

Text of Pope Paul's Encyclical on The Church in Modern World

(Continued from Page 5)

them, everyone who has religious values at heart, to condemn the ideological systems which deny God and oppress the Church—systems which are often identified with economic, social and political regimes, amongst which atheistic communism is the chief. It could be said that it is not so much that we condemn these systems and regimes as that they express their radical opposition to us in thought and deed. Our regret is, in reality, more sorrow for a victim than the sentence of a judge.

Dialogue in such conditions is very difficult, not to say impossible, although, even today, we have no preconceived intention of excluding the person who professes these systems and belongs to these regimes. For the lover of truth discussion is always possible.

The difficulties are enormously increased by obstacles of the moral order: the absence of sufficient freedom of thought and action, and the perversion of discussion so that the latter is not made use of to seek and express objective truth but to serve predetermined utilitarian ends.

This is what puts an end to dialogue. The Church of Silence, for example, speaks only by suffering, and with her speaks also the suffering of an oppressed and degraded society, in which the rights of the spirit are crushed by those who control its fate. If we begin to speak in such a state of affairs, how can we offer dialogue, when we cannot be anything more than a "voice crying in the wilderness" (Mark 1, 3)? Silence, growing, patience and always love, in such conditions, are the witness that the Church can still offer, and not even death can silence it.

But though we must speak firmly and clearly in declaring and defending religion and the human values which it proclaims and upholds, we are moved by our pastoral office to seek in the heart of the modern atheist the motives of his turmoil and denial.

His motives are many and complex, so that we must examine them with care if we are to answer them effectively. Some of them arise from the demand that divine things be presented in a worthier and purer way than is, perhaps, the case in certain imperfect forms of language and worship, which we ought to try to purify so that they express as perfectly and clearly as possible the sacred reality of which they are the sign.

We see these men full of yearning, prompted sometimes by passion and desire for the unattainable, but often also by great-hearted dreams of justice and progress. In such dreams noble social aims are set up in place of the Absolute and Necessary God, testifying thereby to the ineradicable need for the Divine Source and End of all things, whose transcendence and immanence it is the task of our teaching office to reveal with patience and wisdom.

Again, we see them, sometimes with ingenious enthusiasm, having scientific explanation of the universe. This procedure is all the less reprehensible in that it is often based upon laws of logical thought not unlike those of our classical school. It is a procedure which leads in a direction quite contrary to the will of those who use it, thinking to find in it an unanswerable proof of their atheism and its own intrinsic validity, for it leads them onward towards the new and final metaphysical and logical assertion of the existence of the supreme God.

In this cogent process of reasoning the atheistic politico-scientist stops short willfully at a certain point and so extinguishes the sovereign light of the intelligibility of the universe. Is there no one among us who could help him to reason on to a realization of the objective reality of the cosmic universe, a realization which restores to man the sense of the divine Presence and brings to his lips the humble, halting words of a consoling prayer?

Sometimes, too, the atheist is spurred on by noble sentiments and by impatience with the mediocrity and self-seeking of so many contemporary social settings. He knows well how to borrow from our Gospel motifs and expressions of solidarity and human compassion. Shall we not be able to lead him back one day to the Christian source of moral worth?

Accordingly, bearing in mind the words of our predecessor of venerable memory, Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris* to the effect that the doctrines of such movements, once elaborated and defined, remain always the same, whereas as the movements themselves cannot help but evolve and undergo changes, even of a profound nature (cf. n. 54), we do not despair that they may one day be able to enter into a more positive dialogue with the Church than the present one which we now of necessity deplore and lament.

But we cannot turn our gaze

away from the contemporary world without expressing a cherished desire, namely that our intention of developing and perfecting our dialogue in the varied and changing facets which it presents may assist the cause of peace between men, by providing a method which seeks to order human relationships in the sublime light of the language of reason and sincerity, and by making a contribution of experience and wisdom which can stir up all men to the consideration of the supreme values.

