

# Patriarch Athenagoras, an Orthodox Pope John



## Liturgy and Life

Father Hans Anscar Reinhold of Pittsburgh, Pa., combined "the dedication of a priest, the diligence of a scholar, and the intellectual force of a born prose stylist" to foster active participation of the laity in the worship of the church and bring a liturgical influence to religious art, architecture and music. Expelled from his native Germany by the Nazis, Father Reinhold took a teaching post at Portsmouth Priory and pastoral assignments in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York and Washington. His "Timely Tracts" appeared in Orate Fratres magazine, over the initials "H.A.R.," for some 15 years. A contemporary authority on the liturgical renewal has noted that Father Reinhold's writings "have suggested so exactly the reforms that have been made that one suspects they were used as models."

By FATHER EDWARD DUFF, S.J. Special Correspondent

Istanbul—(RNS)—One might have thought it was a bearded, more robust, larger-than-life Pope John XXIII talking when the Ecumenical Patriarch, Athenagoras, I, spoke of the love of one another as the solvent of human estrangement and the secret of church unity.

Indeed, when I asked His Holiness what the next steps are in the pursuit of further union, he quoted Pope John as noting that "the theologians need more love."

Forty years ago the present Ecumenical Patriarch had concluded that the mutual reconciliation actually accomplished this past December 7 is the simultaneous annulling in Rome and Istanbul of the excommunications exchanged in 1054 between the Patriarch of the East and the papal legate was feasible and necessary.

For the Patriarch the reading of the joint statement in the church of the Phanar in the presence of a delegation of the Holy See, headed by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore, and at the last working session of the Second Vatican Council, in the presence of Metropolitan Meliton of Heliopolis, was a tangible follow-up of his meeting with Pope Paul in Jerusalem two years ago.

It is moreover, the preamble to further action which, as the joint statement declared: "Will lead to living together again, for the greater good of souls and the coming of the kingdom of God in that full communion of faith, fraternal accord and sacramental life which existed among them during the first thousand years of the life of the Church."

The next step will be the naming of a committee of theologians, drawn from all the Orthodox Churches, for formal conversations with a committee appointed by the Holy See. This is the procedure decided upon at the third Pan-Orthodox Conference at Rhodes in November, 1964. In such matters the Patriarch of Constantinople has the right of initiative but must act in unison with the sister Orthodox Churches. Already Metropolitan Nicodemus of the Russian Orthodox Church has made it clear that the cancelling of the excommunications concerns only Constantinople and Rome and has no further bearing.

In a most frank and happy interview at one point the Patriarch to emphasize a point insisted that he was speaking to me "as priest to priest." His Holiness' thinking was dominated by a single theme: The catalyst and the cement of unity is charity.

"We began to differ, the Church of the East and the West," he asserted, "when we ceased to love. We are coming together as we are learning to love one another anew."

Consensus always of being held to the See founded by the Apostle Andrew, brother of Peter, first Bishop of Rome. Patriarch Athenagoras talks constantly of "the common church" and "the single church of Christ." He tapped my knee to make his point:

"When you return to Rome," he said, "visit again the colosseum and see the blood stains on the floor. That is the blood of Greek Christians, too. And



Pope Paul and Patriarch Athenagoras, symbolic head of the world's 250,000,000 Orthodox Christians, met at Jerusalem early in 1964. It was the first meeting between a pope and a patriarch in approximately 1000 years. The Patriarch who resides at Istanbul is currently under pressure from the Turkish government to leave the city, traditional center of the Orthodox faith but now a predominantly Moslem metropolis.

Several times His Holiness expressed his eagerness to go to Rome "to see my brother, Paul, and to renew the embrace of Jerusalem," leaving him "intenter to speculate about the political complications impeding the Patriarch's departure."

Asked about the Vatican Council, Athenagoras replied very simply: "I was in it." His fashion seemingly of expressing how closely he followed the events in Rome and how continuously the point of view of the Eastern Churches was kept in mind in St. Peter's Basilica.

Speaking with evident joy of the dramatic annulling of the mutual excommunications on December 7, the Patriarch added: "We closed the Council together."

