

Legion of Decency 30 Years Old

'Great' Audiences, Need for Movies

New York (NC)—The U.S. Bishops' Committee for Motion Pictures, Radio and Television, in a statement marking the 30th anniversary of the National Legion of Decency, called for a "mature approach to films on the part of movie makers and movie audiences."

In a wide-ranging, 6,500-word review of the past, present and future of the film industry and the Legion, the bishops' committee stressed the need for intelligence and responsibility in movie studios and movie theaters.

At the same time the bishops warned of disturbing trends—the efforts of "powerful factions in Hollywood" to revive an "anything goes" policy on film making and the "growing tendency" among some producers to "challenge the Judeo-Christian vision of man."

They expressed hope that, in the spirit of the Vatican council's decree on communications media, "the signs and symbols of the film medium will speak to all men of who they really are—men in the image and sign of God."

The statement was signed by the members of the bishops' committee: Archbishop John J. Krol of Philadelphia, chairman; Bishop Walter W. Curtis of Bridgeport, Conn.; Bishop Loren T. Kane of Rockford, Ill.; Auxiliary Bishop John A. Donovan of Detroit; and Auxiliary Bishop Timothy Manning of Los Angeles. It was issued (April 15) to coincide with the 30th anniversary this month of the founding of the National Legion of Decency, which provides moral evaluations of current films for the guidance of Catholics.

The statement—entitled "The National Legion of Decency: 30 Years of Christian Witness"—began by emphasizing the power, for good and ill, of the new mass communications media. It underlined their influence by referring to the modern world as an "audiovisual civilization."

Among recent events illustrating the power of the media, the statement cited their treatment of the last days of Pope John XXIII, which made this an "unending experience whose intensity and depth the whole world shared"; the "sensitive coverage given the Vatican Council and the pontificate of Pope Paul VI; and the moving treatment of the events surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy."

There can be no question that the Church welcomes with joy the new communications revolution," the Bishop said.

Turning to the history of the Legion of Decency, the statement recalled that at its founding in April, 1934, it was unique in the Catholic world. Now it is one of 42 national Catholic film organizations throughout the world.

The "primary function" of the national Legion office, the statement said, is "to offer service of moral guidance to the film patron so that he may be able to make a discriminating choice of motion picture entertainment."

The bishops cited statistics to demonstrate a shift in Hollywood policy—imposed by the Church nor the Legion has or ever will discourage the responsible efforts of serious film artists to create meaningful works for the attention of mature viewers.

In this connection the statement cited the Vatican Council's decree which stated that "serious films aiming at a mature audience... should be subject to moral restraint." It also cited the A.I.V. rating (formerly known as "Objectable for Adults") and the A.I.V. rating ("morally objectionable for adults, with reservations").

Discussing the question of the treatment of evil in films, the bishops warned of "simplification."

But at the same time, the statement continued, the Legion, "especially in the last decade," has observed "many departures from the 1934" in the matter of the treatment of evil in films.

"In all such cases," it declared, "the film maker has lacked the fundamental qualities of an authentic artist. Above all he has lacked a respect for man and a loving understanding of him. Without these qualities a film maker's treatment of moral evil can only be a trafficking in the anguish and tears of those who would call him brother."

The bishops then turned to the responsibility of audiences, commenting that "to have great artists in the film medium, there must be a great audience to receive them."

The Legion's efforts to this end, they said, have included giving special recommendations to superior films and the "more fundamental" policy of urging film study in schools.

Recalling the endorsement of film study in the Council's decree and in Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Miranda Proarus*, the statement said progress in this area "has been slow but there have been encouraging beginnings." It cited film study courses and film festivals in high schools, colleges and seminaries.

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Clock Crowded With First Masses

Akron — (RNS) — The scheduling of first Masses for four young parishes of St. Sebastian church, Akron, Ohio, made for a pretty crowded clock and was solved by drawing straws. The four show Msgr. Hillary A. Zwiler, pastor of the church (left), the times of their Masses. They are Sembrarians Frank LaRocca, 7 a.m. Mass; Joseph Kraker, 8:30 a.m.; William Karg, 10 a.m.; and David McCafferty, 11:30 a.m. The future priests are to be ordained May 23 in St. John Cathedral in Cleveland. They completed their Mass arrangements while home from St. Mary Seminary, Cleveland, on a short vacation.

Only a Brother' Joy in Architecture

Centerville, Ohio — (NC) — of the Order of Friars Minor, Conventuals, Capuchins, Third Order Regular, Society of the Atonement, and the Brooklyn Congregation of Franciscan Brothers.

They met at St. Leonard's Seminary, which was designed by Brother Cajetan in a style which he himself describes as "progressive."

