of Christians. His interest in missions is attested at various points. He has referred in particular to the foresight of Pope Benedict XV in stimulating the formation and promotion of native clergy, soon after the close of World War I.

In naming cardinals and bishops from distant lands, His Holiness has emphasized both the need of the Council to be widely representative, and his own need of their help as pastors and counselors.

Early in 1959, Pope John remarked that the task of the head of the Church is not to preserve it as a museum, but to guide it in the way of life. A little later, speaking to Asians and Africans studying in Europe, he said that the Council "will not at one stroke abolish all the divisions that exist among Christians; but the Grace of God acts on the soul." The same day, speaking to a group of blind pilgrims, he voiced the fervent aspiration for "unanimous cooperation not for strife, discords, divisions, but for peace, spiritual elevation; for Christ . . ."

On several occasions the Supreme Pontiff has made it clear that he sets great store on the success of the Council, speaking of it as an "opus grande", invoking the blessing of the Virgin Mary, speaking of the anxious hopes of multitudes. He joined Dr. Geoffrey Francis Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, in speaking of a spirit of unity and unity of spirit. He has contrasted the reception given to his announcement of the Council and appeal to separated brethren with certain harsh and even hostile reactions which greeted, in 1897, a similar appeal by Pope Leo XIII. He has cautioned against hasty judgments and predictions, and has suggested that Ephesians IV, verses 15-16 — a text which enjoins pursuing the truth in charity, with Christ the head of the whole body — might well be inscribed over the doors of the Council room.

Meanwhile, some of the results of the Pope's announcement of the Council and the steps taken in its preparation may well be counted as permanent gains — without any present prophecy as to what the Council will do.

For the Pope to call the bishops and others into council to aid him in his general pastorate indicates an important limitation in the practice (but not necessarily in the principle) of papal infallibility.

After the First Vatican Council in 1869-1870, many thought that this would be the last Ecumenical Council since the Pope had been declared infallible. Although theoretically the Pope does not have to call a Council to pronounce infallibly, the fact that he does summon the bishops indicates that he judges it wise or expedient to do so.

The very announcement of the Second Vatican Council has given occasion and encouragement to many constructive statements by Roman Catholics and others. Some of these have been made public, but doubtless a great many others are contained in the responses of bishops, religious orders and universities in the unpublished preparatory materials.

The creation of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity may well prove to be more important, in the long run, than the work of the Council. But so fundamental a step might well have seemed too revolutionary had not the preparation for a Council made it a natural, even a necessary move.

## Mutual Kindness, First Step to Unity

Toronto — (RNS) — The "great guiding line" in the relationship between separated Christians must be charity," the Rev. Gregory Baum, youngest member and only Canadian on the Vatican's Secretariat for Christian Unity, said here.

Father Baum, a convert from Judaism to the Catholic Church, gave the second of two lectures on Christian unity at All Souls' Anglican church in suburban Willowdale. The first was given by the Rev. E. R. Fairweather, Anglican priest and professor of dogmatic theology at Trinity College, University of Toronto.

Father Baum said as a first step towards unity, members of different denominations must learn to argue without hurting each other. A charitable attitude was reflected in modern church literature, both Protestant and Catholic.

"Today," the priest said, "you will find a frankness and a readiness to admit faults in the literature of both sides."

Admitting that some of the passages in Catholic Church literature of 50 years ago was offensive to Protestants, Father Baum said: "It is a bit of a Christian vice to build up arguments for our own Church and at the same time to belittle others."

