

# Pope Paul, Two Years at Summit of Church

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Preaching a eulogy shortly after the death of the universally beloved John, the then Giovanni Battista Montini, Archbishop of Milan, declared: "Death cannot stifle the spirit which he has infused into our era. Can we turn away from the paths so masterfully traced? It seems to me we cannot."

At his coronation Mass, Pope Paul pledged that his pontificate would be devoted to international peace, Christian unity and the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council convoked by his predecessor. It is a pledge he has well lived up to.

Although John XXIII will be remembered as the father of Vatican II, it has been Paul VI's role to translate the former's blueprint for aggiornamento into reality. Thus, among the monuments of his pontificate are Council decrees of immense importance to the Church.

They include, besides the revolutionary Constitution on the Liturgy, the history-making decree on the Nature of the Church which formally defined the collegiality of the bishops and their partnership with the Pope in the government of the Church. Also, the Decree on Ecumenism which constituted official endorsement of the ecumenical movement and set forth principles and criteria to be followed by Catholics in the dialogue with those outside the fold; and the Constitution on the Catholic Oriental Churches, which, among other things, opened the way to some intercommunion with the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

On his own authority, Pope Paul proclaimed the Blessed Virgin Mary as the "Mother of the Church" and shortened from three hours to one the period of the faithful fast before receiving Holy Communion.

## Peace Pleas

Of all spiritual leaders the most often heard pleading for peace among the nations, Pope Paul offered the Church's mediating offices in settling international disputes when he issued his first encyclical—*Ecclesiam Suam* (His Church)—in August, 1964. A year before he had halted the nuclear energy test ban treaty signed in Moscow by the United States, Britain and Russia as "a token of goodwill, a pledge of concord, a promise of a more serene future."

When he made his Holy Land pilgrimage in January, 1964, he sent 220 peace messages to heads of states and international leaders. This year he made special peace appeals as new political crises erupted in Vietnam and Cuba.

During his visit to India the following December for the 50th International Eucharistic Congress in Bombay, he urged creation by developed nations of a "great world fund" to combat hunger and poverty everywhere. In his first Christmas message, he described hunger as "the most serious problem confronting the world."

## Bonds with Orthodox

Pope Paul's Holy Land pilgrimage and his meeting in Jerusalem with Eastern Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras was easily one of the top ecumenical events of the century. Not for over 500 years had a Roman Pontiff embraced, conversed with, and prayed with the "first



Pope Paul greets Protestant clergy attending Vatican Council. Cardinal Bea introduces the delegates to the Pontiff.

among equals" of all the Orthodox prelates.

This was only one of Pope Paul's many gestures to the world's 200 million Orthodox believers in the prayerful hope of their eventual reunion with Rome. In July, 1963, he sent a personal envoy to celebrations in Moscow marking the 50th anniversary of the episcopal consecration of Patriarch Alexei, supreme head of the Russian Orthodox Church. In March of the following year, he was officially represented at the enthronement of Metropolitan Athenagoras of Thyateira as the new head of the Orthodox community in Great Britain.

To the Vatican came many Orthodox dignitaries who were warmly received by Pope Paul. In return a number of top Curia officials which had been seized by Crusaders and brought to the Cathedral of Amalfi, Italy, last March, it was announced he was planning to restore to a Greece Orthodox monastery near Jerusalem the relics of St. Sabbas, who founded the sanctuary in the fifth century, and to the Orthodox community in Crete, the preserved head of St. Titus, one of the favorite disciples of St. Paul, who was the first bishop of Crete.

Pope Paul's ecumenical hand has been extended also not only to Protestant churches, but also to Jewish, Moslem and Buddhist religions.

Representing the formation of a new Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians which would deal with other religions in "loyal and respectful dialogue" and in "absolute sincerity."

Last April saw the Pope add yet another challenging dimension to the dialogue by creating the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers. He had foreshadowed this move by clearly intimating in *Ecclesiam Suam* the possibility of a dialogue with professed atheists, saying: "We do not despair that they may one day be able to enter into a more positive dialogue with the Church than the present one we now of necessity deplore and lament." Earlier in his first

Easter message, the Pope had made a special appeal to atheists to "judge for themselves that they are laboring under the weight of irrational dogmas."

Speaking of communism in September, 1963, Pope Paul warned against any notion that the Church's all-embracing pastoral solicitude "signified a change of judgment as regards errors spread throughout society and already condemned by the Church."

## Progress with Reds

Nevertheless his pontificate has already been marked by developments vis-a-vis the Communist world which have helped to make his reign a memorable one. Just a year later, the Hungarian Communist government yielded some concessions to the Church which, among other things, made it possible for the Pope to name new bishops in the country, although the cause of Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty remained unresolved.

In Czechoslovakia, meanwhile, Vatican negotiations with the Communist government made it possible for Pope Paul to include Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague (long ousted from his See by the Red regime) among the 27 new cardinals he named last January. Now there is some talk that the Pope may visit Poland next year for celebrations of the millennium of Christianity in that country.

Other developments which stand out in the diary of Paul VI's first two years on the papal throne are:

## Birth Control Debate

His setting up last year of a special commission to study the birth control question in relation to the use of artificial

contraceptives, the use of artificial means for preventing conception. In March, the Pope told the commission its work must be carried out "urgently" and "to the end" because "we cannot leave men's consciences exposed to uncertainties which today too often prevent married life from developing according to God's design."

His creation, also last year, of another special commission to prepare plans for a reorganization of the Roman Curia, the Church's central administration, in harmony with modern needs and demands.

