

Convert Totals Drop

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menism was a great cause in the decrease may have been spurred by the fact that over a five-year period conversions in the U.S. went from an all-time high to a decade low.

The high, according to Father Keating, came in 1950, the first full year of the regime of Pope John XXIII. In that year there were 142,267 converts to Catholicism in the U.S. Pope John spurred tremendous ecumenical gains. But in each succeeding year, conversions dropped. In 1960, 131,841; 1961, 124,430; 1962, 125,070; and in 1963, 123,986.

Father Keating used 1962 statistics as a basis of his deliberations, weighing losses against ecumenism and warning his readers there was no real proof that ecumenism was at fault.

Seventy per cent of the total loss was attributable to the Pacific and Middle Atlantic areas and the Military Ordinariate. He said, "And of these three areas of the Pacific more than equalled the losses of the other two with a fall-off of \$,970."

The drop in California conversions was 5,743 in 1962, he said, of which all but 40 occurred in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and Diocese of San Diego. In such a case, he said, if ecumenism were a major factor, "then the two places which contributed so heavily to that decline might be expected to have participated in a vigorous way in ecumenical activity."

"The fact is, however," he continued, "that there was no outstanding ecumenical activity in either of these places during the period investigated. This surely casts some doubt upon the theory that ecumenism is chiefly responsible for the slump."

He said that the Middle Atlantic Area (New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey) showed a drop of 2,826 in 1962. Of this amount, half was reported in Pennsylvania, and all but 214 of the state's total was reported in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

"Here again," he said, "there was no record of ecumenical work."

But, turning to Pittsburgh, he noted that the diocese headed by Bishop John J. Wright, "widely known as an ecumenically-minded bishop," was only 192 below its peak year (1959) in conversions.

In Father O'Brien's study, released at Notre Dame, the data was based on survey of "a cross section of people representing 78.9 million people... who belong to some Church." They were asked: "Have you ever tried to get anyone to join (your church)?"

Father O'Brien said that on the basis of a Catholic population of 44,874,37 in 1963, it required 381 Catholics to win one convert. "What it really means," the priest contended, "is that only about five of the 381 make any effort to share their faith. The remaining 356 don't lift a finger to help."



New York — (RNS) — Michelangelo's world famous Pietà — seen by 13.5 million people at the New York World's Fair — is "stored" away for the winter until the fair reopens in April. As part of security measures a cage surrounds the priceless sculpture which will remain in its same location at the Vatican Pavilion. Closing the cage are Magr. John J. Gorman, the pavilion's director (left), and Father Joseph T. Lahey, assistant director. The statue also received a special covering to protect it from cold weather, although it will be in a heated area.

13 Million View Pietà

New York — (RNS) — Religious pavilions at the New York World's Fair, which drew their share of both praise and brickbats during the first season of the exhibition, are now being prepared for the winter.

When gates closed until next April 21 at the 646-acre area in Flushing Meadow, a total of 27.1 million visitors had been on the grounds.

The eight religious pavilions reported they had drawn collectively 22.4 million visitors.

And according to spokesmen for the religious exhibits, the season added up to more than a statistical success alone. They were in general agreement that the popularity of the pavilions showed a significant degree of sincere interest on the part of the individual in not only his own religion but that of others.

As expected even before the fair opened, the Vatican Pavilion, and particularly its main feature — Michelangelo's Pietà — was one of the main drawing cards. Pavilion officials reported a total of 13,523,037 visitors during the season, with virtually all of them taking the two-minute treadmill ride through the darkened area where the famous statue was displayed.

The appeal of the other religious pavilions could be seen in the following totals reported by exhibit spokesmen as the fair closed:

Mormon Pavilion, over 3 million; Billy Graham, 2,250,000; University of Staffordshire,

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Church Looks Inward

By REINHOLD LEHMANN

Berlin — (NC) — Four years after the erection of the Berlin wall, the view of the Catholic Church in East Germany has become increasingly directed inward on itself.

