

# 'Signs of Times' Call for Unity, Service

(Continued from Page 1)

clearly presents its characteristics.

"By such dialogue all acquire a truer knowledge and a firmer estimate of the doctrine and life of each Communion."

## How Far Should "Dialogue" Go

The schema in the section titled, "On praying with one mind" states: "This interior conversion and sanctity of life (expected of Catholics), together with private and public prayers for Christian Unity, are to be regarded as the soul of the entire ecumenical movement."

"It is customary for Catholics to meet frequently for prayer for Christian Unity, for which Our Saviour Himself on the night before He died so ardently prayed to the Father. That all may be one! John 17:21. In certain special circumstances, as when prayers are ordered for unity, and also in ecumenical meetings, it is permissible to consider that Catholics join with their separated brethren in prayer. Such prayers in common are a very effective means of begging for the grace of unity."

And here the schema interjects a word of caution. "But it is not permissible to consider such 'inter-communion in worship' as a means to be used indiscreetly in restoring Christian unity. Inter-communion depends chiefly upon two principles: a sign of the Church's unity, and a sharing in the means of grace."

And then the schema states that the manner of inter-communion must be left to the judgment of the bishop of an individual diocese. He is the one who will decide the manner of inter-communion for his priests and people.

Catholics promoting the ecumenical movement need prudence and humility. Misguided zeal on their part can lead to either of two evils: first, indifference, the attitude of those who consider all religions of equal value, being so many roads leading to the summit of the mountain. Hence, the indifferentist says, as long as one achieves his goal, there should be no concern which road he takes. This is not sound Catholic doctrine. We believe we have the one true Church, founded by Jesus Christ.

Excess of zeal can also lead to syncretism, that is, the false belief that the commonness of some secondary features found in different religions is enough to make them regarded as united and fused into one. This phenomenon is so strong and widespread in our day that it has become a principle in the science of comparative religions.

Prudence then is needed in our ecumenical work, be it in our attitude, in our words or in our actions. Humility is also required, the conviction that we ourselves have nothing good which we have not received from God. If we are fortunate enough to possess the grace of the Catholic faith, it is not a mere gift of God to us. We are hearing into his own soul, would look down on a person of a different religious faith? Those promoting Christian unity should therefore put themselves on a sympathetic level with those whom they address.

While Vatican II sees Ecumenism as a divinely inspired sign of the times, we should also remember that the Catholic Church, through this Council, has not changed in a substantial, doctrinal sense or that its authorized formal teaching (its magisterium) has any less validity for Roman Catholics than before this Council. Vatican II has not "watered down" the truths given our Church by its founder, Jesus Christ.

Cardinal Bea, who heads the Pontifical Secretariate for Promoting Christian Unity and who is an ardent champion of Ecumenism, has never wavered on the fundamentals. "There can be no question," he said, "of seeking a compromise, on dogma, or divinely revealed doctrine. All the Councils have realized this and they have never decreed new articles of faith or revised old ones."

Outside of these unchangeable truths of the Catholic religion, however, is the vast field of interpretations, attitudes, practices, customs, traditions, understandings, methods which are changeable and which are now leading to a new era in Roman Catholic history. The obstacles to Christian unity are still formidable, but certainly our Church is taking great strides toward the goal.

To conclude this section, if we try to join great prudence with the zeal of charity in promoting Christian unity, in a fulfilling Christ's wish that "all be one," we believe that the initiative of Pope John and Pope Paul will bear consoling fruit, that the witness of Christ's will for salvation will be carried to the masses, and that all men will get to know the solitude of the Church on their behalf.

St. Peter's at 8:45 a.m.

Most of the bishops' buses arrive at St. Peter's by 8:45 a.m. The prelates in robes of white here and many of the white



Russian Orthodox delegates at Vatican Council leave St. Peter's after a morning session. In accompanying article, Bishop Casey tells how Catholic Church seeks increased contacts with other churches as prudence to ultimate unity.

lines robes are beginning to look a bit bedraggled as this session nears its end. "I am hoping in the morning to see the two main entrances of the majestic basilica."

Some bishops go directly to their places, or converse with fellow bishops in the quiet shade of the aila — the place around like the Tower of Babel — one can hear the tongues of all the nations. Other Fathers kneel for a moment of silent prayer at the side chapel of St. Pius X. The saint's body, clothed in the vestments of Christ's Vicar, lies beneath the altar, clearly visible to pilgrims behind a glass window.

Others go to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel to the west of the Papal Altar. It is not uncommon before each morning Mass to see three to four hundred cardinals and bishops kneeling on the stone pavement (there are only a few pews) praying for guidance before they begin another day's work.

There are six confessionals scattered around the chapel and confessions are heard in Italian, German, French, Spanish, Polish and English. You would be edified to see the bishops standing patiently in line, just as you do in your parish church, waiting to make their weekly confession.

