

Priest, Nun Vocation Trends Vary in Europe

The Vatican announced this week a report on religious vocations in Europe—a picture that shows gains in Communist-run Yugoslavia and a drastic dropoff in traditionally Catholic France.

The Newsletter of the Congregation of Religious, Vatican agency which shapes the Church's recruitment program for priests, nuns and brothers, said Yugoslavia claims it has a "plentiful" supply of aspirants and is forced to turn many away because of lack of space and funds.

Belgium, particularly the diocese of Malines-Brussels which is headed by Cardinal Leo Suenens, has doubled the number of its seminarians.

The Dutch bishops admit a decline in religious vocations but have recently adopted a nationwide recruitment program to recoup the losses.

Hungary, also Red ruled, despite government restrictions, reports a steady increase in applicants to seminaries and convents since the abortive revolution a decade ago.

Ireland, once prolific in vocations, is now barely breaking even between applicants and those priests and nuns lost through death.

Italy also has a bleak outlook, a negligible six per cent increase over previous years totals.

Poland and Czechoslovakia, both under Communist domination, are down, but France is virtually lowest of all European nations.

Spain, Portugal, England, West Germany and Australia are holding about even.

For the U.S. vocation story, see below.



Jose de la Borda lavished his silver wealth on this picturesque church of St. Prisca at Taxco in central Mexico.

Mexico, More than Sunshine

Winter weary residents of snow-choked upper U.S. areas are beginning to notice that some of their friends and neighbors are bronzed as if it were summer time.

The well-tanned people have probably just returned from a trip south—and many from a trip south of the nation's border, from Mexico.

For those who discovered there was more to Mexico than Acapulco, these pictures are perhaps familiar. They show three of Mexico's most famous churches, a nation that still gives clear evidence of strong faith and bitter persecution.

Best known of all that country's churches is the shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Guadalupe, now engulfed by Mexico City. The shrine is a story by itself.

The ornate Church of St. Prisca dominates the hill-side city of Taxco, a city built on a silver mine. Eighteenth century Frenchman Jose de la Borda dug out an estimated \$20,000,000 worth of the precious metal and built St. Prisca's as a sign of his gratitude.

St. Prisca's is considered the finest example of the Churriguesque style of architecture in the world. Its exterior has changed stone into lace and the interior is lavished with gold-leaf and intricately carved wood.

The cathedral at Cuernavaca was built in 1529 to be both a church and a fortress. It is the oldest church in the western hemisphere. Its massive oak doors and beams are said to be from ships of the Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez who destroyed his fleet so his troops would get no idea of returning to Spain.

Cuernavaca, the city of perpetual spring, has a sizable colony of retired U.S. citizens who found the weather and the cost of living more agreeable than at home. The city is also the location for a training center for U.S. priests and nuns on their way to be missionaries in Latin American countries.

The cathedral, formidable on the outside, has recently been completely renovated inside. The old, fancy Spanish style decorations were ripped out and ultra-modern furnishings put in their place—a plain altar with a simple canopy and modern art statues and paintings replaced the usual life-like figures of the past.

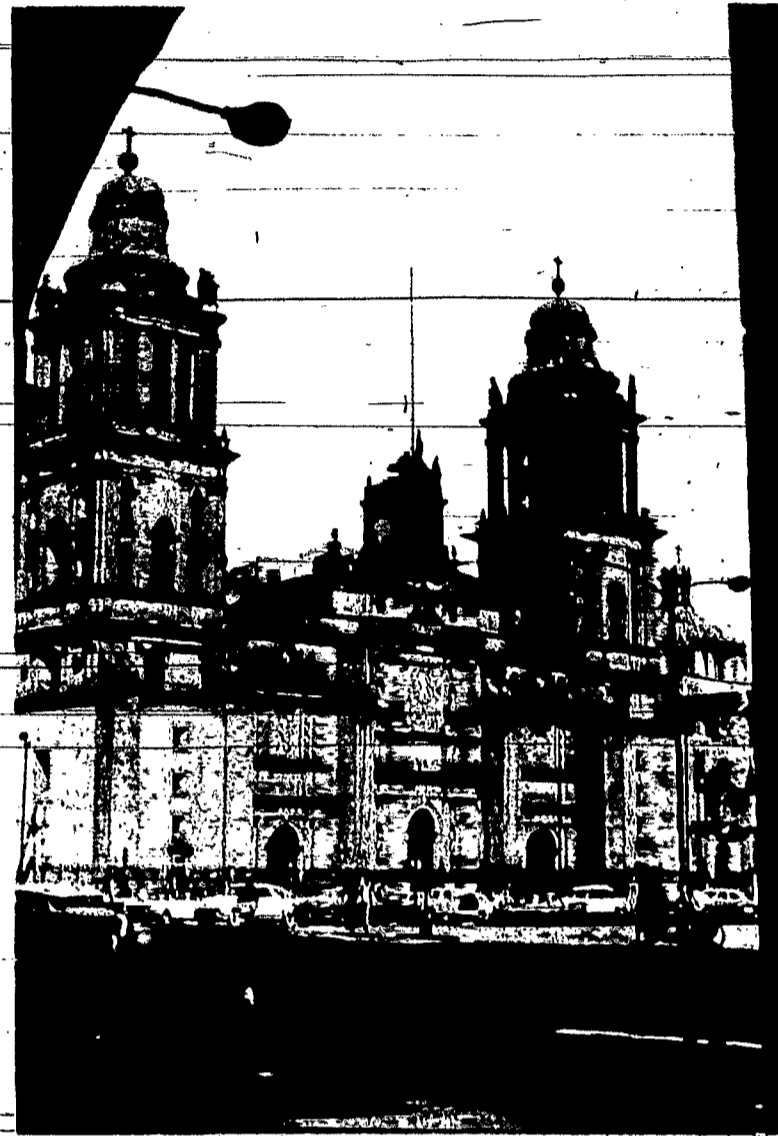
Tourists to Mexico had better be sure to see the vast cathedral of Mexico City soon—it might not be there very much longer—it is sinking into the mud.

