

Laymen Are The Church

Pompton Lakes — (NC) — Laymen aren't just in the Church — in a very real sense, they are the Church.

It is that belief which has helped motivate a New Jersey lawyer in activities which have brought him to the presidency of a federation of Catholic groups numbering nine million members.

William F. Johnson of Pompton Lakes was elected president of the National Council of Catholic Men during the organization's biennial convention last May in Pittsburgh.

In his two years at head of the NCCM he hopes to be able to bring about "an increase in the personal participation of individual men in various aspects of the lay apostolate."

"Laymen," he said in an interview, "must recognize the fact that as members of the Mystical Body of Christ they are the Church, in their capacity as laymen."

This is so, he said, so that "all things may be restored in Christ and that His Church may continue to grow and her influence be felt in all aspects of world affairs."

He added a word of caution: "This call for growth in the lay apostolate should never be confused with a movement of social laicism. The roles of the clergy and the laity, although founded in the same spiritual purpose, are nevertheless distinct. The advancement of lay participation (in the work of the Church) is not to be confused with any attempt at interference in the functions of the priesthood."

Johnson, 49, the father of five and a practicing attorney for 25 years, has a long history of civic and apostolic activity.

He has been active in the lay apostolate since 1948, when the National Council of Catholic Men was established in the Paterson diocese. He was the unit's third president and has also been president of the Catholic Lawyers Guild and of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus.

A daily communicant and a member of the Nocturnal Adoration Society, he has won Church honors, being awarded a knighthood of St. Gregory and the Pontifical Cross of the Holy Land.

Vatican's Champion of Church Unity

By DR. CLAUD D. NELSON
(Special from Rome)

Rome — (RNS) — Among the members of the Roman Curia to whom Non-Catholic leaders have looked for authoritative guidance regarding the Second Vatican Council is Gregory Peter XV Agagianian, long one of Catholicism's top champions of Christian unity and a man of extreme refinement and broad culture.

Patriarch of Cilicia of the Armenians, Cardinal Agagianian is Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and president of the Commission on Missions, one of the special bodies created by Pope John XXIII to help prepare the Council.

The prime interpreter of the Council, so far as Non-Catholics are concerned, is Augustin Cardinal Bea, head of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, who has already made a number of pronouncements clarifying the nature and aims of the Council, especially in relation to Christian unity.

But whereas Cardinal Bea's concern has been with the "separated brethren," Cardinal Agagianian has focused specific attention on the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Other outstanding interpreters meanwhile have been Father Charles Boyer, S.J., internationally-renowned founder and leader of Unitas, a Jesuit-sponsored movement originated in 1946 to promote Christian unity; and Father Hans Kueng, a young Swiss theologian, whose recent book, "Konzil und Wiedervereinigung" (Council and Reunification) has been hailed by officials of the World Council of Churches as a highly significant contribution to pre-Council discussions.

The fact that Cardinal Agagianian belongs to an Eastern Rite and has had wide contacts with Orthodox leaders both in the Near and Middle East as well as Europe, helps to stamp him as a man to whom his Orthodox fellow-Christians are most likely to lend a sympathetic ear.

When this correspondent visited the cardinal at his office in a building fronting the Piazza di Spagna, the latter made clear at the outset that he was fully aware of the age-long and still current

causes of division between Catholics and Protestants and Orthodox.

However, he said, he found encouragement in the willingness, especially of the Orthodox, to explore afresh the doctrines of the Catholic Church and to continue informal discussions with Catholic theologians. At the same time, he made a point of stressing that these discussions must be governed by charity and "unconditional submission to truth."

Cardinal Agagianian also pointed out that to speak today of "the Orthodox Church" is unrealistic, since there are many Orthodox Churches of independent jurisdiction and no central authority exists which can

speak in the name of all the Orthodox.

The cardinal strongly supported Pope John's warning against expecting a "Council of union." He said Rome will not be treating with a Byzantine emperor and will not repeat the fiasco of the Council of Florence in 1439, when under pressure from Turkish peril, agreements were signed on behalf of priests and people in the East who simply ignored them.