His Holiness, Patriarch Athenagoras explained his involvement in Vatican Council II: "The Council does not only belong to Roman Catholics but to all the Churches and it brings fruits to us as well." As evidence he mentioned the flood of letters he has received from Catholics from all over the world who are discovering that he is, as he declares, "Pope Paul's dear brother," letters from children, letters from Spain. On his desk he had a copy of a New Testament in Spanish presented to him the day before by a group of priests from the country who had come to see him.

As to the meaning of the Council, the Patriarch observed: "The Church has gone out to meet mankind." Or as he put it in his New Year's message: "Humanity feels above all imagining the thirst for a higher spiritual and moral life. This new life begins to flower the moment the Church ceases to occupy itself with the past but, going out of itself, moves forward energetically, without looking back, toward man for whom Christ is born."

The pervasive faith and the radiant optimism of the Greek of a man are infectious. Never have I met a more impressive, more attractive personality than the Ecumenical Patriarch, a man of towering spiritual stature. Nor can his serene confidence and simple candor be dismissed as that of a naive, cloistered enthusiast. His vast experience of men and of tumultuous political events in many lands over the long years are doubtless rusted by the most seasoned diplomat.

Born just 80 years ago in the Greek Epirus, then a part of the Ottoman empire, as Aristotiles Spyrou, the son of the village physician, he made his theological studies at Istanbul. After Angelo Roncalli had left Turkey to become pope in Paris, though he never met Pope John, the Patriarch greeted him on his election with the Biblical phrase: "There was a man sent by God whose name was John." When the Patriarch was planning a visit to Rome to encounter him, the Pope's health declined. Athenagoras sent him Eastern delicacies the Pope had learned to love in his years in Sophia and Bulgaria, Turkey. "He came to open the way and then to disappear, his sufferings winning large graces for all of us," the Patriarch assured me.

Of Pope Paul the Patriarch speaks with an affection and understanding that would be expected in the Montini immediate family, or as one who has found the secret of Pope Paul's personality. Clearly, something abiding was transmitted in the embrace of the two men on the Mount of Olives, a scene which is recorded in a large picture on the wall behind the Patriarch's desk and in another, more informal color photo by his inkstand.

In Rome one speaks of Pope Paul's competence and experience and practical wisdom. At the Phanar the Ecumenical Patriarch mentioned to me, rather, "my brother, Paul's heart, his candor, his profound charity, his spontaneous friendliness to all." With this evident affection goes a solid respect: "Pope Paul is the great sovereign pontiff of which our epoch has need," is the judgment of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Did the little girls perhaps think that the Patriarch was Santa Claus, I asked their mother. "Not for a minute," she assured me. "They are Greek Christians and know that a bishop is a father. But this bishop is a special kind of father, being the Patriarch and being Athenagoras." His Holiness promptly proved to be a special kind of father in finding gifts somewhere in his desk drawers for the children.

If the cause of religion was being advanced, the position of the Church authorities might seem more understandable. But even pragmatic justification appears to be lacking. I failed to find anyone to challenge the manifestly's comment on this point.

"The religious situation of the Spanish people is characterized, above all," it says, "by a growing process of deChristianization, especially marked among the intellectuals, the working class and the young. The percentage of practicing Catholics in Spain is notoriously lower than in other countries where the Catholic faith has no official or compulsory character."

## A New Ghetto Now Being Built?

(N.C.W.C. News Service)

The ecumenical movement is ignoring the "major religion in America," secular humanism, and may find itself in a new ghetto because of it.

The only solution to this new wave of "spiritual agnosticism" is a dialogue between "committed and practicing Christians" and secular humanism. And one of the first steps in this dialogue is "to scuttle the 'Newman concept'."

This is the view of Father Robert E. Kavanaugh, Newman chaplain at the St. John student parish at Michigan State University. Unless a dialogue with secular humanism is established, Father Kavanaugh writes in the Jan. 22 America magazine, the dialogue between Catholics and Protestants "will be a tragic waste of time."

"To be unduly waylaid by a Protestant-Catholic dialogue would be like putting a finger in the dike while the water pours over the top," he says.

