

Did the Council End in Defeat?

Notre Dame lost its climactic game last Saturday, it is said, because of the confusion that resulted in switching their signals from Latin to English.

That was the joke that made the rounds last weekend — if anyone had the courage to joke about such a tragedy.

To take the quip seriously, however, wouldn't be half the mistake as the current massive misunderstanding of the climactic events of the Vatican Council's closing sessions a week before Notre Dame's defeat.

A widespread opinion claims the Council was also brutally defeated — by no less a person than Pope Paul VI.

Those who hold this opinion cite three "proofs" for their claim:

- Pope Paul overturned the Council's concept of the "collegiality" of bishops by rejecting a petition signed by 1400 of them in order to favor a minority of 120 who wanted to block a Council vote on religious liberty.

- Pope Paul gave the Blessed Virgin Mary the new title of "Mother of the Church" after the Council had earlier voted against it.

- Pope Paul imposed 19 of his own changes on the Council's carefully drawn up statement on ecumenical activity, the Catholic Church's quest with other churches for unity.

Now how do we disprove proofs as formidable as these?

- Pope Paul's rejection of the petition of 1400 bishops actually upheld the Council's rules that a minority does have its rights too. His intervention would have been a display of papal power contrary to the Council's agreed-on procedures. Even medieval Machiavelli admitted that the best way to govern is to give a hearing to minority groups.

The Pope's refusal to intervene, furthermore, did not act on the religious liberty statement but only delayed the action until the next session. His refusal to act does not mean he's against the statement either. Earlier this year he told Spanish critics of the statement, "Let the Spaniards be with the Pope. Don't be afraid of religious freedom."

- The new "Mother of the Church" title given Mary also did not countermmand any Council decision. The Council didn't vote one way or another on it. A Mexican bishop spoke out strongly against making the title official — a title used by Popes Leo XIII and John XXIII as well as the present Pope — but no action was taken one way or another by the Council.

As a matter of fact, promoters of "maximum" devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary wanted the title "Medatrix" and "Co-Redemptrix" given her, titles which have been clearly defined by their promoters but which are quite misleading to the general public. In giving the new title to our Lady, Pope Paul stated quite clearly that "Mary, handmaid of the Lord, exists only in relation to God and Christ, the one Mediator and Redeemer."

- And finally the 19 text modifications of the Pope in the ecumenism statement certainly did not in any way eviscerate the document. It remains a magnificent statement which the most progressive minded optimists of five years ago would never have dreamed of winning approval at the summit of Catholicism.

It is this writer's opinion that Pope Paul is a genius Pontiff, that he is steering the Church through this Council in a way his predecessors were unable to do either at the first Vatican Council of 1870 or at the sixteenth century Council of Trent or any previous Council. Every Council prior to the present one left the Church with lasting wounds, Pope Paul is determined such shall not happen again.

Trent failed to convert the Protestants, actually froze them out of the Church, the agonized condition the present Council seeks to remedy. First Vatican a century ago with its decree on the infallibility of the pope saw the Church again divided as an unconvinced minority split away to form the Old Catholic Church, a remnant still surviving today.

The pessimist philosopher Schopenhauer once said, "God is dead." A good share of the world's three billion people would agree with him.

The Church just can't go on acting as if it were the guiding star of Christendom.

It's Christendom, not God, that is dead.

Christianity is no longer a tight little island safe behind bastions guarded by knights in medieval armor.

We live in a post-Christendom era but that doesn't mean it can't be a Christian era. It might yet become a greater Christian era than any that has yet been. But our present time is one of transition and Pope Paul, as captain of the barque of Peter, wants to steer his course without shipwreck of a single soul. I think he's doing his job superbly well and I'm mighty glad to be one of the crew.

—Faber Henry Atwell.

Church Not a Museum, Trust It, Says Pope

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Catholic Church is "no museum of the past" and "there is no essential aspect of human life which escapes its attention," Pope Paul VI told thousands of pilgrims during his midweek general audience.

At the same time, he stressed the duty of all Catholics to share in the life and responsibility of the Church.

The Pope's remarks were prompted by the schema on the Church in the Modern World, which, he noted, had created "animated and penetrating discussion" at the Second Vatican Council.

Pope Paul urged pilgrims to put their trust in the Church and invited them to share in its problems and undertakings.

