

How Families can help the Church in its Program of Renewal

Every Catholic will soon be affected by the decisions of the present Vatican Council. For the most part it will be the family, as a vital social unit of society, bearing the burden of re-educating the citizens of God in this new spirit of renewal.

Unless we have parents who are willing to lead a hand in achieving the goals of the Council, unless we have a new generation reared in the new spirit, the work of the Council will remain fruitless for a long time—and we have no time to lose because the world is moving faster than we think.

Among the chief concerns of the Council is liturgical renewal—a concern that will inevitably affect all the people of the Church.

What is really happening? Simply this: for the first time in the history of the Church we are developing an educated and articulate laity. Not only is this something new in the Church, but something new in the world.

And this brings us to the problem of expressing the new liturgy of the Church. How should a people, that is literate and capable of expressing itself, worship? First of all, the people must learn how to worship as people, as a community. This is precisely what is at stake in the renewed liturgy. But something new must be discovered. It will not suffice to

The decision of the bishops of the Vatican Council will have little practical effect unless fathers and mothers carry out the Church's extensive plan to make ancient faith relevant to modern times. This article by Holy Cross Father Louis J. Furr of Notre Dame University, published originally in the *Lump Magazine* of the *Atenement Fathers*, tells how families can help the Church in fulfilling the hopes of the Pope and the world's Catholic bishops.

pray in the vernacular, although this will help considerably.

It will not suffice to merely use one's voice in the church, as this we have been attempting with more or less success in the past with Dialogue Mass. What really needs to be discovered now is a people praying in unison as a people—the big reform that we are most in need of today!

It is likely that strong resistance will come from both the clergy and laity in the transition from time-worn habits. All of us are accustomed to individualistic tendencies when it comes to prayer—even during the great community prayer which is the Mass.

We pray by ourselves and for ourselves, and we like it this way. It is so comfortable not to be disturbed by the needs of those around us. The new liturgy, however, will require a truly communal prayer—the people's prayer as a people of God—and this may interfere with the kind of praying we generally do.

To best prepare for the new liturgy of the Church, we must begin the renewal in the home. The family must first learn to pray as a family and to celebrate the liturgical feasts as a family.

The family circle is always the best medium for celebrating any event, not only birthdays, anniversaries and legal holidays but baptisms, engagements and marriages. Why not Advent, too, and Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and especially Easter, Pentecost? All of these can be worthily celebrated at home in a family way to prepare one another for a better understanding of these events that are solemnized in the parish church.

Even daily prayer, at meals and in the evening, should have special prominence in the home with the father presiding, so that the spirit of the community can be expressed in a worthy manner. Not only does each individual as a child of God owe his existence to God and express his dependence upon Him, but the family as a unit owes its existence to God and must likewise express its dependence upon Him.

As the normal head of the family, the father performs his priestly function when he presides at family prayer. It is therefore, a function that belongs to the father and not to the youngest members of the family as we often see.

Closely allied to liturgical renewal is the restored interest in the Word of God, as contained in the Bible. Interest in Scripture reading has grown considerably in recent years. Even though Bibles have been sold by the million in high-pressure sales campaigns, we have yet to learn how to read and discuss the Bible fruitfully in the home, the school, the church. It is true that Bible Vigils are becoming popular in many sections of the country, and this helps tremendously to bring the Bible back into currency.

The home, however, is the most logical place where Bible reading and discussion can become a most efficacious form of prayer and religious education. Bible discussion in groups, such as study clubs or the Christian Family Movement, is an excellent formula for bringing the Word of God back into the home. Because excerpts from the Bible have been given to us in Latin and officially commented upon by the priest from the pulpit, we have had the habit (if ever we had it) of reading and studying the Bible at home.

Of course, the Holy Spirit acts through the official magisterium of the Church, but it is also true that He is present in the family circle as well. "Whenever two or three are gathered in My name, I am in the midst of them," said Jesus. His spirit is most especially there where the family is seeking to know and understand the Word of God.

Preparation for Sunday Mass and important feasts is another step forward in successful community prayer. This is a very simple way of linking the home and parish celebration. It can be done by reading the Scripture parts of the Mass with the aid of missal and discussion. When done regularly, it becomes a kind of Bible Vigil in the privacy of one's home. The family can make of it a precious opportunity for spiritual direction for the entire family. Again it will create a community concern for religious growth and spiritual development.

Ideally, by including friends and neighbors, the weekly meeting can become a ferment in community spirit beyond the family circle.

Another great concern of the Ecumenical Council is the definition of the laity's role in the Church. Up until now the laity as a group was not in a position to exert its influence in the Church or for the Church. But now that we have a mature, responsible laity willing to do its share, this new posture must find its proper place within the structure of the Church. The layman wants to be responsible for his share in the apostolate of the Church, which in former times was almost exclusively in the hands of the clergy and religious orders.

