

A Day at the Council with Bishop Casey

Bringing God's Kingdom to Millions

This article by Auxiliary Bishop Lawrence B. Casey describes a typical "Day at the Council" in Rome. Bishop Casey wrote the article Sunday, Nov. 11, as the bishops neared the end of discussion on the Council's first topic, liturgy. Council sessions are held in vast St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican. This vivid, first-hand account of the daily sessions will give readers a clear picture of this historic event.

This is an account of a typical general (business) session of Vatican Council II, with a few observations on the Council itself.

No attempt will be made to discuss in detail the material thus far treated in the general sessions. The Council Fathers are bound by secrecy. Moreover, the Council has made no decisions on the subjects already covered (as of November 10).

We do not know how the voting will go; neither does anyone else at this moment.

Through newspaper photos, Courier readers have a general idea of the physical layout at St. Peter's.

The tiers of seats for the Council Fathers extend practically the whole length of the central nave of the basilica. The cardinals, patriarchs, primates, archbishops and bishops occupy these seats. The abbots, prelates nullius and general superiors of the major male religious communities of the world are seated in six galleries above the tiers of seats.

All are Council Fathers, and all likewise have a vote.

The ten cardinals forming the Praesidium sit at a wide table in front of the papal altar. To their right is a small gallery of "periti," the experts in canon

law and theology appointed for the Council by the Holy See. To the left of the Praesidium is a small table for the Council Secretariate headed by Archbishop Pericle Felici, Council Secretary, and to their left is a gallery for the Non-Catholic observers.

The Non-Catholic observers are a group of dedicated, Christian men who follow the progress of the Council faithfully each day. Most of them are proficient in Latin and they note the proceedings with intelligent interest.

Their questions are answered by members of the Secretariate for Promoting Christian Unity. Translations of the Fathers' talks are also handed them within a few minutes after they have been given in Latin.

One Non-Catholic observer was asked which feature of the Council impressed him most. He replied, "The mere fact that we are here."



Bishops of all rites and races shape Church's future in decisions to be made at Vatican Council. (Life Photo)

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Rochester Nun in Bangkok

No Gilt in the Klongs

Affluent tourists visit Bangkok, famed city of "The King and I," to view the numerous gilt temples of the Buddhist faith—but a young Rochesterian in the fabled city finds life there is a daily struggle to survive.

URSULINE nun Mother Virginia Marie (Claire Bangie) 45 in her third year of a mission assignment to the teeming capital of troubled Thailand in southeast Asia.

She has appealed to friends at home to aid her order in building a new Mater Dei Institute, a school and religious center for young Thai women.

SHE DESCRIBED the hazardous conditions of their present "below sea level" mission structures as follows:

We have wet weather about half of the year. Running through our compound and surrounding our compound are klongs (small canals). When the rains come, the klongs fill up and overflow into a great part of our property and into our buildings. During the last heavy downpour, because there is no way for the water to run off, the garden area all filled up and we had lakes.

In our Thai kitchen, cooking over open fires, the water simply rose and our Sisters waded around in the water. Benches served as the "walking path" from the convent to the part of our new school building that has been completed, due to the klong water rising above the bridge.

Water is water, but this is not just rain water, as the klong serves as a gutter.

The large American hotel is near our compound and its refuse flows into the klong that runs alongside our buildings.

When the rains are heavy, instead of this "water" flowing out to the street, it flows into our compound. The smell is... but more important and serious, the germs and disease being deposited with us is certainly not conducive to good health for the children or for any of the Sisters working here.

The building in which our little boarder pupils sleep is right next to the common "refuse" klong and the smell and disease which this carries all the time, not just during the six month rainy season, is unbelievable.

It is our "dream" to build a new building, a new dormitory for the children away from this location. But we cannot go on to a dormitory for our children until our school building is completed, and due to a lack of funds we have to stop right where we are now with our school building only partially completed.

The six classes of the first three grades, and our 180 kindergartners are still in their open-air classrooms. This means: On one side there is no wall but an over-hanging roof. On the other side—half worn tables. I do not see how one could have any appetite to eat anyway, immersed in such water.



Rochester Ursuline nun Mother Virginia Marie with two Thai children at mission school in Bangkok Thailand.

Often this "dining room" gets so filled up with "klong water" that it is impossible to sit down and eat off the wooden well-worn tables. I do not see how one could have any appetite to eat anyway, immersed in such water.

The area (I cannot get myself to call it a "dining hall") where our day-students eat has a roof on it and a cement floor well worn by repeated flooding from the city's "common gutter klong" which overflows onto this floor whenever the rains are heavy.