The opening of a dialogue, such as ours would be, disinterested, objective and sincere, is in itself a decision in favor of a free and honorable peace. It excludes preference, rivalry, deceit and betrayal. It cannot do other than condemn, as a crime and destruction, wars of aggression, conquest or domination. It cannot confine itself to relationships with the heads of nations, but must set them up also with the body of the nation and with its foundations, whether social, family or individual, so as to diffuse in every institution and in every soul the understanding, the relish and the duty of peace.

Jews, Moslems

Then we see another circle around us. This, too, is vast in its extent yet it is not so far away from us. It is made up of the men who above all adore the one, supreme God whom we too adore.

We refer to the children, worthy of our affection and respect, of the Hebrew people, faithful to the Old Testament. Then to the adherents of God according to the conception of monotheism, the Moslem religion especially, deserving of our admiration for all that is true and good in their worship of God. And also to the followers of the great Afro-Asiatic religions.

Obviously we cannot share in these various forms of religion nor can we remain indifferent to the fact that each of them, in its own way, should regard itself as being the equal of any other and should authorize its followers not to seek to discover whether God has revealed the perfect and definitive form, free from all error, in which he wishes to be known, loved and served. Indeed, honesty compels us to declare openly our conviction that there is but one true religion, the religion of Christianity. It is our hope that all who seek God and adore Him may come to acknowledge His truth.

But we do, nevertheless, re-

cognize and respect the moral and spiritual values of the various non-Christian religions, and we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals of religious liberty, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare and civil order. For our part, we are ready to enter into discussion on these common ideals, and will not fail to take the initiative where our offer of discussion in genuine, mutual respect would be well received.

Christians

And so we come to the circle which is nearest to us, the circle of Christianity.

In this field the dialogue, which has come to be called ecumenical, has already begun, and in some areas is making real headway. There is much to be said on this complex and delicate subject, but our discourse does not end here. For the moment we limit ourselves to a few remarks—none of them new.

The principle that we are happy to make our own is this: Let us direct what we have in common rather than what divides us. This provides a good and fruitful subject for our dialogue. We are ready to carry it out wholeheartedly. We will say more on many points of difference regarding tradition, spirituality, canon law, and worship, we are ready to study how we can satisfy the legitimate desires of our Christian brothers, still separated from us. It is our dearest wish to embrace them in a perfect union of faith and charity.

But we must add that it is not in our power to compromise with the integrity of the faith or the requirements of charity. We foresee that this will cause misunderstanding and opposition, but now that the Catholic Church has taken the initiative in restoring the unity of Christ's fold, it will not cease to go forward with all patience and consideration.

It will not cease to show that the prerogatives, which keep the separated brothers at a distance, are not the fruits of historic ambitions or of fanciful theological speculation, but derive from the will of Christ and that, rightly understood, they are for the good of all and make for common unity, freedom and Christian perfection. The Catholic Church will not cease, by prayer and penance, to prepare herself worthily for the longed-for reconciliation.

In reflecting on this subject, it distresses us to see how we, the promoter of such reconciliation, are regarded by many of

the separated brethren as being in a stumbling block, because of the primacy of honor and jurisdiction which Christ bestowed upon the Apostle Peter, and which we have inherited from him.

Do not some of them say that if it were not for the primacy of the pope, the reunion of the separated churches with the Catholic Church would be easy?

We beg the separated brethren to consider the inconsistency of this position, not only in that, without the pope, the Catholic Church would no longer be Catholic, but also because, without the supreme, efficacious and decisive pastoral office of Peter the unity of the Church of Christ would utterly collapse.

It would be vain to look for other principles of unity in place of the one established by Christ himself. As St. Jerome justly wrote: "There would arise in the Church as many sects as there are priests" (*Dial. contra Luciferianos*, n. 9). We should also like to observe that this fundamental principle of Holy Church has not as its objective a supremacy of spiritual pride and human domination. It is a primacy of service, of administration, of love. It is not empty rhetoric which condescends the Vicar of Christ the title of "servant of the servants of God."

It is along these lines that our dialogue is alert, and, even before entering into fraternal conversation, it speaks in prayer and hope with the heavenly Father.

We must observe, venerable brethren, with joy and confidence, that the vast and varied circle of separated Christians is pervaded by spiritual activities which seem to promise, controlling developments in regard to their reunion in the one Church of Christ. We beg that the Holy Spirit will breathe upon the "ecumenical movement," and we recall the emotion and joy we felt at Jerusalem in our meeting, full of charity and new hope, with the Patriarch Athenagoras.

