

Vatican Paper Defends Nuns' Garb Changes

Vatican City—(RNS)—The Vatican City's weekly newspaper took up the cudgels on behalf of nuns who would like to discard cumbersome, outdated habits in favor of smartly designed, modern attire.

An American woman reader had written to Osservatore Della Domenica protesting against the adoption by some orders of "civilian clothing" which hardly distinguished nuns from other women, she said.

To this the paper replied: "Even if nuns dress like other women, this should bring them closer to them, instead of seeming to keep them farther apart."

The reader also charged that for nuns to dress like other women detracted from the modesty and reserve which should characterize members of religious orders.

Osservatore Della Domenica minced no words in repudiating any such idea.

"If to dress as all women dress is against modesty, reserve and respect," it said, "then why do you not, madam, wear a long skirt to your feet and a black veil on your head? There can be no degrees of modesty between nuns and other women. Morality is the same for all. If a dress is immodest upon a nun, then it is immodest upon any woman."



Religious Films on Missions

Kyoto, Japan — (RNS) — Father James F. Hyatt of Seattle, Wash., a Maryknoll missionary in Japan who produced the award-winning motion picture "Six People — Ten Legs," directs filming of a scene. The 30-minute, black-and-white movie won top prize last December at the First Pan-Asia Festival of the International Catholic Film Office (OCIC) in India. It was cited as the best film made in Asia "inspired by the cultural and artistic riches" of that continent. "Six People — Ten Legs" tells the story of a ten-year-old crippled boy whose selfish attitude is dramatically changed by the kindness of his classmates. The film, seen on national TV in the U.S. and Japan was made in conjunction with the Maryknoll Fathers' Good Shepherd-Mass-Communications Movement in Japan.

The Philippines, Asian Outpost Of Democracy

(The author of the following article is a Filipino priest who is assistant professor of education at St. John's University in Jamaica, N.Y.)

By MSGR. OSMUNDO A. CALIP
(N.C.W.C. News Service)

The only country in the Far East that is both Christian and democratic is the Philippines, home of 32 million people. To Spain the country owes its four-century-old Catholicism; to the U.S. its democratic way of life.

An examination of the impact of these two great forces in the Philippines seems appropriate as the country prepares to commemorate in 1965 the fourth centennial of the establishment of Christianity there.

So deeply rooted is the Western spirit in the Filipino that he often resents foreigners classifying him as Asian. "My physical features are Asian, but my mind and heart are Western," is often his statement.

The Philippines, a cluster of more than 7,000 islands, lies about a thousand miles off the Asia mainland. If put together, these islands would form a land area bigger than New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania combined.

Referred to by historians as the Pacific door to Asia, this country has occupied a special place in the American and Spanish plans of expansion to other parts of Asia.

Many Spanish missionaries and traders came to these islands during the four centuries of Spanish colonialism and from here continue to China, Vietnam, Japan, the East Indies and as far as India. Since the American occupation of the Philippines, the U.S. has also used these islands as a base for its economic, military, political, and religious activities in Asia.

Bataan and Corregidor remain landmarks of U.S. gallantry against the Japanese during World War II. A huge U.S. air and naval base, among the biggest in the world, are situated somewhere on Luzon island.

American firms doing business in Asia have established regional offices in Manila. Religious organizations also built centers extending jurisdiction over a good number of territories in other Asian countries.

Undoubtedly, this Christian democratic nation holds a position of commanding interest and of paramount importance in the turn of events likely to happen in Asia. That position becomes even more significant as Red China with ever-growing arrogance, increases its threat to the countries around it.

The neutralism of some Asian countries and dangerous attempts of others to play ball with Red China through diplomacy contribute to the enhancement of the Philippine position. In the event that the U.S. would have to adopt a harder line on Red China in Asian affairs, it would be almost impossible to disregard the strategic position of the Philippines, on which the U.S. can always rely as an ally against communist aggression.

At the 1955 conference of Afro-Asian nations at Bandung, Indonesia, the Philippines came out in vigorous defense of the rights of democratic countries to align themselves against communism. It was not merely out of the blue that the Philippines echoed American thinking about the democratic right of countries to resist communism. The Philippines' stand was very much within the context of that country's culture and historical background.

Education by Spain and the U.S. has made the Philippines what it is today.

From the Spanish educational system that started as early as 1565 and continued to 1898, Filipinos imbibed the Christian concept of man and his dignity, which communism denies. When the U.S. came to the Philippines in 1898, the concepts of freedom and equality were stressed, although such concepts were not presented from the angle of religion but from the philosophy of American democracy.

Laymen to be Consulted On Vatican Document

Vatican City — (NC) — Laymen will be consulted throughout the complicated process of re-editing the ecumenical council's draft document on the Church in the modern world.

An ecclesiastical expert charged with giving unity and polish to this wide-ranging document — which at last count was being reworked by seven council subcommittees — noted that the layman's touch was sadly lacking on the draft presented to the third session of the council last year.