It is becoming more and more evident that the area of the apostolate proper to the life of a layman is that of social action and social welfare.

Today's family symbolizes the core of all social problems. It is the family that is most affected by unemployment, by housing shortages, by inflation, by problems of delinquency, by suitable recreation at home and in the neighborhood. The modern trends of mobility have practically eliminated the help normally obtained from life-long neighbors in established communities. The scattered family and the family are completely dependent upon their own resources. Hence it is vitally important that the fathers and mothers of our present generation get involved in social action in order to lighten the burden of today's complicated family life.

The family is not only the mainstay of our parish life, but the fathers and mothers are the vital link between the world of religion and the world of secularism. When secularism becomes the accepted attitude of society, the family must stand with foot in both camps. The family stays close to the parish and parish school, and this should maintain a close relationship between priest and people. At the same time the family remains very much in the world, and deals with it bravely—at the local supermarket, the factory, the office, the movies and civic affairs.

Unless the family takes an active interest in its own world, it will inevitably become a passive recipient of the ideas and values of the world. Hence it is important that the fathers and mothers of our present generation, both the nation and the world will be in trouble.

The race problem, as an example, cannot be solved only in integrated schools. It must also be solved in the neighborhood.



In the employment office, in the place of recreation and entertainment.

Again, the family is squarely in the middle as a source of Christian inspiration and Christian action. The church cannot execute her program of social reform without the help of fathers and mothers, who more than anyone else struggle with the burden of developing our future generation.

Finally, another serious aspect in the Council is ecumenism. Pope John, as we know, called the Council primarily to further the cause of Christian unity. All the Church can do is to reorient the thinking and behavior patterns of her people. To be truly effective, the ecumenical movement must begin in the backyard and neighborhood of our communities.

In our country, not only a melting pot of races and nationalities but also a land of mixed religious beliefs, the opportunities for the ecumenical spirit are beyond calculation.

Dialogue and mutual understanding are in order. Acts of service in the true spirit of Christian fellowship are feasible not only every day but every hour of every day. The first duty of the Christian is to accept his fellowman whatever his religious background. Here in America we have the climate for mutual respect and tolerance. We can give the right kind of example in this respect to our fellow Catholics of other lands.

Freedom of religious expression and respect for other religions are in the best interests of the ecumenical spirit. Thus, cooperation with people of different religions is possible in any neighborhood and should be encouraged. Neighborhood projects that bring people together are feasible and very helpful for communication. Exclusiveness is the enemy of the ecumenical spirit.

If it is true, as someone has

ventured to guess, that by 1970, 90 per cent of the Catholic school children will be in public schools, then a concentrated effort will have to be made by the parents to educate our youth religiously. This will put this responsibility on the home. The movement to continue adult religious education in the home, as currently promoted by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, the Home and School organization, the Christian Family Movement and others, is of vital importance to the Church. Perhaps we have relied almost too strictly on the parochial school to accomplish all the educating. The future of the Church may well depend on responsible parents who will continue the religious education of their children with the help of lay people in our parishes. This too will place the Mother Church where it belongs—upon its apostolic laity!

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Source of Contact of Bishop and Parishes

My dear People:

Once again I appeal for your support for our diocesan paper, the *Catholic Courier-Journal*. It is useful for us to know the activities in various parts of the diocese, and also as a source of contact between the parishes and the Bishop.

The addition in cost is unavoidable. In a day when several large newspapers have been forced to suspend publication it is easy to understand that our paper is affected very severely by increased cost of production, and must raise its rates or depart from the field.

The *Catholic Courier-Journal* serves the purpose week after week of keeping our people abreast of the news in the parish life within the diocese, and in the Church and around the world.

Every diocese in our country has a weekly paper. I am sure you will be willing to help us keep ours in Rochester, even at the cost of personal sacrifice.

With my blessing, I am,
Your devoted Shepherd in Christ,
James J. Sheehan
Bishop of Rochester



Patroness of the Congo

Mother of the African... The mystery of the Incarnation of the Redemption—in a word, the mystery of love, for God is truly love—fills to the brim the heart of the African, as at every child of nature... Convinced of this overwhelming love which permeates his whole life, the African will henceforth be able to find God in every aspect of his existence, where previously he could see only baleful influences, witchcraft, and spells... King Matura II, King of Ruanda

Another Catholic in the White House Capital Co-ed from Texas

San Antonio — (NO) — A good student enthusiastic about school activities is the way the "mildly star-busted" is remembered at Incarnate Word High School.

This is the description given by faculty of the Catholic Warrior, Lynn Smith, who has been in Washington to live at the White House with his wife, friend, Lynn BIRD Johnson, daughter of the President.