"Do you know the present history of the Church?" he asked. "Do you know the problems of her culture? Do you follow the efforts she makes to educate mankind in the usefulness of the Christian life? Do you know of the many trials and sufferings which afflict her and do you remember that each one of us should be in the Mystical Body as a healthy and active member and not a weak, sick and inert one?"

Pope John's Hopes Fulfilled

World's Bishops Agreed on Need for Aggiornamento

By JOHN COGLEY
Special Correspondent
(By Religious News Service)

During the third session, the Ecumenical Council reached its maturity. The bishops in Rome began to achieve a distinct identity not as prelates called in from here, there, and the other place, but precisely as Fathers of this particular Council.

A consensus was reached, in general terms, of what the present needs of the Church are and of the direction in which the Catholicism of the future will move.

The unpredictable change that takes place when a group gets together for prolonged dialogue, no longer seemed as strange as it did even last year. In short, the Council, which began as an idea in the mind of Pope John, which first came together in uncertainty and confusion, and which was over many meetings a collection of individual prelates, each moved by a separate vision, now has an existence of its own that transcends the importance of any particular Father.

Early in the third session, Archbishop John Heenan of Westminster (England) explained the increased pace of the Council progress by saying that the Fathers were more experienced now and had overcome some earlier difficulties.

That was undoubtedly true, but it was not the total explanation.

More important was the emergence of the consiliar consensus — the recognition by all but the most obtuse that, whatever their disagreements, the Fathers of Vatican II were intent on pursuing Pope John's goal of aggiornamento and of relating the ancient doctrine of their Church not to textbook abstractions but to the present world and to the actual men and women now living in it.

The ultra-conservative Fathers were once, and not long ago either, merely a minority within the Council, to be accounted for numerically — the losing side noted in a series of votes. The change now is that this minority has become a dissident group opposed to the consensus that quietly became evident as the Council pursued its work.

Consequently, the only truly significant disagreements now are between the Fathers who share this consensus.

They may, for example, argue about whether terminal deacons may marry or whether married men may become terminal deacons. This sort of disagreement

Liberty Text 'Excellent' Sure to Pass

Chicago — (RNS) — Albert Gregory Cardinal Meyer, Archbishop of Chicago, forecast Vatican Council passage of an "excellent text" on religious liberty at the next session.

"The document was never expected to be up for definite passage this time," he told newsmen on his arrival home from Rome.

"I feel it will be passed at the next session in substantially the same form it is now. It's an excellent text," he added.

Cardinal Meyer confessed "a natural disappointment" when a preliminary vote was not taken, but added he thought Pope Paul had acted wisely by refusing to interfere with the rules of the Council.

Along with Joseph Cardinal Ritter, Archbishop of St. Louis, and Paul-Emile Cardinal Leger, Archbishop of Montreal, the Chicago prelate sponsored a petition which asked the Pope to override the Council President's decision to defer action on religious liberty until the fourth session. Some 1,400 bishops — about two-thirds of the average Council attendance — signed the petition.

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Bishops share worldwide responsibility with the Pope for government of the Church, the Vatican Council stated at this autumn's session. Picture shows Pope Paul at Council's final session two weeks ago.

is difference within a consensus that terminal deacons are necessary and desirable in the modern Church.

But one who does not go along with the whole idea of restoring the diaconate is offered even by a Cardinal Ottaviani or Cardinal Borelli, who acknowledge the rights of conscience but argue that a "Catholic state" should restrict non-Catholic proselytism and the public, though not the private, manifestation of erroneous religions.

It is possible, then, to sketch the broad basis of the consiliar consensus coming out of Vatican II.

Bringing The Council To America

Washington — (RNS) — Promulgation of the concept of collegiality, in which the world's bishops share with the Pope in the government of the Church, has spurred Catholic hierarchy of the U.S. to determine whether its existing format is appropriate for its new responsibilities.

Much stress was placed by the Ecumenical Council on national and regional conferences of bishops in administering the work of the Church over wide areas. In the U.S., the prelates have carried out such work in the past as a conference through the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Because collegiality places a greater responsibility upon American bishops as a unit, the hierarchy, at a recent meeting in Rome, named a special committee to examine the rules and procedures of the general bishops conference to determine whether changes are necessary in current statutes.