The warning bell sounds five minutes before Mass begins at 8:00 and we stroll back to our place at the middle of the aila, past the Papal Altar, with its marble steps leading down to the tomb of St. Peter, the long table which seats the ten Council Presidents including Cardinal Spellman and Cardinal Meyer, the shorter table in front of them from which the "wheels" of the Council, the four moderators, Cardinals Agagianian, Lercaro, Dopfner, Suensens, run the Council each day — we stroll past the two

tribunes where are seated the delegated Protestant Observers and the Catholic Lay Auditors, men and women, past the Cardinals and Archbishops' sections, brushing elbows with some giants in the world of the spirit, men whose names you read in your daily papers. After three years, one takes this experience in stride. Perhaps, in time to come, looking back on this memorable pageant and the eventual years of Vatican II, we may better appreciate the privilege that was ours.

## Married Deacons

There was some discussion in the public press about the section of the Council in restoring the diaconate as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy. The intention of the Fathers, I believe, was to help the priests particularly in those countries in their work of spreading the Kingdom.

According to Chapter III of De Ecclesia, these deacons would be assigned by their bishop to administer baptism solemnly, to guard and distribute the Eucharist, to assist at and bless matrimony in the name of the Church, to bring the Sacred Scriptures to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the people, to preside over the worship and prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, in some mission countries, one priest may have the care of 50,000 souls, or more.

It is obviously impossible for this missionary to reach all his flock. With the assistance of well trained deacons he can do ever so much more for souls.

The schema leaves it up to each national Body of Bishops to decide, with the approval of the Pope, whether to restore the diaconate in its country. The Council on September 20 voted 1898 to 829 to confer the dia-

conate on men of "more mature age" who are married. In the next vote, same day, the proposition that the diaconate be conferred upon suitable young men without binding them to the law of celibacy, was defeated 1364 to 839.

All talk to the contrary, this vote indicates that the tradition of celibacy which, through the centuries has been part of the inner strength of the Church, will not be changed. St. Paul's classical doctrine that the Church's "professionals" priests charged with spreading the Gospel can do their work better by freely dedicating themselves to the Lord, untrammelled by family cares, will not be changed. It is within the competence of the Body of Bishops of the United States to decide whether to confer the diaconate on married men of mature age for the mission areas of our country. My own guess, and it is only a guess, is that it will not be done.

## Famous Schema Number 13

The Rochester Diocese, October 13, carried the UPF report that Archbishop Heenan, Primate of England, had termed Schema 13, "The Church in the Modern World" as "a document unworthy of a General Council of the Church." The report was correct, was the Archbishop?

To make a proper judgment, let's take a look at the background material first. We go back to the opening discourse of Pope John in 1962. He had not assembled "the Holy Father" told us in that famous speech, "to repeat already stated doctrines and norms but to consider what concerns the renovation of the Church so that she may present herself pure and without stain to men."

It took the debates and the

The Primates of England was a report that "between the sessions of the Council the Church of God has suffered a great deal from the writings and speeches of some of the experts. They are relatively few in number," he said, "but their sound has gone forth to the ends of the earth. They seem to have little for the teaching authority of the bishops."

"We must protect the authority of the Teaching Church," the Archbishop continued. "It is of no avail to talk about a College of Bishops if specialists in articles, books and speeches contradict and pour scorn on what a Body of Bishops collectively and he added particularly. The theories of one or two experts must not be mistaken for a general agreement among theologians which has, of course, special authority."

Archbishop Heenan made a good point here. Reports from some indicate that many people were confused by the private opinions expressed in speeches and magazine articles regarding the schema. The schema itself, in its present form, is divided into an introduction and four chapters. In the introduction, the schema mentions "the signs of the times" which provoke the dialogue between the Church and the world. Then for three chapters the relation between the problems of the world and the supernatural order is described (Chapter I, the vocation of every man; Chapter II, the mission of the Church in the world; Chapter III, the activity of Christians in the world).

Finally, in the fourth and last chapter, the one which has caused most of the controversy, the schema treats "the signs of the times" dealing one after another with the material of the Appendices and indicating at the same time the human and Christian values they imply.

The importance of this schema stems from the whole purpose of the present Council. The Church, since its foundation by the Lord, exists for men. The goal of her "aggiornamento" her inner renewal, for this reason, is that she may better serve all men.

After speaking about herself, what does the Church in this schema say about the present world, its ambitions and anxieties, its great conquests and its problems of human misery and nuclear tension?

With this schema, the Council enters the plane of human values that interest all men, even those most removed from the Church, and constructs that bridge to the world that Our Holy Father, Pope Paul, intended as its ultimate goal. This, then, is an oversimplified summary of "The Church in the Modern World."

About Archbishop Heenan's remarks that this document is unworthy of a General Council of the Church, may we say this — and it is a purely personal viewpoint.

## Pope Praises Catholic Youth

Vatican City (NC) — Pope Paul VI praised the leaders of the youth section of Italian Catholic Action and defended their organization from charges that it is out-of-date.

The Pope received about 300 diocesan presidents of the organization and told them he was happy to meet with the young people of Catholic Action. He described them as "valiant ones in spirit, energetic in initiative, harmonious in action, always faithful and always new."

The Pope said the Italian youth possessed a "unique conception of life" which is that of Christ which, through the Church, He offers to the men of all times. "You are called to carry out the mission of offering yourselves as a sacrifice to the people of your own age, to the youth of today in the beauty and strength of your ideals."

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