Father Roberto Tucci, S.J., director of Civita Cattolica, Rome Jesuit fortnightly review, also said that a deadline at the end of May has been set for a final draft of the document, known as schema 13. It will then be sent out to the world's bishops for study before they meet Sept. 14 for the fourth and final session of the council.

In the words of Father Bernard Haering, C.S.S.R., secretary of the conciliar mixed commission responsible for schema 13, the present task of the mixed commission and its subcommittees is to "correct the text in the precise sense expressed in the council during the debate at the third session." All seven subcommittees, with about 100 members, are now engaged in this "very detailed study," Father Haering said.

The Redeemptorist moral theologian also made it known that a new subcommittee has been appointed to coordinate the work of other subcommittees and ensure the unity of the final draft. A further task of this new subcommittee is to give the draft a consistent and clear Latin style.

Communism can have no place in the Filipino way of life steeped in Christianity and democracy. So proud of being Christians are the Filipinos that Jose Rizal, the national hero, on the eve of his execution by the Spaniards, acknowledged the unending glory of Christianity in his country.

Spain gave to all her colonies three unites, which the Philippines also imbibed: unity of language, religion and blood. It is generally admitted by historians that the educational aims of Spain in the Philippines were primarily to propagate the Catholic religion, Spanish culture, and the Spanish language.

The schools and colleges founded by Spain contributed immensely to the intellectual growth of the Filipinos. Already in 1876, the Philippines had 593 public primary schools with a total enrollment of 138,900. By the end of the Spanish regime there were 2,150 such schools accommodating more than 200,000 pupils. On the higher level of education, dozens of colleges and universities were spread strategically throughout the country.

Graduates from such institutions were so many, especially toward the end of the Spanish rule, that the government then, as today, considered how to place them a public problem.

But there was no lack of criticism of those schools and institutions that turned out leaders, many among whom would rise against Spain and draw up a constitution for an independent Philippine Republic even before America thought of sending troops to Manila.

Much of the criticism centered on their being religion-oriented. Beyond doubt the educational system during the Spanish time was in the hands of the Catholic religious orders of men and women who integrated religion in the school and life of the people. But critics forget that it was religion that conveyed the Christian principles and teachings which succeeded in drawing the people away from their pagan customs and orienting them toward the ideals of the West.

When the U.S. came to the Philippines, education saw a transition from a religion-oriented system to one devoid of religion. It was a change from the positive teaching of religion to absolute neutrality. "The separation between State and Church shall be real, entire, and absolute," declared President William McKinley in his "instructions" to the Americans who were just about to take over the government of the Philippines.

As far as most Filipinos are concerned, the disappearance of religion from education in their country is a sad story. But the disappearance cannot be entirely blamed on the Americans. Abuses of Spanish religious authorities had very much to do with making it possible for the secularistic educational philosophy to begin. Yet, it cannot be denied that the Philippines, with its 85 per cent Catholic population, had strong leanings toward Christianizing again the educational system of their country.

To the Filipinos, only a really Christian oriented democracy can successfully withstand the onslaught of communism.

No 'Bayonet' Needed For U.S. Catholic Schools

New York — (RNS) — No "canonical bayonet" is required to induce Catholic parents to send their children to parochial schools, according to America, the national Catholic weekly.

In an editorial appearing in its Jan. 23 issue, America questioned the necessity of Canon Law 1374 which, it said, has "a negative way of saying that Catholic children must attend Catholic schools."

Canon 1374 states that Catholic children "shall not attend non-Catholic schools, neutral schools or mixed schools, namely, those that are also open to non-Catholics," and empowers the diocesan bishop to determine the conditions in which Catholics may attend such schools.

"The question we would raise," said America, "does not concern the desirability of having Catholic schools. Nor do we question the moral obligation of Catholic parents to send their children to those schools."

"We take it for granted that in a free society parents have the right to give their children a formal education that is religious as well as a secular content. We think that most Catholic parents will agree that

that is the kind of education they ought to give their children, where it is possible to do so.

"Our question concerns only the necessity and the utility of making this a canonical, legal obligation. In point of fact, this law of the Church is not and cannot be rigorously enforced in the United States. There are not enough Catholic schools to accommodate all Catholic children. Even if there were, we doubt whether it would serve the cause of Catholic education in a free society to impose it as a law on the members of the Church."

America held that the "tremendous expansion" of the Catholic school system—129 per cent in 25 years—"is not at all due" to enforcement of the canon law.

Mayor Refuses To Fly Pennant

Detroit—(NC)—Detroit Mayor Jerome Cavanagh has turned down a request by the Catholic Laymen's League of Detroit to fly a "One Nation Under God" pennant under the U.S. flag on the city-county building.

