

French Priest, Pioneer of Current Trends in Church



Symbol and text of the fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

For thirty years the writings of Yves Congar have had a profound and updating influence on Catholic thinking. No one seriously interested in the religious currents of our time can afford to leave him unread.

He has pioneered many of the trends which are now capturing the minds of all who wish to bring Catholicism to grips with the modern world. His ideas echoed through the Council. It must have surprised many that the thinking of the quiet theologian was shared by so many of the bishops.

Congar is now accepted: but a decade ago strenuous backstairs efforts were made to silence him. A lesser man would not have taken the sniping and mistreatment with such graceful silence. His patience can only be explained by his passionate dedication and loyalty to the Church and his understanding of the human element in the Church.

He played an active part as an adviser during the first sessions of the Council and he is co-editor of "Council Speeches of Vatican II" a Paulist Press paperback.

He was a pioneer of ecumenism when few were; he called for reform twenty years before Pope John was elected; he attacked clerical attitudes at a time when such criticism was haughtily regarded as impudent if not scandalous.

He was constantly under attack and he lived under a cloud



FATHER CONGAR
long under a cloud

of suspicion. That is now history: the Council came and with it the calibre of Congar came into full perspective.

A few months after his election as Supreme Pontiff, Pope Paul praised Congar publicly and told him that through the years he had been his favorite theologian.

His impact on American Catholicism far outstrips the sales his books have received here. Congar is a trained theologian and though his writings do not always make easy reading, it

is always timely. He moves from one facet of theology to another with the ease of an expert, and has made significant contributions to ecclesiology, liturgy, catechetics, ecumenics, speculative and biblical theology.

For him theology is a living, liveable thing: not the dry, dated art of apt quotations — "The St. Thomas said" theology; and he stands as one of the great Thomists of our times, embodying the daring and progressive spirit which inspired the work of Aquinas.

Congar's work is "haunted" by one great recurring question: What is the Church? His probing of the problem is his life's work. All he writes can only be understood in reference to the mystery of the Church.

For many years Congar has been working on a monumental work, tentatively titled "The Church, People of God and Body of Christ." It is unlikely that this will be released until the Council closes. "The Mystery of the Church" published by the Helicon Co. presents some of his early work on ecclesiology. And very shortly his important study of tradition will be published in America.

"Divided Christianity" was his first book to be translated, over a quarter of a century ago. It marked a new beginning and set thinking on Christian reunion on a new course.

Then came the war, the fall of France and the Resistance.

Congar's work was interrupted when the Gestapo arrested and interned him in the Colditz and later in Lubeck.

After his release he resumed his professorship at the Sorbonne, the Dominican House of Studies in Paris and articles have appeared under his name.

In 1950, his work on the necessity for reform within the Church appeared. A storm broke loose from conservative circles. The book was suppressed, without explanation. The English translation, which Fides Co. was about to publish, was prevented. His questioning of accepted clerical attitudes doomed the book and won him the unrelenting opposition of some quarters.

In 1956 Newman Press issued his best known work, "Lay People in the Church." It is a landmark. Many may argue that it now deserves revision; but none will deny that it cut a new furrow and that the more elaborate, later solutions owe much to it. It raised many questions, destroyed cherished myths and posed problems which still await solutions. His later, smaller work, "Lay Church and World" (from Helicon) restated and elaborated some of these basic ideas on the laity.

Outside Catholic circles, Congar's work on ecumenism received its widest hearing. Non-Catholics felt he knew them and understood their historical and theological positions. His knowledge of theological sources, his extraordinary grasp of

historical detail and his theological versatility enables him to temper the many oversimplified explanations which were, and are, generally accepted.

In this field "After Nine Hundred Years" Fordham University Press is a splendid exposition of the stand of the Orthodox Church. And "Christ, Our Lady and the Church" from the Newman Press presents difficulties — awkward though they be — which will have to be faced in future ecumenical discussions.

In the field of biblical theology Congar has won wide recognition. Apart from his several important articles on the subject, "The Mystery of the Temple", also from the Newman Press, is regarded as a milestone.

Ten years ago UNESCO asked him to write "The Catholic Church and Race Relations" and it is regrettable that this work was hardly noticed in America.

Since he has opened up so much new ground, it is almost impossible to categorize him; but perhaps one of his most recent books "Wide World, My Parish" from the Helicon Co. could best serve as a splendid introduction to the rich mind of the quiet Dominican. Yves Marie-Joseph Congar, who was born in Sedan in northeastern France sixty years ago.

