

# 1963's Turmoil Fails to Dim World's Hopes

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Athens, Greece, in Istanbul who urged that the meeting be held for a summit meeting in Jerusalem of Christian leaders.

It was widely felt that the slaying of President Kennedy and the subsequent murder of the alleged assassin in a Dallas nightclub, had cast a gloom over the nation's conscience. In hundreds of sermons around the nation, clergymen echoed the plea addressed to all citizens by the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, to close doors of intolerance and fanaticism.

Shortly before he died, President Kennedy had been present at a family reunion in the city of New York, and spoke of placing him alongside the late Pope John in influencing better interreligious relations. The new Chief Executive, hailed as a leader in less dedicated to religious principles, began his administration with a call for respect of the civil rights bill behind which President Kennedy had thrown his full support.

Among groups called to the White House for consultation on the legislation was a delegation of the National Council of Churches which had already placed itself firmly in support.

Strong backing for the pending legislation had already been voiced at the first National Conference on Religion and Peace held at Chicago in January and attended by Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish leaders. The call for equal rights repeatedly sounded at Protestant conventions found churches seeking to set their own houses in interreligious order. In response to such developments as these, the United Church of Christ set a July 1, 1964, cutoff date for aid applications from segregated congregations; United Presbyterian agencies were urged to attack discrimination through close scrutiny of all their financial relationships; American Baptist foreign missions director started a detailed scouting of their sizeable investment portfolio to unearth discriminatory practices in firms holding funds; in Washington, D.C., Protestant, Catholic and Jewish leaders jointly announced an agreement to insist on non-discrimination clauses in new construction contracts in the capital area.

Taking place on Aug. 29 was an international "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" in which leaders and members of the major faiths joined. Among the participants was Father John LaFarge, S.J., founder of the Catholic Interracial Movement, whose death on Nov. 24 at the age of 83 deprived the Catholic Church of its foremost exponent of interracial justice.

In November the Roman Catholic hierarchy spoke out powerfully for the use of spiritual resources to solve the racial dilemma. Reformed, Conservative and Orthodox branches of Judaism similarly let their desire for human equality be known.

In October, the Third Order of St. Francis showed its support of Negro demands by awarding its 1963 Peace Medal to Negro Baptist integration leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In Jackson, Miss., and other

southern cities, many white clergymen and laymen risked arrest and imprisonment at the hands of local authorities to back integration demands.

The Supreme Court's Bible-reading and prayer decision met with general Protestant and Jewish approval, but episcopal approval was divided. There was, however, a wide range of support for the court's ruling in 1962 against the state-authorized Regents Prayer in New York schools.

Since only about half the states had either required or allowed devotional practices, the new decision became an issue primarily in the Southern and Northeastern states, where, in a number of instances, ways were improvised to circumvent it.

Many religious leaders saw the ruling as a stimulus to more, rather than less, religion in the school system. They called attention to the Court's statement that it was not outlawing academic use of the Bible or information about religion in such courses as literature, history and social studies.

Meanwhile, on the national level, proponents of a Constitutional amendment to overturn the Court's ruling attempted to obtain signatures on a discharge petition that would force proposed legislation out of committee and onto the House floor for debate.

In the meantime, Pope John had left what was to prove his last great legacy to the world. Supplementing his other historic social encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra*, issued in 1961, *Pacem in Terris* was even more epochal in its breadth and scope.

In it the Pope stressed that the universal common good must be the norm and goal of all temporal affairs. Clearly intended for people of both the Communist and the free world, the encyclical, among other things, called for an end to the armaments race and a ban on nuclear weapons testing. It denounced racism and colonialism, and urged strengthening the United Nations as a peace-preserving institution.

To Protestant and other Non-Catholic leaders who joined everywhere in praising the encyclical, one of its most significant features was a defense of religious liberty as a fundamental human right. This was conspicuously ignored by Communist propagandists, although they joined free world leaders in all walks of life in otherwise acclaiming the papal document.