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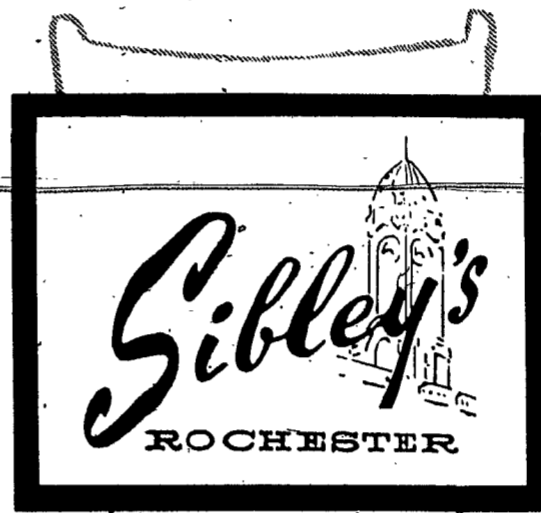
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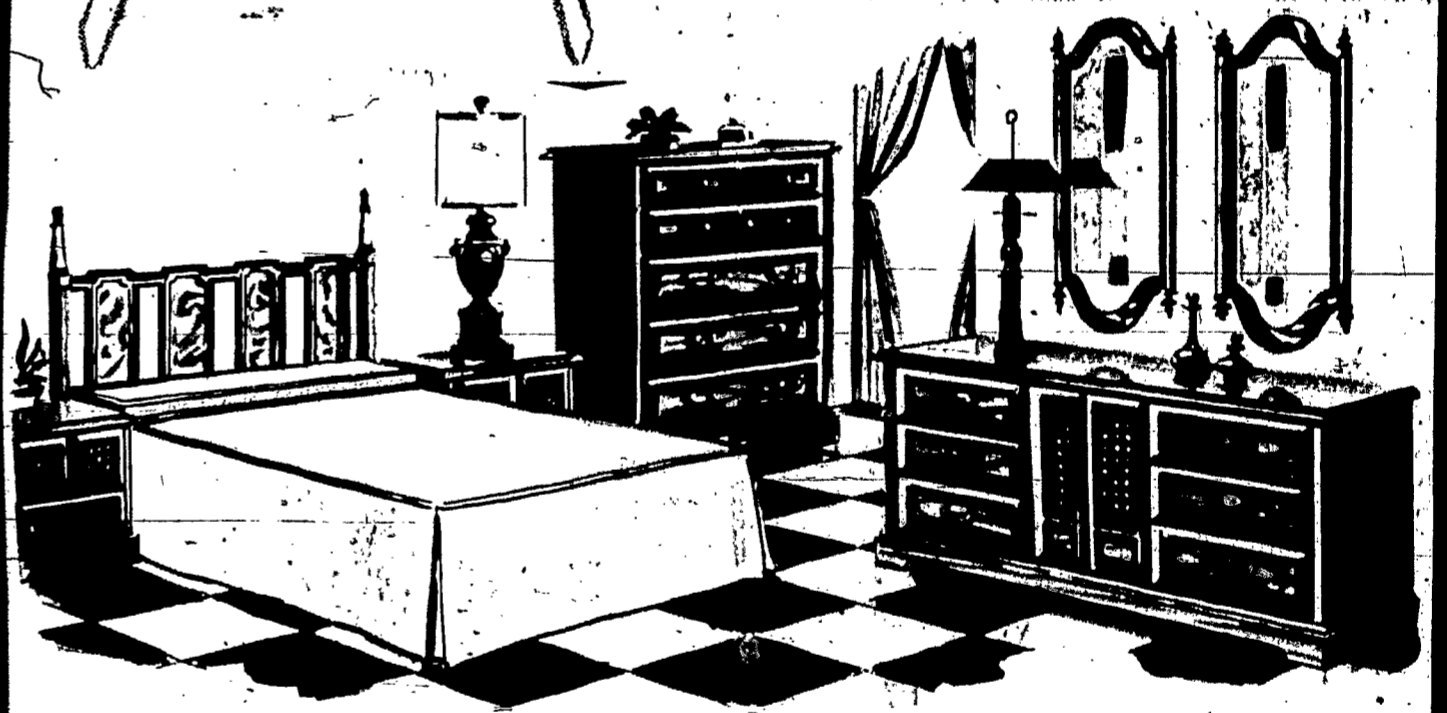
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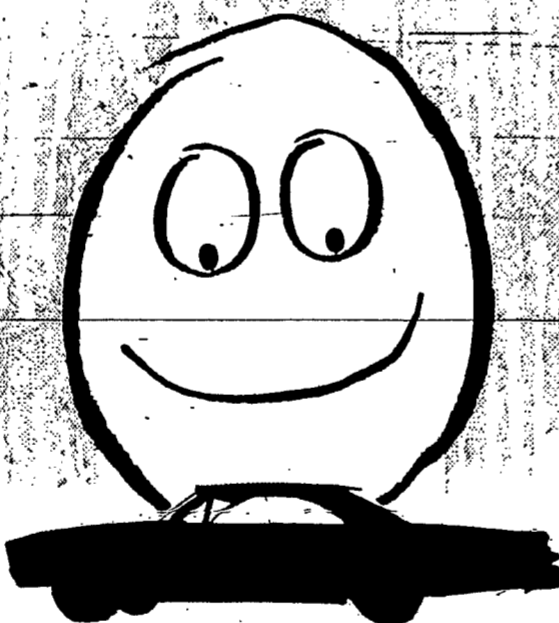
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