

Freedom in Church Theologians' Topic

By RUSSELL SHAW

Washington (NC) — Two of the world's best known Catholic theologians declared here that freedom lies at the very heart of Christianity.

This point was stressed in the opening address to a three-day conference on "Freedom and Man" by Father Karl Rahner, S.J., and in the conference closing address by Father Hans Kueng.

"The history of salvation and revelation, which includes the history of Christian theology, is a history of the thematic self-reflexion of man upon himself as a free being," said Father Rahner, author of many theological works and a faculty member at the University of Munich.

Father Kueng, of the University of Tübingen, Germany, called for freedom in theology, saying: "Compulsion causes uniformity, narrowness, and emptiness; freedom allows variety, multiplicity, breadth, and richness."

The "Freedom and Man" conference was one of the closing events of the year-long celebration of its 175th anniversary by Georgetown University, the nation's oldest Catholic institution of higher education.

Originally planned as a gathering of a limited number of theologians, the Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 conference was interrupted because of the demand for tickets, first to an auditorium on the campus and then to the university's 4,700-seat gymnasium, with some sessions piped into the auditorium to accommodate overflow crowds.

Participating in the conference were many of Europe and America's leading theologians, including some who have played major roles at the Vatican Council.

Father Kueng, a leading figure in the ranks of liberals at the Council, made a strong plea for freedom in theology.

"If there were in the Church only one united theology in the sense of one united party, only one single theological party line, this would be a sign not of Catholic freedom but of uniformity, narrowness, and emptiness; freedom allows variety, multiplicity, breadth, and richness."

The youthful theologian stressed that diversity is the traditional condition of Catholic theology. "No Catholic theologian can say that he alone represents the Catholic Church. . . . Every theologian and every theology is limited in a particular, personal and historical way," he said.

Father Kueng contrasted two types of theologians in the Church — those of the "periphery" and those of the "center." "To put it in rather simplified manner," he explained, "the periphery stands for those of the front line, the center for those of headquarters."

Neither type of theologian is the exclusive representative of the Church, he declared, and both must strive to work together for the well being of the Church.

"It is vitally necessary that in theology these tendencies in the center and on the periphery should not become exclusive, immovable positions," he said.

FATHER RAHNER, in a highly abstract paper on the theology of freedom, emphasized that there are two persons intimately involved in every free act of a man — himself and God.

"Freedom, understood as communicated to man by God in permanent creation, is freedom to accept absolutely the absolute mystery we call God, and to do so in such a way that God is not one of the objects with which, alongside others, some thing-like sort would occupy itself. On the contrary, God is rather the one who 'dawns on' man first of all in this absolute act of freedom, and in whom alone the nature of freedom itself comes to its complete realization," he said.

He said freedom has "a theological character . . . as part of the nature of freedom itself." This is so, he added, because

"God is to be found, unreflected on, in every act of freedom, as the supporting ground and the ultimate term."

The "terrifying mystery" of freedom in the Christian sense, he declared, is that it involves "the possibility of consent to or refusal of God, who is the source of freedom." Basically, freedom is freedom to accept or reject God," he said.

Father Piet Franzen, S.J., of the University of Louvain, Belgium, told another session that members of the Church are perfectly free to work for a reform of an ecclesiastical law, as we are doing now during this (ecumenical) Council."

Church laws, he said, "are never perfect, as no law can be." However, he added, "this clear awareness of the need for a continuous reform of the Church's canon law does not provoke necessarily a spirit of anarchy."

"So long as the law remains and is universally observed and imposed, one obeys, even when he knows that the law is imperfect," Father Franzen said. "He strives at the same time in a respectful, religious and prudent way to prepare or to obtain the reform or the improvement of the law."

"The competent authorities for this are the bishops together with the pope, but the initiative, the thinking about it, the planning may be done by every member of the Church who has a certain competence or who feels himself compelled by his conscience."

Father Franzen declared that the exercise of authority in the Church is "necessarily linked with the obligation of a sincere and open dialogue with all the members of the People of God."