Mexico City is the highest major city in the world, built where there was once a lake 7500 feet above sea level. The city's ancient buildings are all slowly sinking, a fraction of an inch a year, but after 400 years, the toll of the volcanic ooze is obvious.

The cathedral at Mexico City, largest church in the western hemisphere, has a chapel that tilts several degrees to the right and one of the towers is gradually becoming a rival to the famed leaning tower of Pisa.

The Mexico City cathedral is a link to Mexico's earlier inhabitants, the Aztecs, Mayans and other primitive people. The ca-

(Continued on Page 2)



Mexico City cathedral dominates the ancient Zaca where Aztecs offered human sacrifice to their god Quetzacoatl.



Cuernavaca — the cathedral is church and fortress.

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Parents, Affluence

Why So Few Vocations in United States?

Baltimore — (NC) — Reluctant parents and an affluent society are the major roadblocks to vocations today, Cardinal Lawrence Shehan of Baltimore said here.

"The affluence and allurements and the generally permissive atmosphere of life today make much more difficult the inconvenience and sacrifice necessary to a life of training for the priesthood," the cardinal said in an interview with A. E. P. Wall, managing editor of the Baltimore Catholic Review.

"Parents today seem far more reluctant to permit or encourage their children to commit themselves to a life of sacrifice. I feel that one of the main ob-

stacles to the development of vocations today is to be found in the attitude of many parents," the cardinal said.

"They expect the Church to produce vocations of the highest type to serve their religious needs. They want parishes adequately provided with priests of the highest caliber. They wish elementary and high schools properly staffed to give the best of Catholic education.

"Some become increasingly critical if in all these respects the Church does not measure up to the highest ideal—yet many apparently feel little responsibility for fostering those vocations which alone can make that ideal attainable."

Families, Cardinal Shehan said, "must realize the serious responsibility they have as lay people to develop vocations. Families must foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life if the Church is to fulfill its mission."

Cardinal Shehan denied charges that the Church is being Protestantized.

"The use of the vernacular has but one purpose — to promote the participation of the laity in the liturgy and above all in the Mass," he said.

"It is obviously false to say that the use of the vernacular in the Mass . . . is a mere imitation of the Protestants simply because they have in the past used the vernacular in their worship," he commented.

"Again," he said, "the increased emphasis on the use of Holy Scripture is simply the implementation of what has always been essential Catholic doctrine; namely, that the Holy Scripture is the word of God and worthy of honor above all words of man."

"To imply that such emphasis is in any way against Catholic tradition is not only contrary to the Church's teaching, but is also in a very real way un-Christian," he declared.

The cardinal commented on several other topics during the interview:

• On social problems: "The Church today, more than ever, has to be concerned with social problems. The social problems are almost always also moral problems. Certainly our most vital social problem in this area (civil rights) is a moral problem."

• On priestly freedom: "It is perfectly proper for a priest or a bishop to exercise his full rights as a citizen. It is the duty of every citizen to vote conscientiously and to take an interest in political affairs."

• On religious tax exemptions: "I think the traditions in this country have been sound, but 'profit-making enterprises' that compete with other businesses should pay the same tax as other businesses even though they are Church-owned."

