

Catholics in England

OK to Attend Rites in Other Churches

London—(NC)—The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have relaxed the rules concerning attendance at Non-Catholic religious services of a civic or social nature.

At the same time they recommended that during the mid-January Church Unity Octave all Christians come together for common prayer, Scripture reading, and hymn-singing.

The bishops' joint statement based on the Vatican Council's decree on ecumenism, was announced Dec. 6. It stated that from now on Catholics who are

elect to such posts as mayor, borough councillor and judge may attend the traditional civic services in Non-Catholic churches. A Catholic may not only attend Non-Catholic weddings and funerals, but may also serve as best man at marriages between Non-Catholics.

CATHOLICS MAY henceforth accept invitations to attend services in Non-Catholic churches, making such occasions the induction of a new vicar or minister, the bishops said. Likewise, Catholics may participate in official memorial services for the war dead. In this connection, the bishops suggested that in the case of local memorial services, a Catholic priest should join the clergy of other local churches in planning such services.

"It is probably most satisfactory if each group in turn recites the prayers it knows," the statement said.

"The Octave for Christian Unity has been observed with growing enthusiasm during recent years," the bishops stated. In addition to the fervent observance of the octave in our churches, on one night during

the octave all Christians should gather in some suitable hall for joint prayer and talks from Christians of different denominations. It would be appropriate also to read passages from Holy Scripture and to sing hymns that are known to all.

"If other ways of observance are thought desirable during the octave or on other ecumenical occasions, the priest concerned must consult the bishop. Suitably qualified priests and laymen may with the approval of the bishop accept invitations to speak in Non-Catholic churches provided that the address does not form part of the service.

"It is the earnest wish of the bishops that the clergy and laity will wholeheartedly follow the lead given by the Vatican Council. It is hoped that if the norms given above are followed, any danger of indifference may be avoided. It is clear from the principles enunciated that there can be no sharing in a Non-Catholic Eucharist. Nor is it possible for a Catholic to take an official part in a Non-Catholic church service."

Same Theme, Softer Terms for Unity Week

Garrison—(RNS)—Adoption of the Decree on Ecumenism by the Vatican Council's third session should "intensify and widen the dimensions" of the 1965 observance of the Chair of Unity Octave, Jan. 18-25.

Announcing the week long period of prayers for Christian unity, Father Tullio Cranny, S.A., director of the Chair of Unity Apostolate here, observed that Catholics "no longer use such words as schismatic or heretic or dissident, nor of submission or return."

"The change of terminology," he said, "indicates a change of attitude and the removal of some difficulties. There is more kindness and openness, less hostility and suspicion; there is more esteem and respect for the beliefs of others, as Our Lord would have men do. This means no compromise or dilution of the Christian message but an expression of mutual respect."

Father Cranny noted that the 1965 observance should add greater significance to the unity movement in view of the Council's ecumenism decree which permits, under certain circumstances, common prayer with non-Catholic Christians and inter-communion with members of Eastern Orthodox Churches.

The Week, he added, reminds all Christians of what they have in common: what unites them, rather than what separates them. It should encourage everyone to pray with confidence and with love for the greatest of all causes, and to bend every effort on every level for the cause of unity."

For more than 50 years, the Chair of Unity Octave—in which Catholics around the world participate—has been sponsored in this country by the

Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, also known as the Graymoor Friars.

The observance was started by Father Paul James Francis, S.A., while he was a Protestant Episcopal clergyman. He entered the Catholic Church in 1909 with a small band of followers known as the Society of the Atonement and was ordained a priest a year later.

During the Week, Catholics pray for a different daily intention as follows:

- Jan. 18 — For the unity of all Christians in the Church.
- Jan. 19 — For our separated Eastern Brethren.
- Jan. 20 — For Anglicans.
- Jan. 21 — For European Christians.

Jan. 22 — For American Christians (or for Christians of one's native land).

Jan. 23 — For the spiritual renewal of Catholics.

Jan. 24 — For the Jewish people.

Jan. 25 — For the extension of the Church in all lands.

The Catholic Octave coincides

with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity sponsored by the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order Department and the Catholic Association for Christian Unity in Lyon, France.

Both observances start each year on the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter in Rome and close on the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.

U.S. Doctors Give OK To Birth Control Info

Fast Change Includes Alcohol

Vatican City—(NC)—Publishing an official interpretation of Pope Paul VI's recent relaxation of the Eucharistic fast, the Vatican City newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, declared that it went into effect immediately after its announcement and that it includes alcoholic beverages as well as food and liquids.

The Pope made the announcement of the change during the closing ceremonies of the ecumenical council's third session (Nov. 21). The new regulations reduce the fast before Communion from three hours to one hour for both priests and faithful.

The newspaper said that the immediate effectiveness of the law was a departure from the usual custom of allowing a time lapse between the announcement of a new law and its effective date.

The Vatican City daily did not cite the source of the official interpretation, but it came from the Congregation of the Holy Office, according to the Vatican press office.

Miami Beach—(RNS)—An American Medical Association resolution said that it should make no difference whether the data is obtained through private doctors or community health services.

The action said the AMA should disseminate information on all phases of human reproduction, including sexual behavior.

Arts Need Law Course

Noting that "human reproduction" poses economic and social as well as medical problems, the resolution said there should be "no restraint on the physician concerning the dissemination of birth-control information."

It added that "as with other forms of quality medical care, such information should be equally available to both private and clinic patients."

The action followed a break with the 1938 policy by an increasing number of state and county medical societies related to the AMA.

In recommending that birth-control information should be available to all patients who require it, consistent with their

Washington—(NC)—American universities are turning out half-educated men because the standard undergraduate liberal arts program lacks a basic course in law. This challenge was voiced at a conference on Law and the Liberal Arts, meeting at Catholic University of America.

Dr. Richard Wasserstrom, dean of arts and sciences at the Tuskegee Institute, proposed a non-professional undergraduate law course in professional law schools. He would give the liberal arts student a survey of the legal system, with close attention to the development of Anglo-American common law.

Catholics, Jews to Fight Prejudice

Miami Beach—(NC)—A new Catholic-Jewish interfaith research center has been established in Rome to fight prejudice, the American Jewish Committee announced here.

Ralph Friedman, chairman of the A. J. executive board, said the center already has pilot projects underway in Italy, Spain and elsewhere to analyze religious teaching materials as possible sources of prejudice.

The Jewish leader described the Rome center as a "major step in the implementation of the new spirit of ecumenism and interreligious understanding," arising from the ecumenical council's recent vote to accept in principle a statement on Catholic-Jewish relations that absolves Jews of the charge of deicide.

"This center will help carry out in a realistic way, with the aid of leading churchmen, theologians, social scientists, educators and scholars the growing impulse to eliminate the religious roots of bias and prejudice," he said.

Mission Fund
Stockholm—(NC)—A gift of 4,000 Swedish kroner (about \$1,000) was presented in U.S. form by Bishop John E. Taylor, O.M.I., of Stockholm by the Swedish Catholic Academy.

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