Genial, compassionate Pope John was given credit for a marked softening of Communist hostility toward the Vatican and the Church. When he was presented in May with the Peace Prize of the International Eugenio Ruizan Foundation for his work "for peace and fraternity among men and peoples," a Soviet representative was among the many notables attending the ceremony in the Vatican.

The previous March the Pope had astonished the world by granting a private audience to Alexei I. Adzhubei, the son-in-law of Soviet Premier Khrushchev.

This was only some weeks after Ukrainian Rite Archbishop Jozef Slipyi of Lvov had been greeted by the Pope after having been freed from 18 years of imprisonment in Siberia. In October came other releases

those of Archbishop Jozef Slipyi of Lvov and four other Ukrainian priests in the wake of a government shake-up seen as a de-Stalinization move.

News of Archbishop Slipyi's release evoked loud applause at the Vatican Council, since he had been regarded as one of the most heroic Catholic victims of Communist persecution.

One of the first decisions of Pope Paul was to continue the work of the Second Vatican Council which his predecessor had convoked to bring about a fuller renewal of the Catholic Church and to promote Christian unity. Some 2,300 bishops from about 60 countries attended the Council's second session, along with observers from Protestant and Orthodox observers and special guests.

Although concrete results of the session were meager, it was generally hailed as having demonstrated that more intelligent and active participation of the faithful in the Church's worship, and that there was a consensus that the Church must concern itself more and more directly with the poor, the illiterate and the hungry.

Proclaimed was a constitution on the liturgy which cleared the way for revolutionary changes aimed at more intelligent and active participation of the faithful in the Church's worship. These included use of the vernacular in parts of the Mass (with greater stress on the sermon), and in the administration of the Sacraments. Adopted too was a decree on communications in media, but most observers were disappointed with the document, since they felt it failed to deal in a creative way with the world of television, radio and cinema.

Viewed as one of the most heartening aspects of the session was the opening to discussion of three chapters on ecumenism which called on Catholics to foster ecumenical dialogue and change on all levels. But following over this was offset by the Council's adjournment before it could vote on discussing two other vital chapters — one on Catholic-Jewish relations and the other on religious liberty.

Both chapters had aroused worldwide interest the first one on the part of Jewish leaders who had hoped it would help to uproot prejudice and establish mutual respect and esteem between Catholics and Jews; the second on the part of religious leaders generally who wanted a clear-cut statement on religious liberty as a right that belongs to all men. However, although action was delayed, the Council was expected to discuss and adopt both chapters at its third session next September.

At the formal closing session, Pope Paul alluded to the freedom of expression which had inspired the Council in its efforts to make the Church "better fitted to deliver its message of truth and salvation to the modern world," and of "finding ways and expressions capable of closing the gap between our separated brethren and ourselves."

The Russian Orthodox Church was the only major Orthodox body that sent observers to the Council. However, at a Pan-Orthodox Conference at Rhodes, Greece, in September, the representatives of ten Orthodox Churches unanimously accepted a proposal that the Orthodox Church should seek "a dialogue on equal terms" with the Catholic Church when Vatican II ends.

Meanwhile the growing scope and impact of ecumenism was reflected in many areas around the world as the dialogue be-



Bridgeport — (RNS) — Like many other high school seniors, Betsy and Barbara Lowardi of Shelton, Conn., will be confronting college board exams this winter. But there is a difference. They will be taking them in Braille. Born prematurely and blinded by too much oxygen in an incubator, the twins are now seniors at Notre Dame High School in Bridgeport, Conn. Their principal, Sister Teresa St. James, says: "They have certainly taught us to see what persistence and courage are."