Pope Asks Prompt Action On Council Directives

Vatican City — (NC) — The new central commission set up to coordinate the work of carrying out the provisions of the recent Vatican Council held its first meeting here and received a charge from Pope Paul VI to do its job quickly.

In a brief introductory speech after which he left the meeting, the Pope asked the members to work swiftly so that "the family of Christians may enjoy the fruits of the rich patrimony left to us by the Council."

The task of the central commission, he said, "is among other things to prevent doubts and arbitrary interpretations of the Council's documents and to coordinate the work of the various post-conciliar commissions . . . in a uniform way."

Devotion to Mary, Vital to Faith

Vatican City — (NC) — The veneration of Our Lady "is essentially linked with that of Christ, deriving from and leading to it," Pope Paul VI told his weekly general audience on the Feb. 2 feast of Christ's Presentation in the temple and the Purification of Mary.

Departing from tradition, the Pope combined the audience with the annual Candlemas ceremony during which clerical and lay representatives of Rome present candles to the Pope as an act of homage. It was the first time the ceremony was held in St. Peter's basilica. Usually it takes place in the

Vatican Palace before a limited audience.

Devotion to Mary, the Pope said after the ceremony, "guarantees us convinced firmness" and "vital attachment" to faith in Christ and His Church which would be impoverished and compromised without devoted and reasonable honor rendered to Mary.

Devotion to Mary has been vitalized by the ecumenical council, the Pope said, particularly through the Constitution on the Church, which contains a chapter devoted to her.



FATHER WEDOW



FATHER KIGGINS

Two Priests Assigned To Family Life Unit

Two priests of the Rochester Diocese were named this week to be associate directors of the diocesan Family Life Bureau to expand the Bureau's program into the Auburn and southern tier parishes, the Chancery announced today.

Bishop Kearney has assigned Rev. Roy J. Kiggins of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Elmira, and Rev. Edwin Wedow of St. Alphonsus Church, Auburn, to their new duties.

They will also continue as assistant pastors at their present parishes.

Father Gerald Dunn of St. Monica's parish, Rochester, is director of the Family Life Bureau. His associate for the Rochester area is Father Walter Cushing, chaplain at St. Agnes High School.

The Bureau conducts a variety of programs to strengthen Christian family life.

Best known of its activities is the Pre-Cana series of conferences, four Sunday afternoon talks for couples prior to their wedding. Attendance last year totaled more than 1500. The four talks are presented on an almost year-round basis.

Other programs of the Bureau include Cana Conferences for married couples, Christian Family Movement (CFM) study groups for married couples, Mothers Circles with a current enrollment of 1700, a Widowed Parent Club and the Family Life Clinic at St. Mary's Hospital for counseling in rhythm control of family size.

Communion, Sign and Source of Unity

By ALBERT DE ZUTTER

Kansas City — (NC) — Anglican and Roman Catholic representatives expressed hope at the close of a three-day meeting here that eventually there may be a breakthrough leading to Holy Communion together.

Participants in the meeting told a news conference (Feb. 4) that "we are already members of one body" through a common baptism and faith. The sessions were conducted by the Joint Commission on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations, composed of official representatives of the two communions.

Members of the Joint Anglican-Roman Catholic commission raised the possibility of Eucharistic consecration — joint celebration of the Mass — by priests of both communions and the reception of the Eucharist by a congregation made up of Anglicans and Roman Catholics ever before full structural union is achieved.

Though participants in the talks refused to predict when this might occur, Bishop Charles W. Helmreich of Kansas City-St. Joseph, chairman of the Catholic subcommission for talks with the Episcopal Church, said: "The timing is in the hands of God. Who can move us faster than we can imagine."

The prospect of common participation in the Eucharist before full organizational reunion was based on agreement among

commission members that the Eucharist is not only a sign, but also a means, of unity.

A position paper prepared by Father Bernard J. Cooke, S.J., chairman of the theology department, Marquette University, challenged the joint commission to face the question of an immediate Eucharistic sharing.

After examining the notion of the Eucharist in biblical times and during the first two centuries of Christianity, Father Cooke said:

"One conclusion seems undeniable in the light of the evidence we have seen: We cannot

expect Christian unity to take place apart from the influence of the Eucharist. This would seem to suggest that some common celebration of Eucharist will have to precede our hoped-for reunion.

"Why cannot we, in the private and controlled situation that is ours in this conference, celebrate together the Eucharist? If we can, such common celebration will help immeasurably in establishing the consensus of faith we seek. If we cannot, let us delineate the precise barriers that exist — these barriers it would seem to me would tell us rather definitely the agenda that lies before us in future meetings."

A position paper by Father Arthur Vogel, professor of theology at Nashotah House, Anglican seminary in Nashotah, Wis., made a similar point.

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