

Encyclical Reveals Profound Mind, Spirituality of Pope Paul

By FATHER EDWARD DUFF, S.J.

New York — (RNS) — Pope Paul's first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (His Church), has a surprising modest scope.

The world expected a program paper, detailing the policies his Pontificate would espouse, indicating the major orientations it would impose on world Catholicism. It got what many will deem an inconclusive causerie.

These expectations were based on forgetfulness. Paul VI had already set forth his program and announced his aims.

In his first radio message to the world following his election, His Holiness had declared: "The chief task of our Pontificate will be the progress of the Ecumenical Council, Vatican II, on which the eyes of all men are fixed."

To this "principal work" of his reign he promised to devote "every last bit of energy the Lord has given us." In his allocution opening the second session of the Council last Sept. 29 he had indicated the central idea providing focus for the new Pontificate and for the continuing Council with clarity, simplicity and directness: "We should proclaim Christ to ourselves and to the world around us. Christ our beginning, Christ our life and our guide, Christ our hope and our end."

The encyclical, *His Church*, then, has a simple objective. It is to "reveal the mind" of the Holy Father, especially to his fellow bishops in a "simple conversational letter."

For while aware that his audience includes the entire Catholic world and the millions of others who have grown to listen with respect to Papal pronouncements, Pope Paul's first

encyclical is primarily addressed to his fellow bishops to share with them his preoccupations and to suggest the attitudes that should be theirs when the Church is in Council.

The mind of Paul VI was known to be an acute, profound and subtle one. Of an intense interior spirituality, absorbed by the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ through grace, aware of the achievements and perils of technology, it was recognized to be a mind untroubled by judgments, it was a studious mind, alert to and avid of developments in theology, philosophy and culture, but also one that had long been exercised on the "grave administrative problems" of the Roman Church in the contemporary world.

Now it appears to be a mind made cautious by the complexities of the historical situation and made sober by the respon-

sibilities of the pastoral charges of the pontifical office. It is likewise a mind conscious of the participation of the universal Catholic episcopate in the direction of the Church.

Sensitive to the role of the Council, the encyclical deliberately achieves treating themes that fall within its province which is to say all of the concerns of the Catholic Church in her efforts to achieve internal renewal and to enlarge the area of peace, justice and brotherhood in the world. It contents itself with offering some "methodological considerations."

Although there is no specific allusion to "collegiality," the word currently employed to indicate the solidarity and shared responsibility of the bishops of the Catholic world as successors of the twelve apostles with and under the successor of Peter in ruling the Church, the encyclical is marked by a striking

deference to the collective authority of the Council Fathers and by a touching reliance on their active collaboration.

The Council is addressed to 22 lines. Phrases soliciting fraternal cooperation abound.

Pope Paul asks his fellow bishops "the comfort of your agreement, your counsel, and your example." His Holiness continues: "We look to you as the authoritative voice. We look to you to say how we should together propose for the life of the Church... The Council is to give us too, new and salutary introductions and all of us must certainly prepare ourselves now to hear them and carry them out."

Two significant, if passing, points in the encyclical might be noted in a rapid reading: the hint that the Council may not at all be nearing its end and a frank espousal of religious freedom.

Thus the Council's merits are praised "even at this moment when we are still awaiting the major part of its deliberations."

Again, the proclamation of the gospel, the encyclical asserts, will not be accomplished in the absence of internal forces, but simply through the legitimate means of human education, of interior persuasion, of ordinary conversation and it will offer its gift of salvation with full respect for personal and civil freedom.

Moreover, "religious liberty" is listed among the "common ideals" of all theistic religions.

The "methodological considerations" outlined in the encyclical include those encouraging a deeper awareness of the essential inner nature of the Church as the prolongation of Christ in time; those detailing the proper character of the reform of the Church and those detailing the

differing dialogues with different categories of fellow men.

A continuing meditation on the Church, the object of contemporary theological exploration and of this XIIIth synodal assembly of the Most Holy Roman Synod, the very ones we believe the Church stands in need of, the encyclical promises. A freshening of spiritual faith through study of the mystery of Christ in the Church has long been a preoccupation of the present Pontiff.

Reform of the Church is to be pursued, the "aggiornamento" of John XXIII being kept in mind as our program of action. What this program of action is in fact to be, so far as legislation goes, "naturally" it will be for the Council to say. But Pope Paul admonishes: "The Church will rediscovers her renewed youthfulness not so much by changing her external forms as by interiorly assimilating her true spirit of obedience to Christ."

Indeed, the Pope appears alarmed that the spirit of reform may have gotten out of hand, that a worldly spirit is abroad, "so that a danger bordering on veritable confusion and bewilderment can shake the Church's very foundations and lead men to embrace most bizarre ways of thinking, although the Church should disavow herself and take up the very latest and untried ways of life." The demand for concessions to "secular norms" engenders "the tendency of throwing overboard every restraint and inconvenience from the conduct of life."