—Catholic Book Merchandiser, March-April, 1964

Did God Choose Pope John XXIII?

It is idle but intriguing speculation to consider, "What if Pope John's mother had given birth to a daughter instead of the son she named Giuseppe?"

Would another Pontiff have "opened the windows" of the Catholic Church anyway? Would a Pope Pius XIII have convoked a Council? Would a Cardinal Ottaviani in a tiara have called for a dialogue with other Christians or gone to Moslem Jordan or Hindu India?

Bishop Kearney has accurately pointed out that "strange birds" have flown in through the opened windows and that "weird results" have been triggered by what Pope John once called "a hankering for novelty."

It is, on the other hand, also true that a less spectacular and not-so-headlined spirit has been freshening the air in the Church, again in the words of Pope John, as if a new Pentecost had taken place.

The question is whether Pope John is to be credited (or blamed) for all this. The more basic question is — is it his work or is it God's own work?

And the answer, we think, is that it is both!

When Cardinal Giuseppe Roncalli of Venice was elected pope in 1958, he was asked by what name he wanted to be called. He replied simply, "I choose John." For those who believe that a Providence guides the Church, this reply was not just the statement in answer to the question put to him. It was also the word of God for this era. He too had said, even before the Cardinals cast their ballots, "I choose John."

Men including those with miters and tiaras have in past times; it is true, seemingly thwarted God's will. There have been popes and prelates as well as priests and lay people whose memories are still bitter to the Church, poor evidence of a divine choice in their regard. If however, "by their fruits shall you know them," then Pope John has long since indicated his selection and his reign were abundantly according to God's choosing.

God, however, did not choose only Pope John. Other men also shaped the growth of the Church's mind and heart in this twentieth century so he could reap the harvest of worldwide goodwill and new opportunity for the Church. Some of these men endured long years of obscurity in patient prayer and study, their work often unappreciated and sometimes even held back from publication by their superiors in the Church.

This is not a criticism of these superiors—they had their reasons, good ones too, for their decisions. But it is time that more of us who are so loyal to the memory of Pope John should realize that he was but one instrument, a great one indeed, in the all-powerful hands of God.

Two of these other men are the Dominican Father Yves Congar and the Jesuit Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. This week and next we will print on this page a summary of the contributions these men, among many others, have made toward Pope John's program of "aggiornamento" — of applying the ancient faith to the modern world.

To those impetuous souls who want instant solutions to complex problems, men like Pope John, Father Congar and Father Chardin can serve as proof that God prefers patient as well as learned men to accomplish His purposes. It is now our task to respond with a comparable patience as well as wisdom to the course God has so obviously chosen for His Church in the final decades of this century.

—Father Henry Atwell

Vatican Council Statement on Jews Riles Arabs

Aleppo — (NC) — The uproar caused in Syria by the Vatican Council's preliminary approval of the statement on Christian-Jewish relations has now died down. But it has left deep scars and in the course of several weeks managed to spoil the ecumenical atmosphere that had been years in the making.

Some adverse reaction was foreseeable, despite the fact that the former schema "on the Jews and non-Christians" had been broadened under the new title of declaration on "The Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions."

But the texts inclusion of favorable references to the Jewish religion was bound to only flash a violent reaction not only on the part of Arab governments and Moslems, but also Arab Christians, Catholic as well as Orthodox.

The most violent reaction occurred in Jordan, where for a time it appeared that Catholics might leave the Church. But Syria too saw hostile demonstrations flare up.

The campaign against the Council centered on the theme that the Catholic Church intends to exonerate the Jews of responsibility for the death of Christ. The general charge was that such a stand is a betrayal of the Gospel and of history, and could only have come about through pressure exerted on the Council Fathers by "international Zionism."

The purpose it was said, was to support Israel against the Arab countries.

(What the Council draft says of the Jews is that the Church is grateful to them for the heritage she received from them, and that they remain dear to God. It condemns all past and present hatred and persecution of Jewish people, and states that Christians may never represent the Jews as a rejected, cursed or decide people. The reason for this is that all that happened to Christ in His passion cannot be attributed even to all the Jewish people then alive, and much less to those of today. What the Church holds now—and has always held, it states, is that Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of all men and out of His infinite love.

(The same declaration states that the Church "esteems" the Moslems. Despite past hostilities between Christians and Moslems, it states, all should now work for mutual understanding and seek together so-

cial justice and peace and freedom for all mankind.)