The humanism now being practiced, he says, is neither "a badge of honor" nor "a simple rationalization for immorality."

Instead, he says, "it is born of a religious education that lacked in substance and was terminated too soon. It is nurtured by a myriad of unanswered questions. And it climaxes in a state of mind swarming with clear and definite negations, but affords no positive and integrated substance of faith for daily life."

What Christians should fear, he says, is not the traditional "loss of faith" among Catholics at a secular university, but "the actual, tragic loss of faith among Protestant students."

Although only 30 per cent of Michigan State's students attend Church regularly, he said, two-thirds of these are Catholics.

"The defection from the Catholic Church at the Reformation was small in number by comparison with the legions who no longer subscribe to Christianity in our country, or who pay only lip service to Christian cliches."

One thing that must be recognized, Father Kavanaugh says, is "the fact that secular humanism is a religion with identifiable tenets and a moral code."

The Catholic approach, Father Kavanaugh claims, "has been to teach our students what we think they ought to know. And they remain away from our educational programs in droves, while we naively 'solve' problems they seldom even ask."

"Almost 60 years of 'Newmanism' leaves us still without any effective and distinctive textbooks, prayer books, liturgical aids, social programs, leadership programs, and the like, to translate the faith into terms and activities that students can comprehend and enjoy."

God literature is badly needed to present the Christian case, he says. "Rare indeed is the book on religious issues that goes the rounds of the dorm, whereas in many circles science fiction, Bertrand Russell and Ayn Rand are dog-eared."

Theological terminology and mode of presentation must also be changed, he feels.

"The secular mind does not begin with principles and generalities," he argues. "It begins with the specific, the concrete and the readily observable. It respects deeply personal experience, the scientific method, the socio-psychological approach and the best literary media of our day."

"Ominous warnings" are being heard that the dialogue must soon begin, he says.

"The rights movement, the peace movements, the hunger and poverty crusades, and all the usual areas of expected Christian concern are being instituted and led largely by secular humanists."

Father Kavanaugh warns: "If the secular university once preempts the traditional role of the Church on campus, raising and solving its own values and theological issues within the secular framework, then Christian denominations will simply go on talking to each other in a new ghetto."

in the catacombs, there are the bodies of Greek martyrs as well."

His Holiness confessed himself optimistic. Invited to return the next day to take dinner with him and his synod, I heard him convey his irrepressible optimism in simple religious terms of faith and hope to the group he received after the New Year's Day liturgy.

The patriarchate had suffered much through the centuries and was not without its problems today, he noted, but God had always protected it and would continue to do so. No allusion was made to the barred door in the church of the Phanar where the Turks had hung his predecessor, Gregory V, at Easter, 1821 in reprisal for the Greek revolt of independence and which has remained closed since. No mention was made of the two suburban churches of St. Nicholas and of St. John seized with the passive connivance of the police during the night of September 22 by the partisans of "papa etfim," the self-appointed "Archbishop of the Orthodox Turks and the Ecumenical Patriarch" who has threatened to close the patriarchate of Constantinople and dissolve the Holy Synod.

In His Holiness' office is a large picture of Kemal Ataturk,

the founder of modern Turkey. In his talk to a group of his faithful after the liturgy the Patriarch urged loyalty to the government and subsequently boasted to me that his people are good citizens, that not one of them is in jail for common crimes.

Here, again, a resemblance, to Pope John XXIII suggests itself. As apostolic delegate, the future pontiff wrote from Istanbul of the plight of the Catholic minority in 1934 under nationalist pressure.

I prefer to concentrate on that which helps to sustain us and to continue our activities rather than to weep over our ruins, ruins of a past evidently glorious for all those who have devoted themselves generously over so many years. We must redouble our efforts, sure that the Lord in His good time will fructify anew the soil watered by our sweat."

Despite his manifold problems, church unity clearly the preoccupation of Patriarch Athenagoras and here, too, his optimism is great. "Our common heritage, studied in an atmosphere of charity, will disclose that we are members of a single church which shares from a common chalice the blood of Christ," he asserted.

