

Eastern Rite Catholics Press for Greater Freedom

By MICK JAMES TUCKER

Vatican City (AP) — One effect of the Second Vatican Council is that it has given a worldwide audience to the voice of Eastern Rite Catholics.

During the interim period between the Council's first and second sessions almost all the Eastern Rite bishops have proposed reforms and amendments to be submitted to the Council fathers. They have been rewritten according to norms laid down by the late Pope John and to the wishes expressed by a majority of the fathers at the first session.

Informal sources say the writing of the schemata does not foreclose complete agreement among the fathers. There remain great differences which stand in the way of final decisions. One of these concerns the Eastern Rites.

WHAT ARE some of the problems involving the Eastern Rites that may be heard in the Council? What do the Eastern Rite Catholics want from the Council? What do they not want?

In answering these questions it must be remembered that the Eastern Rite

Catholics are split among themselves. Not do the Latin Rite bishops agree on all points. There are, however, some positions common to all Eastern Rite Catholics.

One is that Eastern Rites present being looked on as a kind of "foreign colony" by the Latin Rite majority of the West. They stress that the Church is neither Latin nor Eastern.

Another Rite Patriarch, Maximus IV Szeiz of Antioch has said:

"We must admit that by the very fact of our being Catholic without being Latin, our very presence in the West is a contradiction. Almost entirely Latin in form cannot be anything but unfortunate."

The Patriarch has also declared:

"What are we to say of those who claim Latin to be the language of the Church, forgetting that the Latin Rite is not the whole Church, but a church in the Church, and that 'Latinism' and 'Catholicism' are not the same thing."

In fact, on the several occasions when Patriarch Maximus IV addressed the Council during its first session, he spoke in French and not in Latin, the Council's official language.

The fundamental claim that the Eastern Rite Catholics will make at the Council is for a confirmation of, and a return to, the autonomy of the local church. It is in this context

that they have and will again raise the charge of "Latinism."

On this point, the Eastern Rite Catholics, the declaration, for example, that the Holy See cannot hope to legislate the Orthodox churches to unity until it has preserved that it will respect the autonomy of the Eastern Rites.

Consistently, as previously, Eastern Rite Catholics claim the Holy See has failed to honor the autonomy of the local churches, which was officially promised to them when they returned to unity with it. This fact, they say, is the first for the fathers of the Council to take into account. They say, when investigations are made to them.

What they are afraid of is that Rome would try to assimilate them into the Latin Rite system, thus destroying their identity.

Eastern Rite officials speak of their development for centuries "within the framework of the Holy See." Now they request to go to the Roman Curia — the Church's central administrative body at the Vatican — for decisions that they could and did make for centuries at the local level.

According to a student of the Eastern Rite in Rome, this is what the Eastern Rite Catholics want from the Council: a combination of a legitimate and healthy pluralism in the Church.

They will not seek this in any specific decrees, he said, but will look for it and encourage it and vote for it in all Council pronouncements.

What the Eastern Rite Catholics do not want from the Council, according to the same source, is to have the Council pass specific legislation for their local churches. They are interested in the Council, he said, only in its universal applications and in the general principles it will establish for the universal Church.

WHAT ABOUT the Orthodox question? Why have they not sent observer delegates to the Council?

The Orthodox Churches want to act as a unit. Because they have not succeeded in agreeing as to what their action as a unit should be, there has been a delay in their sending delegates.