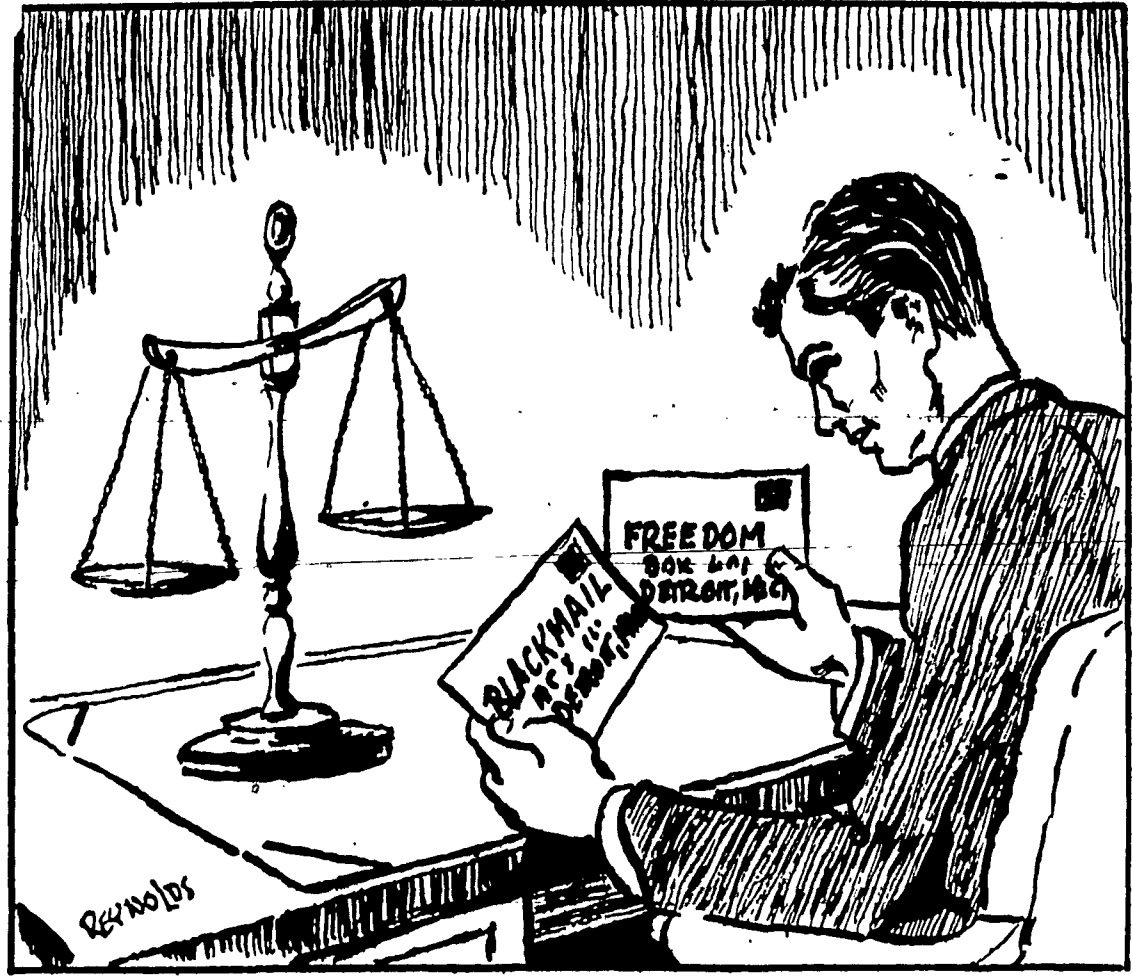
Such words as "heretic" were insulting and had long since disappeared from Church documents, he said.

The priest said interreligious discussions should be confined to theological specialists, since it takes a long period for understanding to develop at the level of scholarship "before it can penetrate to the people."

## Daily Mass Calendar

- Sunday, June 4—Second Sunday after Pentecost (green) Gloria, Creed, Trinity Preface. 1950 — Rev. James Keenan.
- Monday, June 5—St. Boniface, martyr (red), Gloria.
- Tuesday, June 6—St. Norbert (white), Gloria.
- Wednesday and Thursday, June 7 and 8—Mass as Sunday except no Gloria, no Creed, common preface.
- Friday, June 9—Sacred Heart of Jesus (white), Gloria, Creed, Preface of the Sacred Heart.
- Saturday, June 10—St. Margaret (white), Gloria. 1932 — Rev. John Farrell.

Priests listed above died on the date indicated. Please pray for them.



## Cuba Tractors Blackmail?

By REV. RAYMOND M. KENNY  
Guest Editor

During the past two weeks thousands of letters have poured into a post office in Detroit addressed to either "Tractors for Freedom" or "Tractors for Blackmail." Hundreds of speakers and editorials have addressed thousands of words to a new subject. Once again our generous nation is being torn asunder on a new diplomatic rack.