Brother Cajetan, who heads the Office of Franciscan Art and Architecture in New York with 25 employees—including eight registered architects, said of St. Leonard's:

"I tried to reflect the gay and joyful spirit of St. Francis and I permitted sunshine and light to enter every room and hallway of the building.

"Here are no dark, and gloomy staircases, no prison-like cells. I am sure that the education of a young man (St. Leonard's is the theological seminary for the Cincinnati Franciscan Province) is influenced by his environment in many ways, and I know, as an architect, that there are no cheaper building materials than sun and air."

Brother Cajetan, who entered the Franciscan brotherhood at Fulda, Germany, in 1918, admits that "it wasn't always easy to convince either laymen or Church leaders that our buildings should break away from past centuries without losing the best features and meaningful essentials of the past."

Brazil Coup Seen Boon To Church

Washington — (NC) — The rebellion that overthrew the leftist regime of President Jose Goulart of Brazil has indirectly improved the position of the Church in Latin America's largest nation, according to an expert on Brazilian affairs.

Father John De Jong of the Latin American Bureau, National Catholic Welfare Conference, voiced this opinion in an interview here.

The Dutch-born priest, who has spent 18 years in Brazil, said Church leaders there will have greater access to the new authorities than they did to those of the ousted government. The Goulart administration, he said, was not put-and-out communist, but was becoming more and more Marxist and increasingly looking for support to the Soviet Union and Red China.

BECAUSE OF better relations with the new regime, Father DeJong said, Catholic leaders will have a better chance of getting government cooperation to put into effect the broad program of social and economic reform that has been called for by Brazil's Bishops.

The rebellion, he noted, was sparked by Catholics who demonstrated in Belo Horizonte against a slur on the Church by ex-President Goulart.

Father De Jong declared that the overthrow of the leftist regime is proof that Brazil is not ready for a communist government, and that there is still time to institute the reforms needed to solve the country's severe social problems and win for Brazil the confidence of other nations. He added that the rebellion has made non-communist, especially Catholic, leaders more aware than ever of the necessity for reforms.

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Should Women be Ordained Priests?

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ations of the Propaganda—'Only Men Can Be Ordained.'

Father van der Meer argued that the priesthood of women is not contrary to the essence of Christianity by divine right, and he asked for a thorough review of the problem by Catholic theologians to establish "whether men alone can represent sufficiently the fullness of the divinity of Christ."

Without pretending to offer definite conclusions, Father van der Meer suggested that "greater opportunities be offered to women in the Church."

The cry for "greater opportunities" for women was not confined to scholarly works alone. No less a personage than Cardinal Suenens of Malines, Brussels, Belgium, stood up at the Vatican council and stated that "in our age when a woman almost travels to the moon, it is indispensable to let her assume a more important role in the Church."

Father Josef Funk, S.V.D., writing in an Austrian journal, *Archives of Canon Law*, maintained that the shortage of clergy demands the admission of women at least to the diaconate. He based his arguments on practices of the early Christians.

The debate moved into the open a short time ago when Auxiliary Bishop Walter Kampa of Bamberg, Germany, in an article distributed by the German Catholic news agency KNA, criticized those Protestant groups, especially in Scandinavia, which were ordaining women.

Bishop Kampa was willing to agree that women should play a greater role in the Church, even in the ministry of the word. He noted the role

played by the Blessed Virgin in the history of salvation, and the role played by many holy women in the Church. But, he said, those Protestant groups were causing "serious theological misgivings," especially since they are depending almost entirely on Scripture and therefore should not dismiss the writings of St. Paul and the fact that Our Lord chose only men as His Apostles.

One should never forget, Bishop Kampa went on, the symbolic relationship that pictures the Church as the Bride of Christ—a polarity that reflects the position of men and women in the Church.

His article drew an immediate reply from Mrs. Heiselmann in Zurich's independent daily, *Tagesanzeiger*, who said Bishop Kampa's views would make interfaith dialogue more difficult. She noted that the Mosaic Law at the time of St. Paul placed women in an inferior position, on a par with slaves and that this could not apply today.

Another women's attorney, Lotti Ruckstuhl, in a letter to the same paper, stated that St. Paul was upholding the social order of his day only because he did not wish to undermine existing society. The Roman legal system was discriminatory to women, children and slaves.

"St. Paul today," she said, "as in his own day, would urge men to love their wives. But love implies recognition and full acceptance of those who are loved, which in turn should have its practical consequences. Otherwise, love is not sincere."

Subscribing to this view was Mary Daly, believed to be the first American woman to receive a doctorate in theology, who teaches in Fribourg, Switzerland. Mrs. Daly said the or-

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