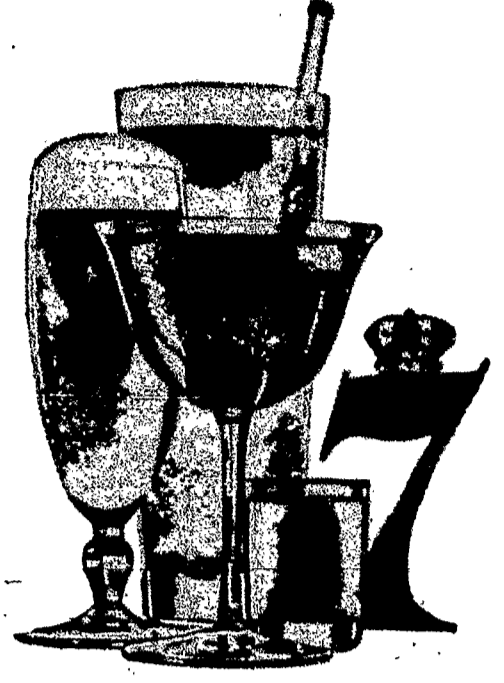
A Pan-Orthodox conference has been scheduled to be held on the Mediterranean

island of Rhodes to discuss whether and how the Orthodox churches will send representation to the Council.

Only the Russian Orthodox Church sent observers to the Council's first session. They explained their action by saying that no steps had been taken up to that time for unity of action.

A typical example of the strong feelings of the Eastern Rite Catholics was expressed by Patriarch Maximus IV.

"We must be convinced that Christianity can never accomplish its mission in the world unless it is Catholic, that is universal not only in law but in actual fact. If someone cannot be a Catholic unless he gives up his own liturgy, hierarchy, patristic traditions, history, hymns, art, language, culture and spiritual heritage, and adopts the rites, philosophy and the logical thought, religious poetry, liturgical language, culture and spirituality of a particular group, be it the best, then the Church is not a great gift of God to the whole world but a factor, however numerous, and a human institution subservient to the interests of one group."



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Colorful Rites Set In Rome

Rome (AP) — The religious life of Rome during the second session of the general council is expected to be studied with numerous brilliant extraneous ceremonies — including several beatifications, Pope Paul VI's consecration of 14 missionary bishops, and his taking possession of his cathedral church.

Although none of these events has been officially announced by the Vatican plans for them are well under way.

First of them following the reopening of the Second Vatican Council on September 29 will be the beatification of the Ven. John N. Neumann, Bishop of Philadelphia from 1852 to 1890. The Czech-born prelate is to be declared blessed on Sunday, October 13. The following Sunday Pope Paul is expected to highlight Mission Sunday by giving episcopal consecration to 14 missionary bishops in St. Peter's.

For October 27, the feast of Christ the King, is slated the beatification of the Dominican Barberi, Italian Passionist who died in Reading, England, in 1843, four years after receiving the late Cardinal John Henry Newman into the Catholic Church.

Pope Paul in his capacity as Bishop of Rome will take possession of his cathedral church — St. John Lateran — on November 9, and on November 17 Italian Father Vincent Romano who died in 1811 will be beatified.



Legion Honors Cardinal

Miami Beach (AP) — Cardinal Spellman of New York, is shown as he received the American Legion's Distinguished Service Medal. Making this presentation at Miami Beach is National Commander James E. Powers. The Legion cited the prelate for his many visits to American servicemen overseas in his capacity as Military Vicar of Catholics in the Armed Forces. At the Legion convention Cardinal Spellman announced he would visit GI's at Antarctica posts at Christmas.

Now We'll 'Never See' The Tree

New Brunswick, N.J. (AP) — A sixty white oak credited with inspiring Joyce Kilmer, World War I hero-poet, to write his famous poem, "Trees," is no more.

Dying of old age — it is believed to have been nearly 300 years old — the Kilmer Oak was taken down Sept. 18 piece by piece. The tree could not be felled or chopped down because of its tremendous crown which had a branch spread of 108 feet and near perfect symmetry.

Sixty-eight feet tall, it stood majestically on the campus of Rutgers University College of Agriculture.

Legend has it that as a boy in New Brunswick — he was born here December 8, 1896 — and as a student at Rutgers in 1905-1906, young Kilmer gazed on the great oak repeatedly and was eventually inspired to write the 12-line poem, "Trees," that ends:

"Poems are made by fools like me,
"But only God can make a tree."

The famous poem was first published in 1913 in a poetry magazine. At the time, Kilmer was an editor of Literary Digest magazine and literary editor of the Churchman, Episcopalian weekly.