In this effort he sees himself working hand in hand "with my brother Paul," the Pope of Rome whom the Patriarch's representative, Metropolitan Meliton, publicly saluted as "the first bishop of Christendom" at the close of the Second Vatican Council.

The power of personality in history has often been remarked. "Two stupid, stubborn men were responsible for the troubles between the Churches of the East and the West," the Patriarch declared.

He was referring to the famous feud between Umberto Cardinal Di Selyvacandida, legate of Pope Leo I, and the Ecumenical Patriarch, Michael Cerularius, whose quarrels among other things included the necessity of wearing beards and the validity of unleavened

## Behind Franco, a Vacuum, Says Spanish Priest

by GARY MacEOIN

NO real change occurred in the political situation in Spain during 1965. Behind Franco, we still have a vacuum. The Minister for Tourism has done a magnificent whitewash job for external consumption. Censorship and other authoritarian laws have been relaxed on paper. But there has been no improvement in the reality."

Such is the devastating summing-up just given me by a priest who holds a top job in Catholic publishing in Spain. His conclusions are supported by priests and laymen from different social strata and work backgrounds.

It is generally agreed that the economic situation improved last year. While there was labor unrest as in previous years, most of the workers have reached a point where they are more interested in food than freedom. "Years of hardship have had their effect," one priest told me. "And the regime knows how to distract the masses with radio, television, bull fights and football."

University students are currently the leaders in the fight to liberalize the

regime. Although police pressure in 1965 was greater than for some years, they were not intimidated. Even the risk of expulsion from the university, which means the closing of all doors to a career, no longer seems to frighten them.

A major current issue is the campaign for freedom of association. Last month, 2,500 students of Madrid University passed several resolutions bearing on this subject. They described the present law, under which an official union controlled by the regime represents the students, as "contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations" and they called for an amnesty for students and professors who had been punished for expression of opinion.

This action was the culmination of several months of intense activity in the universities of Madrid and Barcelona. Many professors had been expelled or had resigned in protest, and many students had been expelled, imprisoned or fined.

It is generally agreed that the Vatican Council has contributed greatly to the crisis of conscience in Spain of which these incidents are an expression. The assimilation of Church and state after

the Civil War forced all Catholic organizations into support of the regime.

The Council's decrees on religious freedom and indeed its entire temper have encouraged a process of divorce. Even the higher clergy no longer constitute a solid front with the regime in spite of their close structural connections with it and the temporal power they wield.

Extremist groups understandably seek to utilize the unrest in Spain for their own purposes. The great majority of the dissidents, however, have quite modest objectives. These were set out forcibly and with dignity in a document circulated to many Fathers in Rome during the final weeks of the Council. It carried 82 signatures, and the signers were identified as current or former office-holders and chaplains of Catholic Action, Pax Romana, Pax Christi, Young Christian Workers and other Catholic organizations in Barcelona.

The first need in Spain, they said, is respect for the rights and liberties of human beings in public and political life, the rights of association, expression, suffrage and representative institutions. Next comes the need for human and social progress for workers, free trades unions,

right to strike, land reform. Finally, the policy of repression of Spain's regional cultures should end, and specifically the continuing efforts to destroy Catalonia's language, culture and institutions.

The signatories of this extremely moderate manifesto stress a point on which I have found general agreement. It is that the Catholic Church is identified with the restrictive policies and activities described, and that the regime could not maintain them without the support of the Church.

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**The Catholic COURIER Journal**  
THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

Vol. 77 No. 17 Friday, January 21, 1966

**MOST REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D., President**  
Published every Friday by the Rochester Catholic Press Association  
MAIN OFFICE 35 Solo St. - 44-7079 - Rochester, N.Y. 14604  
MELNIRA OFFICE 317 Robinson Bldg., Lake St. RE 2-5688 or RE 1-2423  
LUBURN OFFICE 168 E. Genesee St. AL 1-4446

Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.  
Single copy 15¢. 1 year subscription in U.S. \$4.00  
As required under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.  
Canada \$6.00; Foreign Countries \$6.75

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