Should the American people honor the crude barter of human lives for tractors and bulldozers as offered by the Cuban Premier? Or should we haughtily turn deaf ears to those who would profiteer in the liberty of those unfortunate enough to be political prisoners?

As the first shock of the solicitation faded, a group of prominent Americans, private citizens, undertook to seek voluntary contributions and to purchase the machinery. The President has given faintly-disguised but full approval. Negotiations are under way and have been highlighted by a mission to our shores of ten of the prisoners themselves. Like the Roman hero Regulus, these noble young men heroically bound themselves to return to their ignoble captor after a week of bargaining and that return has been duly carried out.

Meanwhile, however, many and distinguished also are those who see in this episode only one more step in the "appeasing" retreat of our great country before the cruel but irresistible advance of the omnipresent Communist dragon. Bulldozers and tractors surrendered now to the socialist blackmailer can only mean new weapons for economic advance in the hands of our sworn enemies. If we yield this ransom today, tomorrow new thousands from the enslaved millions may be proffered by the cold-blooded kidnapers to tempt our stupid generosity. Next week or next month the ransom price may well be B-58 bombers or even Polaris missiles! Surely the Communist audacity knows no bounds.

Others would have it that every decent, self-respecting, humanitarian American could never touch this dishonorable deal. There can be no proper course other than to ignore such blatantly immoral suggestions as that of the Cuban dictator. Any dealing in "blood money" can scarcely leave the purchaser himself unstained, and this no matter how eloquently "do-good" be his intentions. Hence the avalanche of letters addressed to "Tractors for Blackmail."

Herein is cast one vote for "Tractors for Freedom," one vote which rejects the case for the objectors. Must our actions and motives be eternally prided on reaction? Too often in recent years have Americans, Catholics included, been misled into sterile policies which are monotonously "anti-Communist." Is it not entirely possible that one of these Communist geniuses may someday recognize the infallible path to success which we are offering? Could they not completely control our lives by simply saying and doing the opposite of what they want of us? That day our slavery would indeed be accomplished.

Let us American Catholics inaugurate a new positive program. Let pro-Catholicism and pro-Americanism eclipse anti-Communism in our lives. Perhaps then we may avoid the useless waste of energy involved in protesting, against objections to films which are themselves protests against those who might object to governmental investigations vaguely objecting to some kind of action loosely defined as "un-Rochesterian" or "un-New Yorkian."

If a Cuban despot wishes to advertise his own callous disregard for human life and liberty, why should that deter us from our Christian determination to respect human life and help the unfortunate whenever we can. Certainly the favorable reaction of the Latin American press to our position on this question should not be our main reason for acting. Yet are we wrong in accepting their judgment as at least not biased in our favor? Our southern neighbors are not always so out-spoken in our favor.

Furthermore we Americans are convinced that we have an important opportunity and indeed share in the obligation mentioned in Pope John's new encyclical letter. We have been blessed by God more than any nation in both spiritual and material blessings. But we know too that "all men were created equal, that they were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights" and that this generation of Americans has a special need and a special opportunity to export that noble freedom to others.

Moreover as Catholics we have a commission to preach the Good News of Redemption to all nations, not to hide our beliefs beneath a bushel nor behind an anti-Communist protective curtain.

Like all our fellow human neighbors, Catholic or Jew or Protestant, American or non-American, do we expect to be judged by the Supreme Judge who has promised to consider as done for Him whatever we have done for our neighbor who is hungry or thirsty or naked or homeless or sick or in prison?

## Laos Christians Face Blitzkrieg

(Religious News Service)

As the 14-nation Geneva conference on Laos continues with no satisfactory end in sight, Christians in the northern area of the Communist-occupied country are waging a staunch battle for survival alongside their animist brothers.

But their chances of preventing a total Red takeover — with its inevitable anti-religious blitzkrieg — grow slimmer as each day passes.