The wall blocks the view to the West, making it difficult to think of political, cultural and religious unity with the rest of Europe.

The result has been a kind of spiritual introspection — a concern for the pastoral and parochial concerns of the people, while carefully avoiding political and social repercussions.

The present state of the Church in East Germany was perhaps best summed up by Bishop Otto Spelsbeck of Meissen, East Germany, in a talk at the 50th German Katholikentag (Catholic Congress) held in Stuttgart, West Germany, in September.

"The layman," he said, "is not allowed to bring the world into the Church as was done in the Middle Ages, but he does have a responsibility to carry the Church into the world."

The pastoral concern of the East German Church is aided by the fact that Catholics have greater freedom to practice their religion there than in any other communist country.

There are no vacant dioceses. All bishops have been permitted to attend the Vatican Council. Only a few priests have been jailed, and there are no government-appointed "peace priests." There is no dire shortage of priests, and about 270 young men are studying in seminaries.

In 1951, after five years of talks between Church and government officials, Catholics were able to open a publishing house in East Germany and now print two weekly newspapers, whose circulation is nevertheless strictly limited to a small allotment of newsprint.

If the Catholic newspapers do not criticize government policies, neither do they support them. The papers, and the few books that Catholics publish, are confined to religious topics, matters of faith and private morality.

The government control over the Catholic Church is best seen when it comes to the construction of new churches. Since 1945, only one church building has been erected in the Berlin diocese. As the population expands, the government is building many suburban communities around the large cities. But in these communities there are no sites provided for churches.

Of the 17 million persons in communist East Germany, about 10 per cent are Catholic. Many fear that as the Church there continues to be isolated from the rest of Europe, their numbers will decrease. To hasten this day the communists are stepping up their atheistic indoctrination program. Religious books are confiscated at the borders. Only radio and television keep Catholics in contact with West Germany.

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Comforter' Opens in N.Y.

Defends Pius XII on Jews

New York — (RNS) — "The Comforter," a drama written by a Redemptorist priest in rebuttal to charges against Pope Pius XII made in "The Deputy," had its premiere in the Blackfriars Guild's theater here, producer of the play.

Written by Father Edward A. Molloy of New York, the drama seeks to refute the contention of West German playwright Rolf Hochhuth that Pius XII failed to speak out publicly against the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

"I was pained by Hochhuth's portrait of Pius XII and felt he was extremely unjust to a great and good man," Father Molloy said. "I had read most of the Pope's published works, including his 43 encyclicals, and couldn't square Hochhuth's picture of Pius with my own."

In explaining why he wrote the play, Father Molloy said he was "convinced that the truth must be told... If Hochhuth's play is a call to personal responsibility, then this play is my personal response to the call of truth."

In defense of Pius XII, Father Molloy cites efforts of the late pontiff on behalf of the Jewish and Christian victims of Hitler, his opening of convents and monasteries as a refuge, his pleas for mercy, and the giving of gold to Rabbi Solli to be used as ransom for the release of Jews from Nazi persecution.

Fewer Schools, Fewer Vocations

South Bud — (NC) — The future of vocations to the priesthood and religious life in this country depends upon the vitality and expansion of the Catholic school system, U.S. Under Secretary of Labor John F. Henning asserted here.

Henning told the annual Teachers Institute of the Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese that those who would eliminate Catholic schools also would eliminate the priest and contribute to the destruction of American Catholicism.

The government official, father of seven children (one of whom recently enrolled at a Buffalo seminary to study for the Franciscan priesthood) supported his assertions with a table of statistics of ordinations in the San Francisco archdiocese, which showed that for the 1954-1964 decade 83 per cent of the priests had attended Catholic schools prior to going to seminaries.

It is the "parallel duty" of Catholics to work for the greater vitality and expansion of the school system, Henning said, "that without the Catholic schools the San Francisco archdiocese today would be 'missionary country' in terms of the priesthood."

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