Daniel Callahan, an associate editor of *Catholic World* magazine and author of the book "The Mind of the Catholic Layman," urged that the Church make the layman a model for the world of "the possibility of freedom joined with commitment."

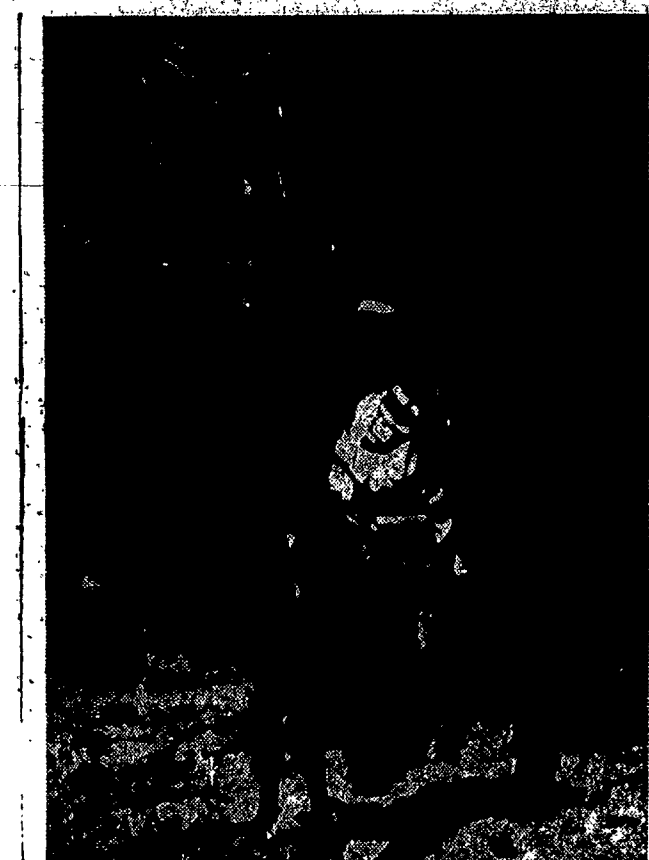
Callahan said the concept of the Church as the People of God has led to new insight into "the Christian equality of each person" as a "significant basis for personal freedom."

"Even amidst a hierarchical order, Christian equality implies a fraternal relationship of those teaching and those taught, of ruler and ruled," he said.

Callahan said that an emphasis on conformity, submissive next and "letter-perfect orthodoxy" has been "characteristic of Catholic life and thought for centuries." But "today they are

being slowly rejected," he declared.

That means the conscience of the Catholic dissenter, even of the apostate and the heretic, must be respected. . . . That the Church has been slow of late in condemning doctrinal aberrations, willing to tolerate bold new lines of theological speculation, and reluctant to resort to excommunication, suggests that practice is now well ahead of theory," he said.



Tour to Visit Mexico Shrine

A tour to the shrines of Mexico will be made under the spiritual direction of Rev. Henry Atwell, Courier editor, from Jan. 22 to Feb. 5. Mexicans, as pictured above, throng to the huge church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City to honor their nation's patroness. The Courier tour will include a visit there. Details and reservations may be obtained from Sargent Travel Agency, Manger Hotel Arcade, Rochester, or from the Courier, 35 Seio St.

Jubilee Year For Spain Stresses Unity

Madrid (NC) — Approximately 1,500,000 pilgrims are expected to visit Santiago, the city in northwestern Spain where the Apostle St. James is believed to be buried, for the celebration throughout 1965 of a Holy Year of Jubilee.

Santiago's archbishop, Fernando Cardinal Quiroga y Palacios, said here of the event, "We want it to be a Holy Year of unity." He expects that the pilgrims coming from many countries will make it an impressive demonstration of the Church's universality.

Devotions To Continue

Philadelphia (NC) — A Georgia bishop told the congregation at a Marian ceremony here that popular devotions, such as the Miraculous Medal Novena, will not be suppressed due to liturgical changes.