Apparently lost sight of in the voluminous political news that comes out of Laos is the fact that some 20,000 Catholic and 10,000 Protestant tribes-people are now surrounded in their mountain strongholds by the Communist North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao rebels.

However, according to Beth Blake, Religious News Service correspondent in Indo-China for five years, these tribesmen are not hiding in their forests but fighting, and with good reason. In recent weeks the Pathet Laos have sacked an unknown number of the 62 Christian villages belonging to the Meos, one of the country's tribes of remote Chinese origin.

The raiders not only burned the Meo tribesmen's small bamboo and pine-shake chapels, but annihilated whole families.

Although many of the tribesmen of northeastern Laos forests, many more have not.

This is confirmed by reports of determined new efforts of Pathet Lao troops to liquidate "heretic Meo tribesmen."

While top personalities of the two great blocs haggled over the future of Laos in Geneva and even while Lao leaders of the three political camps held various cease-fire talks in Laos, the Pathet Lao troops, supported by artillery, pressed toward the mountain and rebel encampment into positions from which the Meo tribesmen have sought to impede and harass Communist Xieng Khouang province and the Plaine des Jarres, the Pathet Lao capital area.

Hundreds of the Meo tribesmen — including many who are regular Royal Army troops — are Christians as determined to fight for their religion as they are to protect their homes and families.

There is little doubt that their attacks on the Soviet airlift flights from Hanoi, the North Vietnamese capital, and on rebel convoys from across the North Vietnamese and Red China borders have been effective. Otherwise the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao

forces would not continue to launch all-out attacks in an effort to drive them from their rugged mountains, not more than 20 miles from the beautiful highland plateau of Xieng Khouang.

Ever since the Pathet Lao were first organized in 1950, they have sought to force the Meo, the Man and the indigenous Khamou tribesmen into joining their cause — or risk total destruction of their villages. After 10 years of such pressure, the tribesmen who have continued to resist the Pathet Lao "indoctrination" have no illusions regarding what it means to live under Red control, even in wild and mountainous Upper Laos.

There are ethnic minorities claim and control virtually all the mountain tops and the vast tracts of land on which they have settled during 200 years of group migrations from south China.

In spite of their illiteracy, the Meos are the most intelligent of the ethnic groups and are energetic in their domestic and political affairs. Considering themselves superior, they look down upon the passive Buddhist Lao of the lowland valleys. The latter, in

turn, have ignored the ethnic minority peoples, thus failing to capitalize on their strong potentialities.

Had the Lao cultivated the tribesmen, they would now have strategically located and loyal fighters along their borders to stem any advance of the invaders who threaten the entire Kingdom of Laos.

Even now, because many tribesmen dislike the Pathet Lao more than the national Lao, the Meos who have not joined the rebels are supporting the government in its present crisis. For them, the royal government has been parachuting supplies, arms and ammunition behind rebel lines.

The non-Communist Laos, Christian and animist alike, are loyal to their chief, Touby Ly Foung of Xieng Khouang. Touby carries the official title of Chao Muong Meo, Chief of the Meo of Xieng Khouang province, but he is recognized as the chief of all the Meo tribes-people of Laos. He is also Deputy Governor of the province and an elected member of the National Assembly.

Touby is the first Meo to have received a formal edu-



Saints of Unity

ST. NERES . . . was father of St. Isaac the Great. After the death of his wife he became a hermit and chief Bishop of the Armenian Church. Some of the reforms displeased King Artaxel, who banished him. The succeeding monarch, Pap, was so severely wicked and cruel he would not permit to religious observance. In the end, this ruler persecuted the Bishop, banishing him.

THE CATHOLIC  
**Courier Journal**  
OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

Vol. 72 No. 35 Friday, June 2, 1961

MOST REV. JAMES R. KEARNEY, D.D., President  
MAIN OFFICE: 200 N. State St., Rochester 2, N. Y.  
READERS OFFICE: 311 Robinson Bldg., 1-4000 or 2-3222  
ADVERTISING OFFICE: 117 Capital - AL 2-5853  
Second class postage paid at Rochester, N. Y.  
Acceptance for mailing at special rate of \$1.00 per copy authorized by Post Office Dept. on July 10, 1958.  
An Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/H/V