Mother Virginia Marie is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Langie of 355 Yarmouth Road, Rochester, in St. John the Evangelist parish. She attended Sacred Heart Academy, Columbia School, New Rochelle College and the Catholic University in Washington. Bishop Kearney presided at ceremonies in the Ursuline Motherhouse at New Rochelle when she entered the order and later when she took her final vows.

Contributions to aid the Ursuline nuns in their Bangkok mission may be sent to Rev. John Duffy, director of the Rochester Propagation of the Faith Society, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester 4, N. Y. An anonymous friend of the missions has pledged to "match" donations sent for the Bangkok project.

The Sacred Congregation of Rites, in a rescript dated September 18, 1962, granted the innovation for the Colorado See upon the request of Bishop Charles A. Buswell of Pueblo.

It is thought to be the first such permission granted for a U.S. diocese.

Monuments and Markers for Holy Sepulchre. The better way to choose a monument is to see our indoor display. You will appreciate our no-agent plan. TROT BROS., 1120 MT. HOPE, GR 33271. Adv.

OPEN HOUSE and Christmas Show at Blanchard, Florist, Saturday, Dec. 3 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Don't miss it. See the newly remodeled store and our artists at work. Free gifts for the ladies. Blanchard, Florist, 55 Lake Ave. Free parking.—Adv.

Scientists Told Seek New Values

Pasadena — (RNS) — Scientists and engineers were called upon here by Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., president of the University of Notre Dame, to undertake a "review of values" to bring a new proportion or perspective to their work.

Speaking at a California Institute of Technology dinner honoring members of the National Science Board, Father Hesburgh said the time has come for scientists and engineers to question "the moral impact of their work on the world of man in which they live."

THE ROLE of science and technology will be determined by how society views man, he said. Contrasting the ideologies of communism and democracy, he observed that "our vision of man's nature and destiny, although higher and better in statement, is often fogged by our actual performance."

Father Hesburgh, who has been a member of the National Science Board since 1954, asserted that there is little practical difference between scientists in the Soviet Union being forced to dedicate their lives to materialistic ends and Western scientists being "seduced" to do likewise, by financial support, by prestigious appointments, or by the wave of our present affluent culture and material preoccupations.

"In either case," he said, "science is prostituted to something far below its greatest human potentiality in our times. In either case, mankind is the loser..."

In the current surge of science and technology, "The Russians may be the bad guys, but we are not automatically the good guys," the priest-educator contended.

"We have the talent and potential for greatness, we have the great tradition of the West, a deep concern for the dignity of man, for freedom, but in the terminology of the space age, the destruct button is getting more attention from science and technology than the construct button," he stressed. "People are coming out second best things."

Why We Keep Christmas

London — (NC) — A national Catholic movement has started sending out 25,000 leaflets to rally support for its campaign "to put Christ back into Christmas."

The Christmas Poster Campaign Group is sending the leaflets to churches, schools and youth clubs urging them to fight the commercializing of Christmas.

Pope John Discounts 'Ten Year' Council

Rome — (RNS) — Fears that the Second Vatican Council may last a great many years were set at rest here by Pope John XXIII when he paid a visit to St. Andrew's church on the Quirinal.

Referring to pessimistic predictions that "we will need ten years to finish the Ecumenical Council," he remarked firmly, but smilingly, "Absolutely not."

The pontiff was joined at the church by Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, Primate of Poland, and 22 other Polish bishops who are attending the Vatican Council, the occasion being a Mass commemorating the feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka, a 16th century Jesuit novice who is honored as the patron of Polish Catholic youth.

These observers are very grateful for the confidence that the Holy Father has placed in them, (they also observe the oath of secrecy) and they are likewise impressed by the spirit of democracy in the Council, the fact that each of the Fathers is free to stand up and present his personal views on the point under discussion. One observer also remarked that he was deeply moved by the spirit of religious fervor shown by the Council Fathers in their responses to the Dialogue Mass opening each general session.

A large golden chair stands on a temporary platform in front of the papal altar itself — vacant at these general sessions. It is used by Pope John at the public sessions. He has not been present at the Council sessions since the opening ceremony, October 11. However, we are told that the Holy Father follows each session closely by means of an outlet to the public-address system installed in the papal apartments.

The acoustics and the lighting system in St. Peter's are excellent.

The individual seats in the Council, green for the bishops, red for the cardinals, are comfortable enough — but the bulky church robes of the Fathers make them rather close quarters. Each seat has a folding kneeler and a writing desk.

Our seat number is S0664, about halfway down the nave. Each Council Father is seated according to seniority; in the case of a bishop, the date of his consecration, so our immediate section might be called "The Class of 1953."

There are eleven rows of seats in our section, six seats in each row. In our row are six bishops representing the Philippine Islands, Italy, Germany, Norway, Indonesia and the United States — a tangible symbol of the Church Universal.

