

Bishop Casey Writes from Rome

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them about its strong points and its weaknesses.

There it is, "De Ecclesia," a gray-covered booklet in the hands of the Fathers, a subject to be treated by the Council. It does not begin to come alive until the representatives of all the nations stand in St. Peter's to praise it or attack some part of it. Copies of their oral remarks (or their written observations, equal in number to the speeches, which never reach the floor of the Council) go back to be processed by the Commissions and the schema is reworked again and presented to the Fathers for vote the following year. If the vote is favorable, a two-thirds majority, it is presented to Pope Paul, approved, and becomes a decree of the Council.

This is an over-simplified version of the Council's method of operation but it does give one an idea of the blood and sweat and tears that have gone into Vatican II.

Citizen of the United States

"I DO DECLARE... that I am a qualified voter of said district that I will be unable to appear personally on the day of such general election at the polling place of the election district in which I am a qualified voter."

I missed my absentee ballot to Rochester October 17. The marked ballot in the brown envelope was a symbol of a great privilege, not only of being a citizen of the United States but also of being able to vote by democratic process, by secret ballot, without fear or suspicion.

On October 16 we listened in Council to the remarks of Archbishop Slipy, the venerable, white-bearded Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian who, before his first appearance

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in the Council last year, had been a prisoner in a Communist jail for fifteen years. We Americans rather take our freedom and our citizenship for granted. In view of the recent political upheaval in Russia, knowing the conditions behind the Iron Curtain, knowing that there is no real happiness among people who grind out their lives in the enforced conformism of a police state, we can be grateful to God as Thanksgiving Day approaches for all our blessings, not the least of which is the privilege of saying, "I am a citizen of the United States."

The Layman and the Council

A layman got up and spoke in the Council during its hundredth session, October 19. This is the first time, to our knowledge, that a layman has addressed a General Council of the Church in secret session. The layman, Patrick Keegan of England, spoke in the name of the laymen who attend the daily Council sessions as the representatives of the People of God. His remarks were in English and he spoke well.

"Few Christians answer their call in Baptism and Confirmation to the apostolate," said Mr. Keegan.

"This schema (The Apostolate of the Laity) besides recognizing the fruitful contribution already made to the Church's life by the lay apostolate, also leaves open and prepares the way for further developments in all aspects of the lay apostolate. This schema is a challenge to all who bear responsibility for Christian formation, but especially for organizations and groups, since these societies can in a unique way foster formation."

The Council debated five times the apostolate of the laity. The schema devoted one title to the Roman Catholic layman and laywoman. This proposition is unique because it is the first time that the laity have been given

special attention by a Council of their Church. The Fathers pointed out the flaws in the schema as it is now written and the final version will find the necessary changes incorporated.

"The Apostolate of the Laity" approaches the layman both as an individual and as a member of organized Catholic associations. It stresses the need of the Church to listen to its laymen in those secular fields where their jobs give them greater experience than their clergy.

As Pope Paul said in a recent letter to American Catholics: "This is the hour of the laity. It is the layman himself who has realized his ecclesial vocation and is not content with being a merely passive and unfeeling instrument but who asks enthusiastically that he may do something for the growth and edification of the Church."

Gradually, through thirty-five years in the priesthood, we have observed a transformation in the local organization of our Church. We priests rely more and more on the help of the laity to organize our parishes properly. Each pastor and assistant in the Diocese of Rochester could write a book on this. Due to a grave personnel shortage many of our parishes are understaffed, two priests, for example, trying to do the work of four. We need more than a few more priests. We need more laymen and laywomen, young and old, our priestly efforts to spread the Kingdom of Christ in our diocese will be seriously hampered. Thank God, the laity have rallied to the call of their priests and bishops.

One fundamental thought about the apostolate of the laity — convert yourself first and then you will be able to convert others. Bishop McGrath of Panama pointed out in the Council that the very thought of the laity apostolate must derive from that of the

common priesthood of all Christians and their universal apostolic mission. The laity's mission will normally be aimed not at direct evangelization but to the sanctification of themselves and the world (practically, their own home and their own neighborhood) through lives lived under the guidance of their own Christian consciences.