And his action in 1964 in instituting a Day of Prayer for Religious Vocations. This came after

Xavier Rynne in his just published third book on the Vatican Council describes Pope Paul like this: "He seems to be incapable of inspiring either the warmth of John XXIII or the awe of Pius XII. Paul is known to be an extremely charitable and kindly person and frequently acts on these impulses, but . . . the world generally knows nothing about them. Like a true intellectual, he is capable of a real inspiration—that is the only word for the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the flight to India—but he fails to reap the fullest rewards and an excessive scrupulosity about questions of protocol and prestige seem to rob them of much of their spontaneity." (The book, titled "The Third Session" is published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux of New York City.)

One of the highspots of Paul VI's career will be when he finally terminates the Second Vatican Council, presumably before the year's end. He has already indicated that one of its most ecumenically significant actions will be the promulgation of a declaration upholding religious liberty. This was in April when he gave an audience to 150 representatives from 15 countries gathered in Rome for a United Nations seminar.

## Jewish Statement

Also expected to emanate from the Council is a declaration—already given preliminary approval—absolving the Jews of guilt in Christ's crucifixion. The preliminary draft was warmly applauded by Jewish leaders, but was bitterly resented in many Arab circles.

Last April, Jewish leaders expressed "astonishment and concern over a Passion Sunday sermon in which Pope Paul, speaking of the Jewish people of Christ's time, said they 'did not only not recognize Him, but fought against Him, slandered Him and injured Him and finally killed Him.'" However, Vatican sources, in a statement clarifying the Pope's talk, explained that he had meant no offense to the Jewish people. They said the sermon was not intended to imply collective Jewish guilt in the Crucifixion. They added that in referring to the Jews, the pontiff meant mankind in general and the rejection of Christ by Christians and non-Christians alike.

For Pope Paul, one of the most distressing experiences of his pontificate has been the worldwide attention focused on "The Deputy," the controversial play by German dramatist Rolf Hochhuth which portrays Pope Pius XII as having been passive in not speaking out forcefully against the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

In a talk last March, when a bronze statue of the dead pontiff was unveiled in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Paul praised him as an illustrious pontiff who had used his voice during the war "to proclaim the rights of all to justice; to defend the weak; to succor the suffering; to impede worse evils, to smooth the ways to peace."

He added that the statue would remind all who saw it of Pius XII's greatness at a time when "one hears raised about the papacy of Pope Pius XII, voices of criticism, and even unjust and ungrateful outcries of blame or accusation."

Pope Paul spoke many times on behalf of the rights of workers, at the same time reminding that the world of labor offers many challenges for an effective Catholic apostolate. In a notable talk on June 8, 1964, to a group of Italian businessmen and executives he strongly denounced laissez-faire economics and the theory that financial profits constitute the sole purpose of the economy.

In another talk—in March, 1964—he complained of the anti-clericalism "which is spreading around the world and especially in those countries and those regions which should be distinguishing themselves as de-

fenders of the Church and supporters of her doctrines." On a number of recent occasions, the pontiff chided Catholics who were openly critical of, or actually hostile toward, the new liturgical changes, especially the use of the vernacular instead of Latin in parts of the Mass. He also sharply rebuked others in the Church who were engaged in "destructive and systematic criticism" of certain of its traditional teachings and practices.

In July, 1963—shortly after his coronation—Pope Paul was visited by the late President Kennedy and assured him that he was praying for his efforts to end racial discrimination in the United States. When he canonized the 22 Martyrs of Uganda last October, the Pope was called by Uganda's Ambassador to the United Nations as having "openly demonstrated to the world that all men are equal and that before God and in His service the color of a man's skin counts for nothing."

The Apostleship of Prayer is under the direction of the Jesuit Fathers, with headquarters at 515 E. Fordham Rd., New York 58, N.Y.

# Heart of Love

By FATHER LEO J. TRESE

The Apostleship of Prayer (also called the League of the Sacred Heart) is an association very popular with all who wish to practice and promote devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Members of this spiritual fellowship pray, in union with the Sacred Heart, for the intentions of each other and for the two special intentions which the Holy Father himself assigns for each month.

THE MINIMUM requirement for membership is the recitation of the Morning Offering. This is the daily offering of one's prayers, good works and sufferings for the intentions of all members and for the intentions of the Holy Father. Other practices, such as a daily decade of the Rosary for the Holy Father's intentions and weekly or monthly Communions of reparation, may be assumed if the member so wishes.

Another helpful accessory for our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a book called the *Raccolta*. "Raccolta" is an Italian word which means, "Collection," and this book is a collection of all the prayers and devotions which have been indulged by the Church. Prayers, aspirations and devotions in honor of the Sacred Heart fill some thirty pages of the book.

Even aside from devotion to the Sacred Heart, the *Raccolta* might well be the private prayer-book of every Catholic. It is a book of some 600 pages, about the size of a daily missal, and is procurable at any Catholic bookstore. It has a wealth of prayers to lead variety to our devotional life; prayers to our Lord Jesus under His numerous titles (Sacred Heart, Blessed Sacrament, Precious Blood, Holy Infant, etc.) prayers in honor of our Blessed Mother and of individual saints, prayers for the suffering souls, special prayers for each state in life and for almost all of life's important occasions.

While a certain amount of variety in our prayers is undoubtedly helpful, this does not mean that a multiplicity of private devotions is to be recommended. We must not let ourselves become involved in so many particular devotions that we neglect our devotion to the Sacred Heart.

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