Bishop Thomas J. McDonough of Savannah spoke at Mary's Central Shrine during observance of the 134th anniversary of the apparition of Mary to St. Catherine Labeourie at the Daughters of Charity convent at Rue du Bac in Paris.

The prelate said that with promulgation by Pope Paul VI and the Second Vatican Council of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, many Catholics concluded popular devotions were to be discontinued. He said this is "erroneous."

"Thanks be to God, no such untoward action is contemplated," he said.

Unquestionably, the devotion of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal harmonizes with the norms and laws of the Church. . . . these prayers and petitions directed to God, through His Immaculate Mother, provide for a fuller participation in the liturgical life of the Church," he said.

With the updating of the Church by the Council, Bishop McDonough said, "much emphasis, and justifiably so, has been put upon the Sacred Liturgy with particular reference to the Sacrifice of the Mass (and) . . . the implementation of the vernacular in the Mass is for the sole purpose of bringing you and me closer to Calvary."

Pope's Sympathy To Nazis Denied

New York (NC) — A student of Vatican diplomacy during World War II has said recent charges of sympathy by Pope Pius XII for the nazis are in "absolute contradiction" to solid evidence.

Father Robert A. Graham, S.J., author of the volume "Vatican Diplomacy" who recently spent a year's research on the Holy See's war-time diplomacy, made his comments in America, the national Catholic weekly review of which he is an associate editor.

The Jesuit cited publication in European newspapers of papers found in the Nazi Foreign Ministry. These were dispatches from Nazi diplomats in Rome to Berlin headquarters, saying that Pius XII was sympathetic to their cause.

He said they were not new papers having been in use during the war crimes trials at Nuremberg in 1946. He also said they were "self-serving dispatches" by German diplomats.

"If the Vatican was really pro-Nazi, it succeeded admirably in keeping solid evidence to this effect out of Nazi dispatches," observed Father Graham who has read the original papers in the Political Archives in Bonn, Germany.

Furthermore, he said, there are "convincing examples" of the Vatican's real positions. He said Pius XII had a part in 1939 plan of the anti-Nazi Ger-

Nun Lost, Woman's Life Saved

Bombay (NC) — Mother Theresa, the Yugoslav-born nun who founded the sacred Missionaries of Charity, missed the major Sunday night service of the Eucharistic Congress.

She lost her way, but that in itself wasn't the reason why she never got to the ceremony. In the small street in which she had strayed, she saw two still bodies stretched out under a tree. One, a man, was dead. The other, a woman, seemed to be dying.

Giving the dead a decent burial and the dying a place to die in dignity and surrounded by love are two of the principal aims this dynamic nun set for herself in India. She immediately telephoned the city authorities and had them take the dead man for burial.

She took the woman to the new home for the dying she has opened in the suburb of Ville Parle with the help of Valerian Cardinal Gracias of Bombay and the parish priest of St. Francis Xavier church, who gave up his own house to this work.

There Mother Theresa washed the woman herself, as is her inflexible custom. With medical attention and solid nourishment, the woman was soon able to sit up in bed, smile, and place her hands together in the traditional greeting of the Hindu. She was glad Mother Theresa lost her way. (Mother Theresa visited Rochester three years ago.)

Interfaith Rite Begins Advent at Harvard

Cambridge (NC) — Catholic and Protestant Episcopal unity was filled, he said. "You've all met together in peace and Catholicism please let our Catholic friends in so they can see it."

The occasion was the first ecumenical inter-parish service here by the two denominations. Episcopal Bishop Anson Phelps Stokes Jr. and Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Riley of Boston, led the worship service.

The 204-year-old Protestant church was filled to overflowing and more than 300 persons were turned away. Christ Church rector asked his parishioners to sit in a room outside

Parish Fights Loan-Sharks

Elizabeth, N.J. (NC) — St. Anthony's parish here has formed a credit union to keep its parishioners out of the clutches of loan-sharks and loan companies that charge usurious interest rates.

The credit cooperative, chartered by the Federal Government, was launched as the New Jersey State Investigation Commission heard testimony of witnesses who said they had been shot at and threatened with death for failure to pay off their loans.



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