The business sessions are held each weekday, except Thursday, and begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. Swiss Guards stand at the entrances to see that no unauthorized persons are admitted. The Fathers stream in (on rainy days it's quite a sight to watch the scarlet-clad cardinals scurry from their cars in the ancient courtyard of Santa Marta).

The attire for the general sessions is purple, crimson, scarlet, black, and white. The black gowns and headpieces of the Eastern Rite prelates and the var-colored mantellets of bishops belonging to religious orders.

Each session begins with a Low Mass, usually in the Roman rite. However, this varies and the Fathers have taken part in Masses of the Dominican, Greek-Melchite, Maronite and Bragan rites. Celebrants of the Masses are the bishops from various countries, each in turn.

Each Mass is a Dialogue Mass, with the Fathers making the responses. The Sistine Choir sings plain chant and choral numbers during the Offertory and various parts of the Canon.

At the close of the Mass all remain standing while the Book of the Holy Gospels is enthroned on the small temporary altar by a bishop who marches in procession as the Council Fathers sing, "Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat — Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ rules," alternately with the verses of the psalm, "Laudate Dominum."

The ten members of the Council Praesidium take turns presiding at each session. The first words of the Council Secretary are "Exeunt omnes" — which means that all who have no actual part in the Council must depart — and quickly. The Presiding Cardinal then leads the Fathers in the recitation of the prayer, "Adsumus," invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (The text of this prayer was included in our Courier column of October 19).

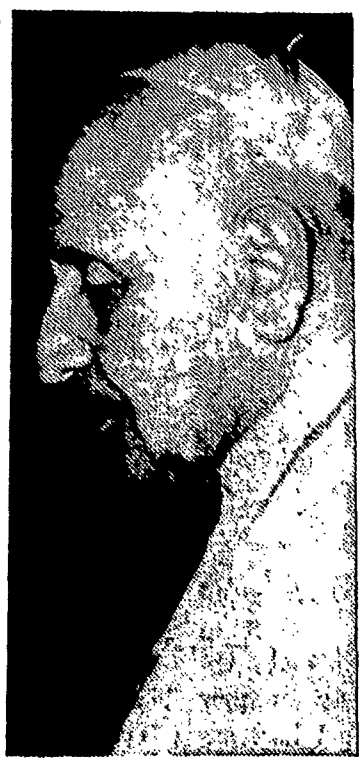
The seminararian assigned to each section passes-out attendance cards, an IBM production with many perforations containing the name of the Father and a square marked "Adsum—I am present." We sign our name, make a cross on the square, the cards are collected and taken to a large air-conditioned booth erected off the left transept and in front of the tomb of Pope Gregory XVI. Here they are processed by IBM machines and the total number of Council Fathers present at that session is available by 10:30 a.m. The total at the sixteenth session, November 10, was 2,172.

When the actual voting begins on the various proposals contained in the "Schemata" (the Council program or constitution), these machines will furnish accurate and complete totals within twenty minutes. The gray booth seems out of place in its surroundings but it does furnish a striking contrast between the medieval pageantry outside and the spirit of the Machine Age inside the enclosure.

There are routine announcements by the Council Secretary and he reads the names of the Fathers, usually about twenty-five, who will speak that day on the topic currently under discussion. A microphone and a reading desk have been set up in alternate sections. While one Father is talking, the next to speak is already in his place, ready to begin when his turn comes — a very efficient arrangement.

All speeches are in Latin. We might add the facility to understand these talks is increasing day by day. The Latin we learned in seminary days now comes in handy. However, we can follow the Latin of the Fathers from English-speaking countries (the Irish pronounce theirs with a brogue) more easily than those who use a foreign tongue.

One wishes that all Fathers spoke with the clarity and precision of Doctor Goggin our



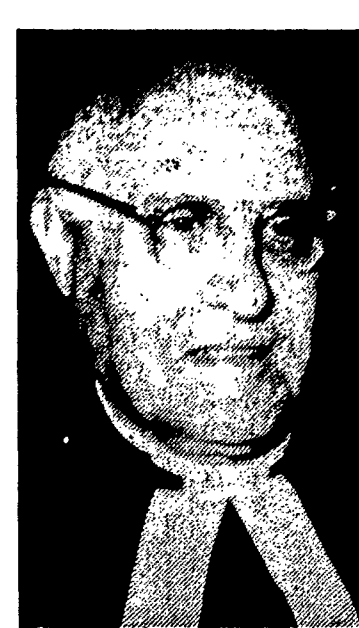
POPE JOHN XXIII a new Pentecost!