Jesuit Superior's Funeral

The funeral of Father James, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, took place Thursday, October 8, in the Church of the Gesù, burial place of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society, Jesuit General, when Father Fernandez, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, presided in a direct line of succession from St. Ignatius, and the head of 36,000 members of the Society of Jesus scattered throughout the world.

The funeral Mass took place at 4:30 p.m. According to a tradition of centuries, the Dominican Master General celebrates the Mass. It was a Solemn High Requiem and Father Fernandez said the Mass in the distinctive Dominican rite. The spacious church was jammed, 22 Cardinals in the sanctuary, over 700 bishops from all the nations, the superior generals of the major male and female religious communities of the Catholic Church seated in the nave of the church.

The sermons of Rome, in the Vatican basilica, of the national episcopals, stood crowded in the side aisles. We sang the Mass responses under the direction of a Dominican priest.

There was no eulogy in keeping with the simple Jesuit tradition. The funeral after the Mass was conducted with medieval pageantry in the dimly lit church. The coffin of the dead General, covered with a large yellow pall, and surrounded by black biermen, was carried to the altar. The procession was surrounded on all sides by cardinals and bishops.

There was simple devotion in the Father's singing of the "Magnificat" with Father Fernandez, O.P., carried the Book of the Gospels in procession on the feast of St. Peter's on October 7, the Feast of the Holy Rosary.

Each of the 2,150 Fathers present that morning would have resented the implication that the Council had "downgraded" devotion to Mary in any way. Like the priests and the people they serve, the Fathers of the Council want the Mother of God to receive all the love and honor due her.

The complaints about "downgrading" and "downgrading" of devotion to Mary in any way. Like the priests and the people they serve, the Fathers of the Council want the Mother of God to receive all the love and honor due her.

After two days, the discussion of marriage and family life was halted in the Council by the vote of the Fathers. Now all are awaiting the report of the study which Pope Paul announced last summer will be coming "soon." In the meantime, the Fathers will be sending in their observations to the commission responsible for the draft of The Church and the Modern World.

Prelates of both sides of the discussion agree a change on such an important matter, especially a doctrine so clearly identified with Catholic identity, will cause a crisis of faith not only among laymen but among priests who sincerely, and frequently at the cost of great personal anguish, taught the doctrine to ask them to make an about-face would be cruel. Still, there are theologians, and Fathers of the Council as well, who say that to continue with the same teaching would be even crueler.

The Fathers have the courage to approach the solution to this problem without prejudice. The Dutch Documentation Center said Patriarch Maximos: "The Council must be courageous — and said Cardinal Suenens — and ment refers to a 'curious paradox' implicit in the present thunderous applause.

A Time of Great Courage

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gregation on October 29, 1964, was one of the most dramatic meetings of the Council since it began in the Fall of 1962. Only the day before, attendance had been meager and the coffee bar had been over a year. On Thursday, the 20th, practically every place in the aula was filled. Word had gotten around that three leading ecclesiastical figures were going to challenge the present Catholic teaching on birth control and plead for a new look at the problem.

The three were Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, Cardinal Leger of Montreal, and Monsignor Patriarch Maximos IV Saigh of Antioch. Each one of them is regarded as a giant among the Council Fathers. Any one of them would have received rapt attention. Together, they made a formidable team. A prelate like the retired former Archbishop of Bombay, the Most Rev. Thomas Roberts, S.J., who has a reputation for being consistently offbeat and something of a "loner," might easily have been dismissed as an eccentric. But these three are universally recognized as leaders among the bishops.

Cardinal Leger was the first to speak. He pointed out that confessors of the world over are confronted by people who have difficulty with the Church's teaching on marital sex. The bishops, of course, were painfully aware of this.

He suggested then that many of the difficulties facing the Church in this matter may be due to the "fear of conjugal love which has pervaded so many moral theology tracts. The usual text book statements

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about procreation being the "primary" purpose of marriage, he said, are not enough.

In marriage, he said, husband and wife are not merely procreators, they are also persons who need each other's love. More attention, they must be given to the purpose of marriage abstractly conceived but in filled with the love of the spouses. The sacrament of marriage, in short, needs a drastic overhauling.

Cardinal Suenens, who spoke with unusual force and emotion even for him, followed immediately, with a plea for an "objective" study of the theology of marriage. There is reason to believe, he said, that the Catholic outlook has become too one-sided. For example, the steady emphasis on the biblical command to Adam and Eve to "increase and multiply" must be balanced with the implications of their becoming "two in one flesh."