Cardinal Agagianian went on to emphasize that the Second Vatican Council would not be anything in the order of a World Council of Churches Assembly. In doing so, he noted what he said were the World Council's efforts to achieve agreement

in practical Christianity, and the attitude of the Council's Orthodox members against what they considered to be the Council's "doctrinal minimalism."

He said that though the Ecumenical Council is not to be an instrument of union, it must be "the evangelizer of unity." But for the Church of Christ to be a confederation in which each community confesses its Lord in its own way is not enough. Nothing less is required, he stated, than "the unity foreseen by the Gospel."

Cardinal Agagianian concluded on an optimistic note by saying that in the quest for Christian unity, the times are changing, asperities are diminishing, and the atmosphere is propitious for a vast effort.

Taking much the same approach was an article written by Father Boyer which said that there have been many changes of outlook since the First Vatican Council (1869-70) and doctrine has not stood still. He said there is great truth in the conception that getting nearer to Christ means getting nearer to each other. For Father Boyer, that means moving to acceptance of Roman Catholic doctrine. But, he adds, the Second Vatican Council can contribute to understanding, and that is what Pope John intends it to do.

According to Father Kueng's book, which was read in manuscript by a considerable number of Catholic theologians and was warmly recommended by Franz Cardinal Konig, Archbishop of Vienna, there has been a change of climate in the whole Church in the search for reunion, and both its leaders and the faithful generally are involved in it.

Father Kueng, who teaches fundamental theology at Tuebingen University in Germany, says the Vatican Council is welcomed by the World Council of Churches and by all men of goodwill who are tired of theological boundaries and distinctions. But he cautions against over-optimism. He said that what the Council does will affect the separated brethren, but at present indirect relations and cooperation are more promising than direct participation of non-Romans in the Council, stressing the constant

necessity of the Church to reform itself, which he said is recognized in Scripture and the liturgy and throughout history, Father Kueng stressed that this involves such suffering as that of the martyrs, and also suffering in common with the separated Christians.

"It is not enough," he writes, to call the separated to "return," to seek individual conversions, or to be better Catholics. The Church must be renewed according to its primary, primitive essence (Wesen). It must accept what is valid in Protestantism.

Father Kueng, who prefers to speak of theological development rather than reforms, sees a danger in "Marxian maximalism" — apparently more in its trappings than in the dogmas themselves — lest attention be drawn away from Christ and God. But he says Protestants sometimes minimize, not living up to the Gospel's attitude toward the Mother of Our Lord.

After a thoughtful and impressive weighing of factors favorable and unfavorable, the author asserts that only the Council can answer the skeptics — by deeds. A big step forward is necessary, he says, to avoid disillusion — disappointment where fulfillment is possible. At the same time, he recognizes that progress is made by steps. He cites those outlined by the Pope himself: contact, near approach, and perfect unity, which, Father Kueng emphasizes, is not uniformity.

Nurses Name Mrs. McCann

Mrs. William McCann of 16 Quenlin Road has been appointed Chairman of Apostolate of Nursing for the Rochester Chapter of Catholic Nurses.

THE OBJECTIVE of Apostolate of Nursing is "to foster and encourage among all nurses the spirit of charity by emphasizing the spiritual and social values and opportunities in the functions of nursing."

With Rev. John Rosse, Spiritual Director of the Rochester Diocesan Council of Catholic Nurses and Mrs. Edmund Lenehan, Diocesan Chairman of Geneva, Mrs. McCann will help develop a program for the Rochester Chapter.

Australia Anglicans Ask School Aid Boost

Brisbane — (NC) — A synod of the Anglican Archdiocese of Brisbane has voted overwhelmingly to ask the state government to grant additional aid to Queensland.

Royal Honors For Clergy

London — (NC) — A missionary bishop, a priest-educator and a Jesuit retreat specialist were among British Commonwealth Catholics named in the annual Queen's Birthday Honors List.

Some 2,000 people, including many Catholics, were among those who received awards for public service.

Bishop Peter Rogan of Buea, the Cameroons, West Africa, was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for his work in his jungle diocese of 30,000 square miles near the equator.

Bishop Rogan, a member of the Mill Hill Missionaries, was born in County Kildare, Ireland, 74 years ago and has spent most of his 52 years as a priest in the African missions. He was decorated in World War II for his work as captain in East Africa.