In Damascus, there were several student protest demonstrations. One priest, the head of a Catholic school, was subjected to interrogation by the secret police for voicing disapproval of these demonstrations.

In Aleppo, two bombs were placed in the Christian neighborhood — presumably by members of the extremist Moslem Brotherhood. And in Latakia, the Orthodox bishop organized protests in the streets against the "decision" of the Council. Later, at a protest meeting, he himself made a speech as did one of his priests and the Protestant pastor.

Radio Damascus, the government operated station, broadcast a commentary reviewing the Syrian complaints against the Council statement. It charged that the Church for 20 centuries has held the Jewish people responsible for the death of Christ, as decides. Why, it asked, should the Church change its attitude at the very time when the Arabs are in serious conflict with the Jews of Israel, who are unjust encroachers in Palestine and the cause of the misery of a million Arab refugees.

Why too, it said, did the Church not have the courage to adopt such an indulgent attitude in the period when millions of the Jews were being persecuted by the Nazis.

Radio Damascus asserted that what it called a highly inopportune decision by the Council can only have been made as a prelude to official recognition by the Holy See of the State of Israel. The Arab world can do nothing but stigmatize the time selected for this statement, which shows, behind the religious facade, political factors.

Instead of approving the document clearing the Jews of the slaying of Christ, the Council should have adopted the document incriminating Jews for the massacre and expulsion of thousands of innocent Arabs, the broadcast said.

In line with this thinking, the Syrian press, which is controlled by the government, let loose a broadside against the Council — for betraying Christ, as did Judas — and against Pope Paul VI and Augustin Cardinal Bea, president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, who is one of the prime movers behind the statement on the Jews.

The Syrian press pictured the Church as having delivered Christ into the hands of the Jews for a second time — not for 30 pieces of silver, but for American dollars. Hundreds of protest telegrams were sent to the Pope and to leading Catholic prelates in the region, and their messages were widely publicized by press, radio and television.

Catholics seemed to feel it their patriotic duty to protest more strongly than others, being convinced that the Council had fallen prey to Zionist machinations.

The climate was so intense that leaders of the various Catholic rites in Damascus sent an impassioned telegram to the Pope stating: "The decision concerning the Jews, in spite of its religious nature, has certain political implications, noxious to the Arabs, both Christian and Moslem. The Christian youth, very aroused, is organizing demonstrations. We beg Your Holiness to eliminate this hurt."

In an effort to calm the situation, Melkite rite Patriarch Maximos IV Salgh of Antioch cabled from Rome the information that the final voting on the declaration had been postponed until the fourth Council session. The patriarchal auxiliary in Damascus, Archbishop Pierre Kamel Medawar, appealed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

and the Information Minister—the latter an Orthodox Christian — asking them to halt the campaign against the Council pending authorized clarification of the declarations.

In line with this, a statement was read in the Catholic churches at the Nov. 22 Sunday Masses, two days after the Council's initial favorable vote, urging the people not to be taken in by rumors. The statement stressed that rather than singling the Jews out, the Council declaration emphasizes the duty for Christians to act well toward all men, including the Jews, without distinction as to race or creed.

Throughout this affair, Non-Catholic religious leaders displayed an attitude which was hardly ecumenical in spirit. They seemed to want to exploit the situation to their own advantage. They organized protest rallies against the Council in particular, and the Catholic Church in general. Their approach seemed to be to project a good image of themselves at the expense of the Catholics, who were represented as having been caught up in spite of themselves in the maneuvering of western imperialism and world Zionism.

The official newspaper Al Thawra (The Revolution) of Damascus published a communique from the council of the Greek Orthodox community of

Damascus charging, "The decision of the Vatican Council to exonerate the Jews of the Blood of Christ is contrary to Sacred Scripture, whose truth Christians have always upheld, and it was made in circumstances which certainly show the influence of world Zionism and its attempt to exploit the faith of Christians in its behalf."

The most violent voice of the campaign was that of the Non-Catholic Syrian Jacobite Patriarch Ignace Yacoub III, who had sent an observer to Vatican II. The patriarch, who uses the titles "sovereign pontiff" and "Patriarch of Antioch and all East," issued on Nov. 25 a long "communique on the doctrine of the Christian Church on the subject of the responsibility for the Crucifixion of Christ."