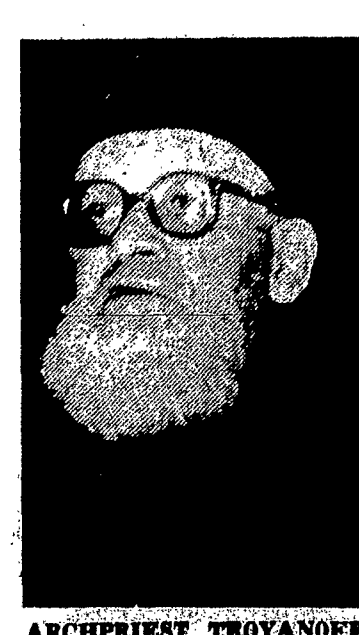
MONSIGNOR FELICI ten minute limit



MONSIGNOR CASEY 'sense of awe'



DR. FREDERICK GRANT Episcopalian at Council 'dedicated men'



ARCHBISHOP TROYANOFF Orthodox from Paris 'moved by fervor'

old Professor of Moral Theology at St. Bernard's.

Speeches are limited to ten minutes—and they do mean ten minutes, no more. Some Fathers summarize their arguments in two or three minutes, which is even better because it speeds the progress of the Council. When each Father concludes, he says "Dixi—I have spoken."

The speeches follow in unbroken order from 8:45 a.m. to 12:15 noon. There is no interruption. Time is of the essence and all the Council Fathers are anxious to see the sessions move along at a steady rate.

The Fathers follow each speaker closely, making written observations in the margin of their copy of the "Schemata," open on their desks.

Each evening, "L'Osservatore Romano," the Vatican newspaper, prints a summary of the material treated that day in the Council but does not give the views of the individual speaker, pro or con. There is no great secret, therefore, about the main topics the Council is considering. Secular newspapers and magazines have made surmises, often without foundation, on the stand taken by particular Fathers.

The first part of the present session of the Council has been devoted to the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy and (as of Saturday, November 10) four chapters of the Schemata have been completed, with four still to be treated. These four chapters should be finished by the end of next week.

(Ed. note: The liturgy discussion ended Monday, November 12, and the bishops then began discussion on Scripture, the present topic.)

Pope John made a significant move at the thirteenth session (Tuesday, November 6). To speed the progress of the Council he granted permission to the Praesidium to call for a vote of the Fathers to end discussion when, in the judgment of the Praesidium, a particular subject had been sufficiently treated.

Two such votes have so far been taken and in each case the Fathers voted to close their discussions. The Council has moved at a rapid pace this year.

Book of the Schemata in session of the Council, and the presiding Cardinal leads the Fathers in the recitation of the "Angelus." Photographers standing outside the barricades at the edge of the great square have a field day as the prelates pour out of the Basilica and walk down the steps toward their buses and cars.

A few observations about the Council many Catholics back home seem to be confused regarding the purpose of the Council and impatient at its seemingly slow progress. Part of this misunderstanding may have been caused by the guesswork and the unintentionally misleading remarks of some secular newspapers and magazines.

It is a fact that the press labors under certain handicaps in reporting the Council. On the other hand, every effort is being made to keep reporters abreast of the proceedings. For example, a committee of English-speaking "periti" has been set up in Rome to brief the newsmen and news services of United States papers.

What the newsmen can't fathom is that the Council Fathers never guaranteed to produce at least one sensational headline each day. The Council is not out to make news. At this point the press looks at the Council as a "rainy days' wonder." As the Council grinds on, month after month, going about its appointed task and producing a minimum of sensational decisions, the interest of the press may wane, and along with it, the interest of the people.

This will not, however, impair the importance of Vatican Council II and its influence on the lives of millions of souls, Catholic and Non-Catholic alike.

As we mentioned previously, Council proceedings do involve a certain amount of secrecy. There is good reason for this. For example, the matters discussed from the floor during the past four weeks have been referred back to the twenty-four member Commission on Sacred Liturgy (one of the ten Council Commissions). The changes in the "Schemata" proposed by the Fathers speaking from the floor will be inserted in the original text—this is a difficult, time-consuming chore—and then each particular proposition on Sacred Liturgy will be placed before the Fathers for a vote.

The same procedure will be followed by the other nine Commissions when their subjects are discussed.

Keeping these facts in mind, one can understand why the Council moves at a slow pace and may last a long time.

As of November 10, the Fathers had not voted on "Schemata" propositions. It is unwise, then, to make predictions on how the voting will go; no one knows. The Council will make its decisions at the proper time. These decisions will then be submitted to the Holy Father for approval.

In the meantime, patience and understanding—and prayers—are needed on the part of the people to bring this tremendous project to a successful conclusion.

Letters from home, both from adults and children, carry the same theme, deep interest in the progress of the Council and a ready willingness to pray and make sacrifices for its success. For those who are carrying the burden over here, this is good to know.

A Sacred Heart parishioner asked this (Continued on Page 1)