The CBE honor also went to Father Kevin Cronin, 54, one of England's leading educators. Father Cronin is Superior of St. Mary's College, a training center near London for Catholic teachers.

Father Cronin has aided in the reform and development of religious teaching in the nation's Catholic schools and in the English Catholics' struggle to win a permanent place for Catholic schools in the national educational system.

Father Peter J. Blake, S.J., superior of Loyola Hall, national Jesuit retreat house for men at Rainhill, Liverpool, was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his work in organizing retreats and moral leadership courses for men.

The synod voted to press for increases in present indirect assistance rather than to seek direct subsidies. Its members accepted, with little opposition, a 14-page committee report on the question of state aid to church schools.

The committee's recommendations called for: — a substantial increase in the present fee allowances granted to holders of state scholarships in Queensland.

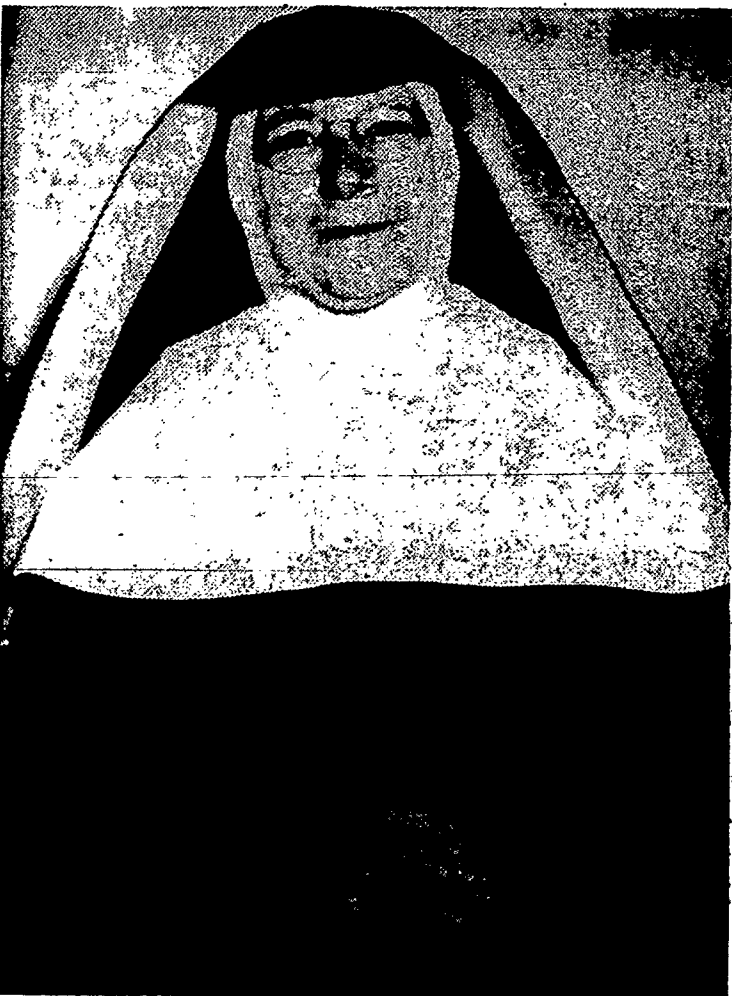
— a boost in the living allowances granted to country children who have to leave home to attend secondary schools.

— Permission for students intending to teach in church schools to be trained in state teacher training colleges, preferably with the same financial aid as is granted to students being trained to become teachers in state schools.

In examining the aims of church schools, the committee report stated: "The claim of those of us who commend church schools has always been that Christian education cannot be provided by merely inserting occasional divinity lessons into the framework of an otherwise secular education. This is a reasonable claim."

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SISTER MAVILUS is marking her 50th anniversary as a School Sister of Notre Dame. Sister entered the convent at Pittsburg, Pa. in 1908 and was professed in 1911. She spent all but ten of the years since at St. Boniface School in Rochester, teaching grades one through five and also serving as church sacristan for several years. The Rev. Francis J. Taylor, pastor, celebrated a jubilee Mass for her May 27 which was followed by a reception. Sister will join 23 other golden jubilarians for a reunion in Baltimore on August 12.

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