Cardinal Albert Meyer, Archbishop of Chicago, has been named head of the committee. Other members are Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati, Archbishop John F. Dearden of Detroit, Archbishop John J. Krol of Philadelphia, Archbishop James J. Byrne of Dubuque and Auxiliary Bishop Francis J. Underkofler of Richmond.

Five committees have been established to direct new branches of activity, all inspired by developments at Vatican II.

A new and permanent office of Liturgical Affairs will be established at NCWC headquarters here. It will handle inquiries from bishops regarding the implementation of the liturgical reforms, will draw up a directory of rubrics and present detailed instructions on the application of new liturgical decrees.

One committee will be devoted entirely to the work of the Catholic Laymen in the U.S., in line with the Council's schema on the laity and the Church in the Modern World.

This group devoted to the laity will include Archbishop Leo Rinz of St. Paul, chairman; Archbishop James J. Byrne of Dubuque; James J. Bishop Ernest Joseph P. Dougherty of Yakima, Wash.; Bishop Ernest J. Primeau of Manchester, N.H.; Bishop Francis J. Furey of San Diego; Auxiliary Bishop Stephen A. Leven of San Antonio and Auxiliary Bishop John W.F. Whelan of Cleveland.

The NCWC Bureau of Information said laity and priests will be named to the committee at a later date.

Also authorized by the bishops was a study of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, an agency of the hierarchy to organize, unify, and coordinate Catholic activities for the general welfare of the Church.

NCWC is made up of many departments — education, legal, immigration, social action, press, information, Latin American, lay organizations and Catholic Relief Services, the worldwide organization used by the bishops to distribute relief supplies.

The same would be true of any Father who argued against the whole concept of Religious Liberty and faithfully echoed the wholehearted intolerance of a previous age.

If any such Father were still to be found among the 2,300 in Rome—and it is unlikely that such a one could be found, even among those opposed to the present schema on Religious Liberty — his opposition would be much more radical than that offered even by a Cardinal Ottaviani or Cardinal Borelli, who acknowledge the rights of conscience but argue that a "Catholic state" should restrict non-Catholic proselytism and the public, though not the private, manifestation of erroneous religions.

It is possible, then, to sketch the broad basis of the consiliar consensus coming out of Vatican II.

In the earlier catch-all categories of "progressive" and "conservative," this consensus is overwhelmingly "progressive." The conservatives were outvoted on practically every single issue up before the Fathers and did not gain a single significant victory. A few of their maneuvers, to be sure, enjoyed "a certain kind of success, at least temporarily, but it may not even be going too far to say that even here the "progressives" were victorious.

For example, the two major efforts of the die-hards in the Roman Curia and their allies during the third session came to nothing, though they caused a great deal of anxiety when they were first discovered. When, in October, it was learned that both Religious Liberty and the statement on the Jews were being relocated and subjected to a review by a committee of hand-picked arch-conservatives, 17 "progressive" cardinals managed to get Pope Paul's assent that there would be no tampering with the controversial documents.

Later, at the end of the session, when even the preliminary vote on Religious Liberty was put off, the theoretically enlarging the document's very survival, there was the famous "bishops' revolt," led by American prelates. The Holy Father did not accept the protesting bishops' urgent, very urgent, most urgent request that he countermand the decisions. But he did give his assurance that Religious Liberty would be at the top of the agenda in the final session of the Council and he thereby assured its survival.

It is already clear that it has the votes necessary, so it is almost certain to be passed. The statement on the Jews, of course, is stronger than ever and has already been substantially approved by the Fathers.

So it has gone over since the Council began. The "progressives" have enjoyed one landslide after another. Their mark is on all the documents already formally proclaimed (with the exception of the mediocre Communications Decree) and of those sent back for revision before final consideration, every single one has been returned in order to make it not less but more conformable to the "progressive" mindset.

It used to be said, early in the Council when some Fathers were trying to escape acknowledging that there were clearly identifiable "progressive" and "conservative" blocs in Rome, that these terms were meaningless since many Fathers were progressive in one matter and conservative in another. If that were true, though, it would be hard to explain the constant string of victories for the liberal faction.