We wish to greet with gratitude and respect the participant of so many representatives of separated churches in the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

We want to give our assurance, once again, that we have an attentive, reverent interest in the spiritual movements connected with the problem of unity, which are stirring up vital and noble religious sentiments in various individuals, groups and communities. With love and reverence we greet all

these Christians, in hope that we may promote together, even more effectively, the cause of Christ and the unity which He desired for His Church, in the dialogue of sincerity and love.

Catholics

At last we turn to speak with the children of the House of God, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, of which this Roman Church is "mother and head." It is our ardent desire that this conversation with our own children should be full of faith, of charity, of good works, should be intimate and familiar.

We would have it responsive to all truth and virtue and to all the realities of our doctrinal and spiritual inheritance. Sincere and sensitive to genuine spiritualities, ever ready to give ear to the manifold voices of the contemporary world, ever more capable of making Catholics truly good men, men wise, free, serene and strong; that is what we earnestly desire our family conversation to be.

This desire to impress upon the internal relationships of the Church the character of a dialogue between members of a body, whose constitutive principle is charity, does not do away with the exercise of the right order necessary in all well constructed societies. Above all, the hierarchical constitution of the Church requires that, on the one side, authority should be exercised according to its proper function and that, on the other side, there should be submission.

The Church's authority is instituted by Christ; it is indeed, representative of Him; it is the authorized channel of His word; it is the expression of His pastoral charity. Obedience, therefore, is motivated by faith, develops into a school of evangelical humility, and links the obedient man to the wisdom, unity, constructiveness and charity by which the body of the Church is sustained. It confers upon him who imposes it and upon him who conforms himself to it the merit of being like Christ who was "made obedient unto death" (Phil. 2, 8).

By obedience, therefore, in the context of dialogue, we mean the exercise of authority in the full awareness of its being a service and ministry of truth and charity, and we mean the observance of canonical regulations and respect for the government of legitimate superiors in the spirit of untroubled readiness as becomes free and loving children.

The spirit of independence, of criticism, of rebellion ill accords with the charity which

gives life to the Church's solidarity, concord and peace, and easily transforms the dialogue into argument, dispute and disagreement. This must remain a humble attitude, so easy, alas, to produce is condemned by the Apostle Paul in his warning words: "Let there be no divisions among you" (1 Cor. 1, 10).

It is, therefore, our ardent desire that the dialogue within the Church should take on new fervor, new themes and speakers, so that the holiness and vitality of the Mystical Body of Christ on earth may be increased.

Anything that makes known the teachings of which the Church is both custodian and dispenser receives our approbation. We have already mentioned the liturgy, the interior life and preaching. We add also schools, the press, the social apostolate, the missions, the exercise of charity.

The Council

All these are themes to which the council will direct our attention. And we bless and encourage all those who, under the guidance of competent authority, take part in the life-giving dialogue of the Church, priests, especially and religious, and our well-loved laity, dedicated in Christ in Catholic Action and in so many other associations and activities.

It is a cause of joy and comfort for us to see that such a dialogue is already in existence in the Church and in the areas which surround it. The Church today is more than ever alive. But it seems good to consider that everything still remains to be done: the work begins today and never comes to an end. This is the law of our temporal, earthly pilgrimage. This is the ordinary task, venerable brothers, of our ministry, which everything today stimulates us to renew and to make more devoted and intense.

As for ourselves in speaking to you of these things, we are pleased to trust in your cooperation and offer you our own life return. This union of aims and labor we ask for and offer not long after our elevation to the Chair of the Apostle Peter; hearing the name and sharing, please God, something of the spirit of the Apostle of the Gentiles. And so celebrating the unity of Christ among us, we send to you with this, our first letter, in the name of the Lord, our blessing as brother and father, a blessing which we gladly extend to the whole Church and to all mankind.

From the Vatican, 6 August 1964.

On the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

'Responsible Parenthood'

Spouses Told - Follow Conscience

Detroit — (RNS) — A noted Catholic moral theologian said here that the application of the Church's teaching on marriage and parenthood belongs to the "conscience of the spouses."