The Church has learned a great deal since Saint Augustine (Augustine, the presiding doctor for almost a thousand years in the Church of the West, is frequently cited to point up the evil of contraception).

Maximos, as sharp-tongued as ever, said that the main problem facing the Church in this regard is to find the "courage" to look at the problem, for it is at the root of a grave crisis of conscience among Catholics. It is not realistic to speak of the "primary" and "secondary" purposes of marriage: in marriage "the development of personality and its integration into the creative plans of God are all one."

The traditional teaching, he said boldly, may even be the result of a "bachelor psychosis" recently released in the clergy. "Perhaps unwillingly, we are setting up a Manichaean conception of man and the world, in which the work of the flesh, vitiated in itself, is tolerated only in view of children."

By this time excitement ran through Saint Peter's like an electric current. Within hours it spread throughout Rome, to the universities, colleges, monasteries, hotels and pensions — wherever the Fathers of the Council or their periti got together.

Naturally, it was present later in the day when the English-speaking newsmen gathered for their regular conference. The theologians on the American press panel, everyone knew, were deeply divided on the question. There was high interest in how they were going to react.

Father Charles Davis, the leading young theologian of England, who recently replaced Father George Tavard on the panel when the latter returned to Pittsburgh, stated that the talks that morning had marked a turning point in Catholic history. "My position as a theologian today is not what it was yesterday." What he meant was that only the day before, the view of family planning he

held was regarded as "subversive," but he now felt free as a theologian to explore all its complications.

The veteran American conservatives, Father Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., former dean of the School of Theology, Catholic University of America, and Msgr. George Shea, rector of the Diocesan Seminary in Darlington, N.Y., gave signs of feeling at once but were clearly not prepared for the turn of events.

Msgr. Shea attempted to establish that since the remarks of the morning had been "realized" by a "secret" discussion between Fathers of the Council, the movement's (and even the progressive theologians') estimate of their importance was exaggerated. It was quickly pointed out to him that the knowledge of what was said had been released by the Council press office.

For his part, Father Connell repeated for the umpteenth time the traditional case against contraception: that all its theological distinctions and subtleties, and cited the long continuity of the Church's teaching on the subject. The one concession Father Connell made to the morning's speakers was the acknowledgment that Saint Augustine was not the only Father of the Church living in his time. There were other Fathers in the East, he pointed out, and some of them took a position different from Augustine's on many matters.

For most of the bishops and Council theologians who have given the question much serious thought, the Church seems to be facing a kind of dilemma.

It was summed up in a paper recently released in Rome by the Dutch Documentation Center, which is supported by the bishops of Holland. The document refers to a "curious paradox" implicit in the present thunderous applause.

Convert 'Unchurched,' Catholics Are Told

Chicago — (RNS) — The role of Roman Catholic laymen and women in serving as missionaries among their churchless friends and neighbors was stressed here by Father John A. O'Brien, research professor of theology at Notre Dame University.