The very mission of the Church, the encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* argues, requires that "we must meet the world and talk with it in a dialogue characterized by clarity, openness, honesty, trust and pedagogical prudence. These differing conversations are envisaged as involving a series of circles including unbelievers, those 'who have all along the one, supreme God whom we, too, adore,' the circle of Christians and finally those of the household of the Catholic faith."

While it is noted that "the dialectic of this exercise of thought and dialogue will make us discover elements in the opinions of others," its purpose is unabashedly missionary and intrinsically uncompromising in maintaining the essentials of the Catholic faith, including the primacy of the Pope as the center of authority and unity.

The attitude, a stiffening undoubtedly of that of John XXIII, is frankly justified by the encyclical in these words: "Immoral desires to make peace are, fundamentally, a kind of skepticism about the power and content of the word of God which we desire to preach." Such an assertion of absolute claims should not disconcert the membership of the World Council of Churches, it has been accustomed to a similar attitude expressed by the Orthodox Churches from the beginning of the ecumenical enterprises.

Religious and so far unsuccessful negotiations with the governments of Czechoslovakia and Hungary to obtain freedom of action for the Church in those countries have made sorrowfuly clear the difficulty of dialogue with atheistic communism. In working the distinction of peace in terms between an ideology and those who presumably profess it, Pope Paul promises continued efforts, not least in the interest of peace between men, which he explicitly listed as one of his ministries.

With non-Christian religions, the encyclical expresses a desire "to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals of religious life, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare and civil order."

Streaming "what we have in common rather than what divides us" is the encyclical's recommendation on the subject of the dialogue with fellow Christians.

An evident affection and respect for other Christian traditions shines through the paragraphs of this theme. The sentence indicating the intractable problems involved "the serious sense of the task of fulfilling Christ's clear will that his followers be one as a sign of their unity in His rules out all shallow and superficial solutions."

No program of action is indicated, again undoubtedly in deference to the Council which will discuss this precise point; no schedule of theological conversations is announced. The sentence of Catholicism is directed to the purification of its own Church as a prerequisite for "the longed-for reconciliation."

Who Listens To The Pope?

God's word for the modern world is often distorted by much static.

How can those, whose job it is to preach this word to others, hear it clearly first themselves?

"The only way they hear that voice today is by hearing the voice of Christ's Vicar, the Pope," said Bishop Kearney emphatically earlier this summer.

That voice of the Vicar has now spoken clearly in the recently issued encyclical *"Ecclesiam Suam—His Church."*

It comes at a time when the world quite obviously needs God's word—certainly His word of peace—when headlines tell us of its lack in Cyprus, Vietnam, the Congo, Harlem and Rochester.

We suspect Pope Paul's voice, like that of his predecessors, will have few listeners.

This, after all, was the fate of Pope John's widely acclaimed encyclicals—*Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*.

When, for example, did you last hear a sermon on these (or any other) papal encyclicals?

When did you last hear an analysis or discussion of an encyclical at a meeting of your parish organization?

When, as a matter of fact, did you last read an encyclical?

If the voice of the Vicar has so few of those within his flock to listen to it, how can we much expect the "other sheep" to heed him?

And the price we pay is to compound our problems by shutting our ears thereby to the voice of God.

This point, we think, is well illustrated by reports from Cuba in the nation's press the past few weeks. Fidel Castro invited 30 U.S. newsmen to attend July 26th celebrations marking the eleventh anniversary of his revolution against dictator Fulgencio Batista. The reports gave vivid details of the deterioration that has come to Cuba under Communism.

Communism, of course, is the wicked ogre.

How comfortable for us to put the blame for Cuba's misery on Communism! But how honestly can we do so?

President Kennedy put the blame elsewhere.

"Had the needs of the people of Cuba been met in the pre-Castro period—their need for food, for housing, for education, for jobs; above all for a democratic responsibility in fulfillment of their own hopes—there would have been no Castro, and no need for Cuba's neighbors to incur the immense risks of resistance to threatened aggression from that island," he told Congress last year.

AND WHO FAILED to meet those needs?

Leslie Dewart, in his recent book *"Christianity and Revolution. The Lesson of Cuba,"* says Cuban Catholics—clergy and laymen—either tolerated or abetted the conditions which gave Castro no other choice than to turn to Communism, to make his government viable after the Batista overthrow. Dewart gives strong reasons for rejecting the now common view that the Castro revolt was from its beginning a Moscow master-minded plot.

Castro was pushed toward Communism, according to Dewart, because President Eisenhower's Cuban policy was "unwisely, unduly and inefficiently" geared to the protection of American investments there.

Despite the long overdue need for change in Cuba, the island's churchmen chose the position of the status quo, took the side of the American big money interests and ultimately closed the door to any possible influence on Castro—a door the Vatican valiantly tried to keep open.

We will surely need more than one book to give us the whole story of Cuba but this book shows what can happen to a nation when its Catholic leaders fail to act in accordance with or even contrary to the papal directives that have been the heritage of the present era—from Pope Leo's *"Rerum Novarum—Plight of the Working People"* through the encyclicals of Pope Pius, Pope John, and now Pope Paul—all of whom have stated clearly that souls are not saved by sacraments alone.