When religious groups were stepped up. Especially noteworthy was the presence of prominent Roman Catholic observers or guests at important Protestant gatherings at which Christian unity was among leading topics. These events included: The World Anglican Congress at Toronto, Canada, in August; the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation at Helsinki, Finland in July-August; the World Council of Churches Fourth Faith and Order Conference at Montreal, Canada, in July, which adopted a message affirming that "the world's Churches are 'on the way' toward healing their divisions and that the ecumenical movement is advancing 'faster than we can understand or express it,'" and had as one of its speakers Paul - Emile Cardinal Leger, Archbishop of Montreal; the annual meeting of the WCC's Central Committee in Rochester, in August-September and the triennial General Assembly of the National Council of Churches at Philadelphia in December, at which not only Catholic but Jewish observers were present for the first time on an official basis.

Discussion of missionary challenges and tasks in the ecumenical context featured the first conference of the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism held at Mexico City in mid-December. During the conference, Protestant and Orthodox delegates paid an unofficial visit to the famed shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe and had an informal meeting with Catholic Archbishop Miguel Darío Miranda y Gomez of Mexico, who had spoken at a Mass on need for Christian unity.

In December came the announcement that a Roman Catholic edition of the Protestant Revised Standard Version of the Bible would be published in England in 1964. This marked a major advance in the movement for a common Catholic-Protestant Bible as a spur to Christian unity which has been spearheaded in this country by Father Walter M. Abbott, S.J., well-known editor and Bible scholar.

American Catholics and Jews faced the mutual challenge of a controversial play which charged that Pope Pius XII had failed to protest publicly against Nazi extermination of the Jews. Written by Rolf Hochhuth, German playwright, the play also had provoked controversy in West Germany, Switzerland, England and France. It is

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brose Reeves, deported from the country in 1960 for his anti-Communist stand, was invited to testify before the U.N. Special Political Committee in New York on the situation in South Africa.

The first six months of his reign saw Pope Paul, in a series of addresses and special messages, stressing the need for encouraging religious vocations, endorsing efforts toward ecumenical unity, and reiterating the Church's unrelenting opposition to atheistic communism. In a message in December addressed to Chilean Catholics, but seen as applicable to Latin Americans in general, he called for solid efforts for social and economic improvement to prevent dictatorships and violations of human rights.

Four cardinals died during the year, reducing the Sacred College to 80 members. In Rome, a new name was added to the list of canonized saints: that of St. Vincent Pallotti, 18th century Italian founder of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate. Seven beatifications took place, one being that of Mother Elizabeth Seton, foundress of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of Emmitsburg, Md., the first native-born U.S. citizen ever to be proclaimed Blessed; and another that of Bohemian-born John Nepomucene Neumann, C.S.S.R., who was Bishop of Philadelphia from 1852 to 1860 and began his priestly career in Rochester in 1834 and aided in founding St. Joseph's Church now in the heart of the city's downtown area.

As ecumenism took new and deep roots in 1963, religious leaders were concerned over events in South Vietnam, where charges of repression, discrimination and brutality toward Buddhists at anti-government demonstrators were climaxed by the killing of President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother and chief political adviser, Ngo Dinh Nhu in the wake of a successful military coup. Condolences by Pope Paul were extended to Archbishop Pierre Martin Ngô Đình Thục, another brother of the President.

At the same time the Pope voiced the hope that the new regime would achieve "peace and concord" in South Vietnam. He had earlier sent a telegram to Archbishop Paul Nguyen Van Dinh of Saigon saying he was suffering with "all the dear Vietnamese people." One of the first acts of the new ruling junta was to pledge religious freedom and democracy.

Other trouble spots were Muslim-dominated Sudan, where expulsions of Protestant and Catholic missionaries were seen as part of a systematic drive to suppress Christianity in the new African nation, and strife-torn Angola, where Catholic leaders called on Portuguese authorities to adopt a Christian policy and cease opposing what they called a "natural right" to independence.

In South Africa, the government's racial segregation policies continued to be denounced by church leaders. In October Anglican Bishop Richard Am-

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