Redemptorist Father Bernard Haring, a Vatican Council peritus (expert) and professor at the Redemptorist Academia Alphoncina in Rome, discussed "responsible parenthood" and the Christian conscience of married people during an interview here.

He was in Detroit to speak at the Pastoral Institute on the Renewal of the Parochial Mission and at the Midwestern Institute of Pastoral Theology.

FATHER HARING cited the lack of adjustment of the social and economic structures of the married person's environment to the spirit of Christ as one of the sources of the difficulties of married people.

Another source of difficulty, he said, is the formulation of moral instruction for what he called a past age.

A "great task" of the Church, he said, is "to re-think her tradition, eliminating what is only an application to another social, economic and cultural framework of past times, and to make clear the unchangeable principles and the possible application in such a new situation as ours."

The 55-year-old theologian defined "responsible parenthood" as "something different from the common understanding of birth control or planned parenthood."

Birth control, he said, is a "negative approach" and emphasized keeping the family small. Planned parenthood puts human planning in the first place and it is "a set plan once and for ever."

"Responsible parenthood is typically a Christian understanding which makes the married people listen to God's loving will," Father Haring continued. "It is a continuous openness to a new situation, to new gifts of God or to new needs and difficulties."

Emphasizing the "dialogue between the spouses," he said responsible parenthood is manifest in the "evident Christian love" which permeates parental love.

He added that "the judgment of responsible parenthood — namely to desire here and now new childbirth — belongs to the spouses."

"The Church teaches them that greater principle of how to conceive of their conjugal and parental vocation. But the application belongs to their conscience."

Parents possess this Christian

conscience, he said, "if they are above all considering God's loving will as it is taught by His Church. It is not a Christian conscience if one (of the spouses) decides alone without considering the gifts and needs of the other."

Father Haring declared there may be a "sharp conflict between the imperfect understanding of the principles of the Church on the part of a priest, pastor or confessor and on the other side the consciousness and conviction of married people."

"Open conflict with the wrong application, or the narrow-minded application of a priest, sometimes seems to be in conflict with the Church," he added. "But the final judgment will be made only by God himself and must be given in view of the goodwill and sincerity of the married people."

North American Gets New Rector

Vatican City — (RNS) — Archbishop Martin J. O'Connor has resigned as 11th rector of the North American College, and will be replaced by a native of New York City, Bishop Francis F. Reh of Charleston, S.C.

At his own request Archbishop O'Connor gave up the post he held for almost 16 years. He explained that pressure of work in connection with several positions he holds in the Vatican administrative offices has made it impossible for him to give sufficient attention to his duties as rector.

He will remain in Rome as president of the Pontifical Commission for the Communications Media which he founded in 1948 at the request of Pope Pius XII.

Archbishop O'Connor was also president of the ecumenical Council's communications media secretariat.



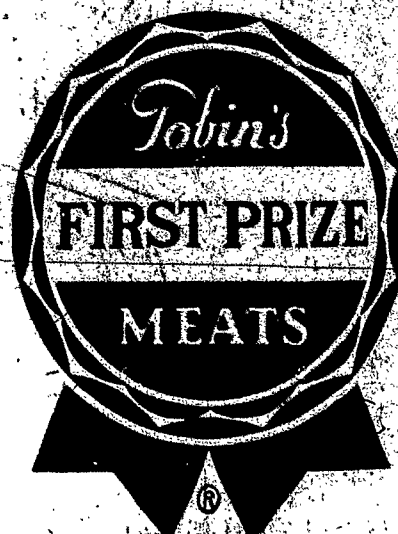
First Baptisms at St. Mark's Parish

Father Joseph Donovan poses proudly with the first two parishioners baptized at St. Mark's on August 2. They are Bruce Gilbert Mark Fisher, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacques Fisher of 818 Flynn Rd. and Gregory James Barrett, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Barrett of 125 Post Ave., Hilton. Pictured left to right: Sigurd Bo and Linda Fisher, godparents of little Bruce, Father Donovan, Mrs. Edward Barrett and John Kozar, godparents of Gregory.



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