Our faith does not permit us to isolate ourselves from the day-to-day needs of our fellowmen, to their rights to live as humans. This is the "conservation of the world" which Pope Pius XII said was so urgently needed—to complete the work of the Creator in building up a society animated by the spirit of the Gospels.

And when we look around our own cities and countryside, we must admit there are conditions here which ominously resemble those conditions in Cuba which produced the Castro regime. We, however, still have time to act with a wisdom that obviously and unfortunately was lacking there.

—Father Henry Aweall

Five Sisters Continue Work of Apostles

Following is the full text of Bishop Kearney's talk at the departure for five Sisters of St. Joseph at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Thursday, August 13. The five nuns will launch a mission project in Matéria, Brazil.

All through the ages of Holy Mother the Church their story has been repeated. One generation after the other has found some spot in God's world where the name of Christ was not known. One country after another has found some bright area upon God's earth where Christ has never been spoken of and all through the centuries there has been developed a great program of the propagation of the faith of Christ.

Certainly His message has challenged men of every generation. "Go and teach all nations." There was a time when talking of all nations spread over a vast world. In other words, the travels of St. Paul as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles, were a tremendous accomplishment for the times in which he lived. But we are now living in an era when the whole world has been condensed so closely by means of communication and by means of transportation that this challenge becomes more emphatic day after day.

We know the story of how these men, after they received the solemn commission which I have just read from the Holy Scriptures, went back to the Cenacle of Jerusalem, with our Blessed Lady, the Queen of Apostles and the Mother of Good Counsel, presiding over the gathering.

It must have been a very challenging responsibility that came to these men. They had listened to our Divine Lord. They had heard the way that He developed His doctrine. They must have been fascinated by the ease with which he could take the flower of the field, the blossom on the tree, the fruit on the bush and out of it make a great story.

They certainly were conscious that they had extraordinary powers. They recalled His words: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." They certainly remembered that tremendous scene at the Last Supper, when having instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, He said to them: "Now you do this in commemoration of me."

These things they knew. But the question was, "How do we go about this? We're told to go all over the world and how are we going to talk this language? We know the things He tells, but it is a different thing to get up before a multitude of people and present to them the doctrine of this man without making a mistake or without misquoting our listeners."

And so they waited patiently in the situation where they did not know what was to be the next move.

Our Divine Lord promised that He would not leave them as orphans, but would come to them. And He came back again in the strength of the Holy Spirit. And there was the change. From that moment they became in a very strange and supernatural way, deeply conscious of the meaning of all things. He had said, they recalled, that before almost every incident, and instead of being a group of uncertain, timid men, they went out from the Cenacle of Jerusalem and they wrote into the history of the Church one of its most remarkable chapters—the story of the lives of the early apostles, their zeal, their competence, their success, and finally their tremendous sacrifices of themselves for the doctrine which they vindicated by the very giving of their lives, living out to the last word His own command, "No man hath greater love than this than that he lay down his life for his friend."

— almost every one that I might mention.

And now tonight for the first time this call of Christ has come and touched us intimately, touched the hearts of our priests, touched the sisters of our own community. And the call for volunteers to enter this field received, as one might expect from the traditions of sacrifice and generosity of the Sisters of St. Joseph, an amazing number who wished to be the pioneers.

Tonight we are sending the first five. We have gathered here tonight in order to be present when they receive their solemn commission. It is a great evening in the history of this community. It is a great evening in the history of this Diocese.

Someone might say, as has always been said in this matter of the propagation of the faith, why should we encourage some of our finest religious to go far afield when we are so badly in need of religious at home? It has been answered in many ways, but I would answer it in this way: that while we are sending five of our young sisters as missionaries into another country, God has called over fifty to take their place. Because there are fifty who have asked to enter this community, I think that is God's own very eloquent answer, at least it is to me, to those who question the sending of others away. Our Divine Lord said if you send them away, I will not only fill their places, but I will bless you with many more so these need never be any concern about "suffering at home" because of the generosity of their hearts.

Every apostle assumes a serious responsibility. It is not an easy task that these sisters have taken on for themselves. It is



Patroness of India

The glorification of the human body, which will take place for the souls of the just at the end of time, has by a singular privilege already occurred in the case of the Mother of God. In 1950, Pope Pius XII solemnly proclaimed, "We pronounce, declare and define to be a dogma, revealed by God, that the Immaculate Mother of God, Mary ever a virgin, at the end of her earthly sojourn was taken up into celestial glory, in soul and body." Our Lady of the Assumption is venerated as the patroness of India, France, Paraguay and the Union of South Africa.

Last Week's Paid Circulation
67,101

THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Thursday, August 20, 1964
Vol. 75 No. 47

MOST REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Louisville, Kentucky, and Chairman of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Newspaper, Religious News Service, Published Every Thursday by the Catholic Press Association, 1111, Rochester, N.Y. 14604. MEMBER OF THE U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT GROUP. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE COURIER-JOURNAL, 1111, Rochester, N.Y. 14604. Entered as Second Class matter in the Post Office at Rochester, N.Y., as required under Act of Oct. 3, 1917, authorized on March 4, 1919.