Kilmer and his wife, Aline, a former schoolmate at Rutgers from Norfolk, Va., were received into the Catholic Church November 5, 1913.

After serving as a staff member of the New York Times Sunday Magazine section and book review section, he launched a brief but brilliant lecture career.

Kilmer enlisted in April, 1917, in the New York National Guard, transferring four months later to the 69th Regiment, which became the 153rd Infantry as part of the "Rainbow" Division, whose chaplain was the famed Father Francis Duffy.

A sergeant who already had been cited for bravery and awarded the Cross of Guerre, Kilmer was killed in a machine gun position July 30, 1918, in the Wood of the Burned Bridge, a few miles from Seringes on the River Ourcq.

Priest Produces Shrine Movie

Brooklyn (AP) — A Brooklyn priest whose avocation is producing films on religious subjects has released "The Shrines of Canada in Focus."

Father George R. Mikovich's eighth film in his "Focus" series visits St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, St. Anne de Beaupre, near Quebec City, and Cap de la Madeleine, near Three Rivers.

Of his eight films all but one are religious.

Father Mikovich, assistant pastor of St. Paul's church here, films, edits and does narration for each film, a project which usually takes some 1,400 hours. "The Shrines of Canada in Focus," like his earlier efforts, is a 40-minute 16 mm. color film.

His first film, "The Mass in Focus," was produced in 1957. In its English and Spanish versions, he estimates that more than 200,000 persons in the U.S. and in the foreign missions have viewed it.



Communion from Son

Fassett, N.J. (AP) — Bishop Stephen J. Kocisko of Passaic gives Communion to his father, John Kocisko of Passaic, at St. Michael's church in Passaic. The bishop distributed Communion at rites at which he was installed as the first head of the newly-created Passaic Byzantine Catholic diocese. The new diocese, created by Pope Paul VI in July, covers the Passaic area and some 35,000 Catholics of the Byzantine Rite, many American descendants of Rutenian, Bulgarian and Croatians.

Hitler Planned To Kidnap Pope

Milan (AP) — Nazi Germany plotted to invade the Vatican during World War II to kidnap Pope Pius XII and exile him to a monastery outside of Italy, according to Oggi, leading Italian magazine.

Oggi, a weekly published in Milan, reported that Adolf Hitler himself initiated the plan. It said the German dictator was dissuaded by Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler, who convinced Hitler that the action would be a propaganda disaster.

Oggi said it documented its revelation of the Nazi project by the testimony of three Germans who are still alive and were in Italy at the time. They are Rudolph Rahn, former German Ambassador to Italy; Eugen Dollmann, one of Himmler's SS unit leaders; and Albrecht von Kessel, wartime secretary of the German Embassy to the Holy See.

According to the article, Hitler entrusted details of the plan to seize Pope Pius XII to Martin Bormann, his vice-chancellor and trusted aide. Bormann in turn devised a tactic labeled "Operation Pontifical." Under it, German troops in Rome were to march into neutral Vatican City at a given signal and capture the Pope. Pius XII was then to have been deported — either to Germany, or to a monastery in neutral Liechtenstein.

The article said that Hitler ordered the plan put into effect a few hours before Mussolini fell on July 25, 1943, and that his decision was transmitted to Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, commander in chief of the German army in Italy, as well as to the other top German political and military officials in Italy.

The three surviving Germans interviewed told Oggi that they opposed the scheme and sought to have it blocked. They said they planned to make it impossible to carry it out if Hitler did not rescind it. Von Kessel said that he then German Ambassador to the Holy See, Baron Ernst von Weizsacker, opposed the plan so vigorously that he ran the risk of being recalled to Germany and arrested.

According to Eugen Dollmann, Pope Pius XII himself undoubtedly knew of the plan. Dollmann said that was also true of the Secretariat of State, Substitute for Ordinary Affairs, Mgr. Giovanni Battista Montini — the present Pope Paul VI.

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