He spoke ironically of the decree of Rome . . . of its ecumenical council, which has abused the sacred books, apostolic tradition, and true history." He voiced astonishment at the stand of "him who claims to be Peter's successor," and also strongly condemned what he called "this Roman heresy which contradicts the truth of Scripture and the teaching of the Church throughout the ages."

The Jacobite patriarch further declared:

"The dogma of the Church is that the responsibility for the Crucifixion of Christ lies with the Jewish people until the end of the world."

The very violence of the Jacobite communique induced the people to study the question more thoroughly.

All Churches Need Renewal

Brookings, S.D. — (RNS) — reform that the Roman Catholic priest in Britain to address the Church is experiencing through the Vatican Council demands a similar program in other Christian Churches the Lutheran Men's League was told here.

Father Vincent A. Zyeran of Washington, director of the Bureau of Information, National Catholic Welfare Conference, said: "It is not enough for only one Church to reform; all those who belong to the Church of Christ must also reform."



"I don't care! It's safer this way!"

Haiti, Island of Despair, Under Heel of Tyrant

By GARY MacBOIN

Nobody seems to question the facts regarding a particularly bizarre situation that has developed in Miami, Florida. The consul-general of Haiti in that city has been implicated in a serious violation of United States laws. It involved the exportation of war planes without a permit. One of his aides has also run foul of the law. He bought several hundred pistols in Miami stores, certifying that each was intended as a "gift." They were subsequently smuggled out of the country and ended up in Haiti.

Yet there is no prosecution. One suggested explanation is that the Central Intelligence Agency fears that a court hearing would disclose some of its operating techniques. Another is that the State Department fears Haitian reprisals against our embassy in Haiti.

What is this regime which we are so concerned not to offend? It is one evil man, Francois Duvalier by name, the

latest and most vicious of the line of dictators who (except for one brief interlude) have ruled the country since the 19-year occupation by the United States ended in 1934.

In recent months, according to Soci, a news service issued in Chile under Catholic auspices, Duvalier "has murdered more than 500 Haitians, workers, students and anybody else whom he happens to suspect. Duvalier himself performs the executions. Often the victims are only relatives of the rebels and have themselves taken no action against the regime. Recently the dictator declared that the land and the souls of his ancestors ask for blood, and that he will give it to them in abundance. He thinks that to kill is to his power what eating is to life."

Since Duvalier seized control eight years ago, he has waged ruthless war on the Church. Three bishops and 20 priests have been expelled, including the only Haitian member of the hierarchy. The Catholic press has been muzzled and youth

organizations do not exist. Priests run foul of the dictator if, for example, they refer in their sermons to civil rights as set out by Pope John in "Mater et Magistra." In protest against expulsions and repression, the Vatican recalled the apostolic nuncio and Duvalier was excommunicated.

It is interesting that in this instance our State Department still carries the favor of a tyrant whom even the cautious diplomats of the Vatican's Secretariat of State have publicly condemned. The reason is not any belief or even suspicion that Duvalier represents the "American way of life" or that he has the support of his own people.

It is simply a fear that the popular explosion that will follow the overthrow of the dictator may get out of hand, as it did in Cuba, and as it threatened to do in the Dominican Republic when Duvalier's friend Trujillo was assassinated. Such a position would be morally un-

justifiable, even if it had some guarantee that it could be successful. But events have proved to us time and again that tyrants in Latin America have short lives, including those who have United States backing. Our enemies in Latin America lose no opportunity of stressing our ties to reactionary governments. In this instance, they have no need to invent any lies about us. The truth is on their side.

It is easy to imagine what a backlash of hatred and bitterness we will receive from Haiti itself when that unfortunate country is once more able to express its true feelings. In spite of the terror and censorship, some indications of what people are thinking already are reaching the outside world. "The United States does not care whether it keeps company with a pig or with a prostitute," was the comment made to one American newsmen recently in Port-au-Prince. If the government were to fall, he was also told, "you would hardly find a Haitian who was not anti-American."

The Catholic COURIER
Journal

Vol. 76 No. 18 Thursday, Jan. 28, 1965

MONT REY, JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D., President
 MAIN OFFICE: 25 5th St. — Baker 5-4210 — Rochester, N.Y. 14604
 BIRMINGHAM OFFICE: 17 Robinson Bldg., Lake St. RE 2-6588 or RE 2-3421
 ALBANY OFFICE: 168 E. Geneva St. AL 2-4446

Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.
 Single copy 15¢; 1 year subscription in U.S., \$5.00
 As required under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.
 (Canada \$5.50; Foreign Countries \$4.75)