She has remained close to Incarnate Word High School since her graduation in 1962, corresponding with faculty members and making occasional visits, not just before leaving for Washington.

She was very humble about moving into the White House, one of the Staff said. "I hope I don't go to the White House and I don't know how I'll do it. Frankly, I'm a little scared."

Work Elementary School for five years.

Warrior Lynn and Lynn Bird have transferred to George Washington University, a private institution in the capital. Warrior Lynn is majoring in education. Lynn Bird is a liberal arts major.

Washington will not be new to Warrior Lynn. She spent a month last summer with the Johnson family.

In Washington, Elizabeth Carpenter, Mrs. Johnson's press secretary, was asked why the First Lady wanted Warrior Lynn to come along with Lynn Bird. Mrs. Carpenter said:

"I think Lynn Bird wanted Lynn not to be denied the friendship of college. But on the other hand, she wanted Lynn with her."

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Missionaries; Our Secret Weapon in the Cold War

By DR. GARY McROBIN

How does a missionary get invited as a technical expert to an international conference? That question is one I tried to answer at a seminar for mission specialists held at Fordham University this summer.

It reflects the rapid change of climate in the underdeveloped world, particularly in the new countries of Africa and Asia, and the recognition by the Church that Catholic missions can continue in many areas only in a form very different from the patterns that have become traditional.

The missionary has always spent much of his time helping the poor. Like Christ he has gone about doing good, feeding the hungry, healing the sick. But today, it is no longer enough to do this at the individual level. "Mater et Magistra" describes the rapid evolution of modern society. Unless the forms being created in the developing nations accord with right reason and natural law, they will tomorrow constitute a morally insuperable obstacle to the spread of Christianity.

The Vatican's concern with the basic problem was demonstrated at a conference held

under UN auspices in Geneva, Switzerland, earlier this year, a meeting of experts almost unnoticed and unmentioned in this country, yet one of the biggest and most important ever held. It discussed the application of science and technology to the development of the underdeveloped world.

In a real sense it was a presentation by the big powers of their claims to undertake the job, a sales meeting at which the United States, Britain, France, the Soviet Union and lesser associates each sought to persuade the uncommitted nations that theirs was the best buy for the country that wants to get ahead.

The Vatican's 3-man team included two distinguished Americans, Msgr. Luigi Ligutti, inspired and long head of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference in this country and now permanent observer for the Holy See at the Rome headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and Father Theodore Hebebrand, president of Notre Dame and Vatican delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The group was small as compared with (for example) France's 250-man delegation, yet it made a major impact on the level and

direction of the meeting. Father Louis Joseph Labrie, who headed it, had a considerable hand in winning down to 3000 the papers submitted for study at the sessions. Still more important was his logical and convincing presentation of the need to give first place in development to the human factors, his stress on human resources and only the value of training and education, on the danger of thinking only of the technical and scientific elements. His plan was second by the Brazilian Chairman of the conference, but it figures prominently in the official conclusions.

The significance of this approach tends to escape Americans for the simple reason that few of us are willing to face up to it. From the strictly technical viewpoint, the planning methods of the Soviets and their satellites give faster and better economic results for an underdeveloped country seeking to modernize its economic, health and educational systems.

The American delegation to the conference, a group of top-notch scientists preaching the gospel of technocracy, was in second place to the Russians on the battlefield of their choice. Neither we nor any of the other

Western nations have been able to work out commercial and investment programs capable of narrowing the gap to work between the developed and underdeveloped world. On the contrary, the gap continues to grow wider. This conference at Geneva showed up dramatically our weaknesses in the propaganda war to gain the sympathies of the underdeveloped world. The contribution of the Holy See was to show that it was not necessary to lose this war, if we redefine our objective in the human terms to which we are committed at the verbal level.

The Christian missionaries are the ones who have done most to demonstrate the validity of these principles. As Msgr. Ligutti declared in a magnificent intervention, as a Soviet statesman that the only mission contribution to development was "the Bible," their work in agriculture alone is more substantial than all the United Nations has achieved.

But today they must work at the institutional as well as the individual level. As I suggested above, they must be technical experts in many fields without forgetting that their first job is to preach the gospel.

United Europe, Papal Goal

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI at an audience to 30 members of the executive committee of the International Union of Young Christian Democrats (IUYCD), voiced the hope that "the process of European integration would proceed without further, time-wasting obstacles."

"The idea of unity corresponds to reality, to the need for unity and peace which we ourselves strongly support," the Pope said.

The occasion marked the second time in recent weeks that the pontiff spoke out in favor of a United Europe.

Addressing his visitors in French, he said he was pleased to "welcome you here for three reasons — because you are young, democratic and Christian."