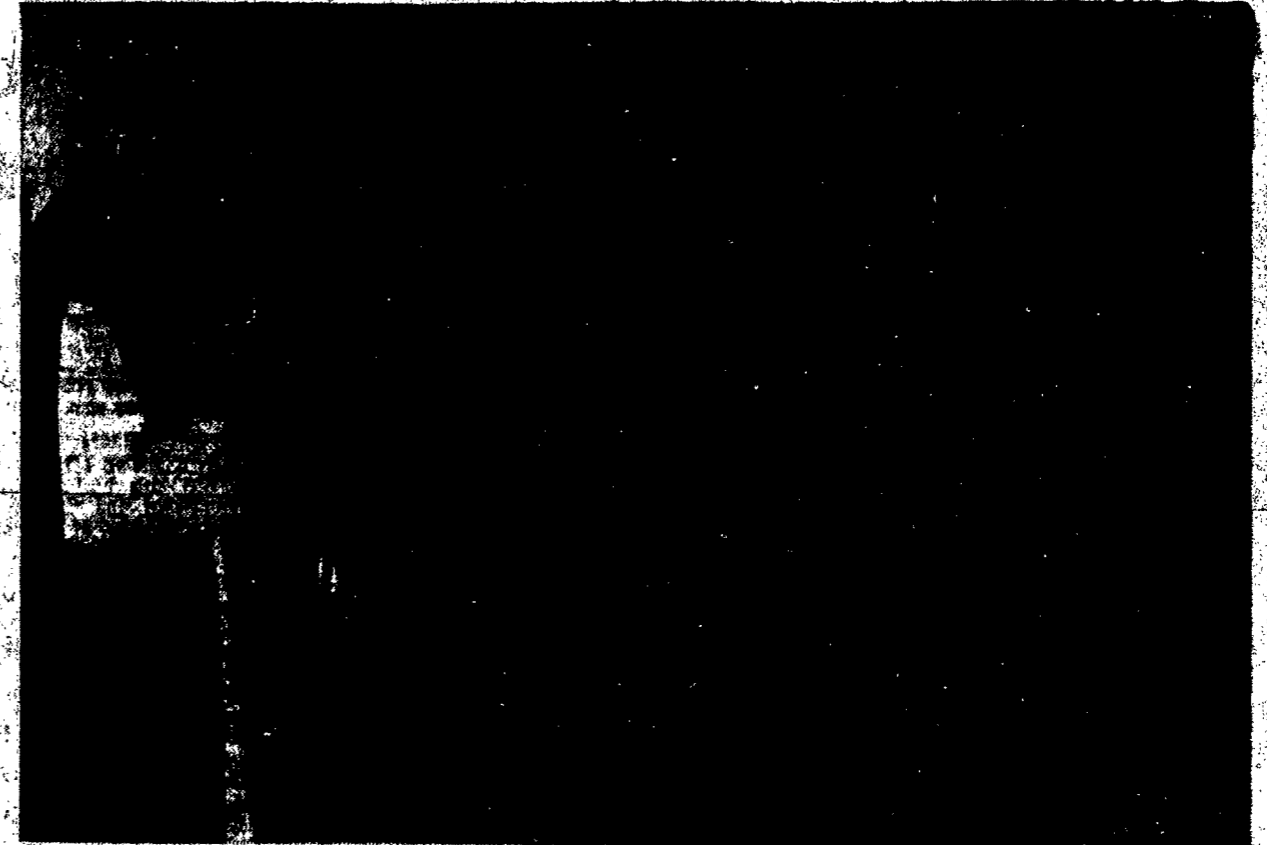
He said that today the most urgent lay apostolate is to witness for Christ and bear testimony to the beauty, truth and divine character of our Christian faith.

"This does not mean entering into religious argument or proselytizing," he emphasized, "but the sharing of your spiritual treasure with those who have no living, functional religious faith, of whom there are more than 80 million in this country."

Father O'Brien spoke at the 30th annual Red Mass sponsored by the Catholic Lawyers Guild to invoke divine guidance on the administration of justice and the courts.

The theologian pointed to a nationwide survey which, he said, showed that Catholics are the least active among all other Christians in serving as voluntary lay apostles.

He said that the "vast majority" acknowledged that not once in all their lives did they go out of their way to share their faith in the way to share their immediate spiritual riches with others in need.



The tomb of Pope John in the crypt of St. Peter's in Rome draws a prayerful visitor from Rochester — Bishop Casey. The tomb is daily decorated with candles and flowers from those who want to honor the saintly Pontiff who convoked the historic Vatican Council now in session in Rome. (Photo by Felici)

Other liturgical developments were discussed at the October 18 meeting, some of which may reach the public press before this column is printed in the Courier, November 6.

Diocesan Liturgical Institutes to be held for the priests of the diocese in Elmira, October 23, and in Rochester on November 7, will help them give their people the knowledge and the training necessary to implement these changes properly. All of us, bishops, priests and people alike, realize that there will be much confusion at first. None of us expects immediate miracles from this new way of worshiping God in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments and Sacramentals.

This is an age of transition. The Council is not going to change the unchangeable articles of faith but many of our religious practices and customs will be changed — and for the better. The new liturgy is one example. It is a tribute to the faith of our priests and people that once they realize that these changes represent the mind of the Church, they will go along with them wholeheartedly.

Keep up the prayers for the Council and the Fathers, please. I shall be writing you again, God willing, sometime in November.

Faithfully yours in Christ,
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English of Mass

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