It is not at all certain that even Pope John was as "progressive" as the Council has turned out to be. Whether he envisioned the clean sweep this party would win must always remain a matter of conjecture for the beloved Holy Father himself might well have

efforts to call off the meaningless and useless war that Catholics have carried on with modernity for so long.

At Vatican II the Church has earnestly tried to speak to modern man—to share his concerns—to understand his anguish—to sympathize with his aspirations—to communicate with him in words he can understand—and to show a new appreciation for his accomplishments. This belated attempt has of course not been entirely successful yet. Modernity is not so easily achieved that just by asking thought even the Church can catch the ear of contemporary man.

But the start has been made, and the contemporary world for the first time in living memory and for long before that has begun to take Catholicism seriously. This is only a beginning. Much remains to be done. But, considering the situation only a decade ago, the change in attitude is amazing—both on the part of the Church and of the contemporary world.

This is no mean achievement for Vatican II.

There is every reason to believe that the mood of the third session of the Vatican Council will carry over into the fourth session. In any case, it is too late now for any permanent reversal or return to the pre-Council Church. Too much has been said on the Council floor by the Church's highest spokesmen. Their consensus, which individually even they probably did not suspect was their true belief until they came together, is now too obvious for serious challenge.

During the third session the Fathers discussed many important matters—like religious liberty, birth control, atomic war, the priesthood in the modern world, the religious orders, the lay apostolate, non-Christian religions, the missions which will come up again. At the end, the Holy Father and the Council Fathers proclaimed three historic achievements—the decree on the Church ("De Ecclesia") and those on ecumenism and the Oriental Churches.

Of these three, the greatest was "De Ecclesia." This was the Church's meditation on itself—the Church's own answer to the question, "What are you?"

The decree will last for a thousand years. Nothing more important or more profound can come out of the Council. Everything in the future of Catholic Christianity will, one way or the other, be linked to this most fundamental doctrine. No matter what he does in the future, Pope Paul will have his place in history if only because he was the pontiff who proclaimed it.

If the Fathers were never to be called back to Rome, they would have gained a place in Catholic glory because it was they who conceived of its importance, who wrote it, refined it, and finally passed it in Council. Nothing the Council can do in the future will outrank "De Ecclesia" in significance.

For this reason alone, then, the third session, whatever disappointments might be tied in with it or whatever disputes it might have left unsettled, was a magnificent success. It was during these weeks that the Fathers finally recognized the consensus that gave them their historic identity.

Without that identity, "De Ecclesia" could never have been passed. Without "De Ecclesia" the consensus could never have been achieved. With both, Vatican II has already fulfilled Pope John's highest hope.

Bishop Kearney's Appointments

- DECEMBER
- 3 Thursday—St. Mary's Church—McQuaid High School Patronal Feast Mass—9 a.m.
 - 4 Friday—St. Joseph's Church—St. Monica Sodality Mass—9 a.m.
Sheraton Hotel—First Friday Club Luncheon—12 noon.
 - 5 Saturday—Abbey of Our Lady of the Genesee—Abbatial Blessing of Rt. Rev. M. Jerome Burke, O.C.S.O.—10 a.m.
 - 6 Sunday—Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary, Geneva—Diaconate Ordination—10 a.m.
 - 7 Monday—Academy of the Sacred Heart—Lily Procession—2 p.m.
 - 8 Tuesday—St. Bernard's Seminary—Solemn Pontifical Mass on Patronal Feast—11 a.m.
St. Francis of Assisi Church, Rochester—Family Rosary for Peace radio broadcast—7 p.m.
 - 9 Wednesday—St. John Fisher College—Low Mass—9 a.m.
 - 10 Thursday—McQuaid High School—Founders' Banquet—7 p.m.
 - 13 Sunday—St. Andrew's Church—Preside and preach at Golden Jubilee Mass—4 p.m.
 - 14 Monday—St. Andrew's Seminary—Low Mass—9:15 a.m.
 - 15 Tuesday—Nazareth College—Low Mass—4 p.m.
 - 21 Monday—Mercy High School—Christmas Play—8:15 p.m.
 - 22 Tuesday—Nazareth Academy—Christmas Concert—10 a.m.
 - 23 Wednesday—St. Anne's Home—Low Mass—8:30 a.m.
 - 24 Thursday—St. Mary's Hospital—Low Mass and Visitation—8 a.m.