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Plumb Line for Pope, Homes for Poor

Rome (RNS)—Pope Paul VI holds a level and plumb line, the gift of bricklayers as he visited a low-rent housing construction project in a Rome slum district. The pontiff mounted a wooden platform to speak to some 800 workers. He made a strong plea for closer and more understanding relations between workers and the Church. Pope Paul said his visit resulted from the "spirit of the Second Vatican Council" which has "busied itself with the problems of workers."

Pope Paul Visits Rome Slum

Rome (RNS)—"You do not come to see me, so I have come to see you."

This was Pope Paul VI's greeting when he mounted a wooden platform to address some 800 workers at the site of a low-rent housing project nearing completion in the Rome slum district of Pietratta.

He used the occasion to make a strong plea for closer and more understanding relations between Italy's workers and the Church.

Met with a round of cheers, the pontiff said that "just as I was the first Pope to go to the Holy Land, to India and to New York, so also am I the first Pope to go to a construction site."

He said he came "to tell you that the Church is close to and friendly toward you. I came here because between the working world and the Church there is no longer the love and confidence there once was on the part of workers. Instead, there is a feeling of increasing detachment, diffidence, hostility to religion. I came to tell you there is no reason for this. The representatives of the Church want to assist you, even accepting some intemperance of yours at times."

Pope Paul said he was visiting the workers "because of the spirit of the Second Vatican Council" which had "busied itself with the problems of workers."

"The Church is opening its arms wide, inviting all its children to be reconciled with God, inviting them to pray and to

Maryknoll

Work Lauded

Albuquerque (RNS)—Work of the Roman Catholic Maryknoll Fathers in Latin America was singled out for praise here by U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas.

He told the Albuquerque-Santa Fe Federal Executive Association that he believes American help to underdeveloped nations must be in the form of local, "indigenous" programs, not in military supplies.

"Sixty-seven per cent of foreign aid is in military supplies, mostly to feudal types of governments which cannot survive this century," the jurist said.

HAMILTON AND OMEGA WATCHES. Budget Terms. William S. Thorne, 318 Main St. E.—Adv.

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lead better lives," he said, adding:

"Workers are by far the largest group in our society. What has happened, then? It has happened that the (Italian) workers' world is not oriented toward religion. It is not oriented toward the Church, nor to the faith. Really it is even worse. Workers feel estranged from the Church, as if they are its sworn enemies.

"You know this quite well from an examination of your consciences, and from your experience in clubs and meetings. We have come here to look for you, seeing you as representatives of the host of workers. We have come to say that the Church is near you and is your friend. There is no reason to doubt this; as we have done nothing contrary to your interests.

"We are here to listen, to

understand and know your sufferings, as well as to excuse any excesses that do not fit in with the framework of an ordered society."

Commenting that perhaps his listeners thought it was difficult for him to visit them, the Pope said that "instead it has been a pleasure to come." This is because there is not reason to have a division.

In the gathering darkness, Pope Paul asked "those of you who want to" to join him in saying the Lord's Prayer aloud. Hundreds of the workmen did. At the end, the Pope came down from the platform and shook hands with scores of men before being driven back to the Vatican. During his visit, he announced that ten fifty members of the workers' families would be sent on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, France, at his expense.

Albany (NC)—The spokesman for the New York state Catholic Welfare Committee has denied ever declaring "war" on a bill to liberalize the state's divorce law.

In a statement issued here, Charles J. Tobin also denied attempting to influence the Legislature to defer action on the bill "beyond this legislative session."

Tobin said his comments came in answer to speculation about the committee's official position, which was sparked "by recent comments" by State Senator Jerome L. Wilson, chairman of the joint legislative committee on matrimonial laws.

Lent Starts Wednesday, Fast Law Eased

Pope Paul has cut Lent's forty days of fast and abstinence down to two — Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

The rest of Lent, he said, it's up to Catholics to decide for themselves how to do penance.

The Pope also pulled back the age when youngsters have to start observing ordinary Friday abstinence — from seven years of age to fourteen.

The new regulations, as announced to news agencies in Washington this week, go into effect when Lent starts Wednesday, Feb. 23.

Catholics will continue to observe meatless Fridays, contrary to rumors earlier this year that the Pope was going to change that law too. He didn't, except for the 7 to 14 age change.

Catholics are urged to spend Lent in a prayerful and penitential manner. Parish bulletins should be consulted for Ash Wednesday and other Lenten schedules.

PERRY FLOWERS for all occasions. Ethel M. Perry assisted by Tom Zavaglia, Mgr. Rom. Weingartner, Asst. Mgr. 441 Chili Ave. FA 8-7722.—Adv.

'No Higher Work than This...'

Here are some excerpts from a talk Bishop Casey gave Saturday noon to church musicians about changes in Catholic ways of worship —

"The great majority of our people, and this is equally true of the priests themselves, have benefited spiritually and psychologically by these changes."

"Music is no longer a kind of extra at the Mass."

"This period of transition in the Church's history will certainly be a great challenge to all."

"... have patience ..."

"You share with your priests the responsibility of helping man communicate with God. There is no higher work than this."

Full text of his talk is on page four. You'll like it.



The Catholic COURIER

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

77th Year

Rochester, N.Y., Friday, February 18, 1966

Journal

Price 15 Cents

Birth Control Commission to be Reorganized

Pope Promises Speed On Family Life Study

Vatican City (RNS)—Pope Paul VI announced he will shortly reorganize the special commission on birth control he established in June, 1964, in an effort to "hasten its work."

At the same time, he reaffirmed traditional Catholic teaching that the procreation of children is the primary aim of marriage. However, he also endorsed the view that marriage involved the presentation of "the mutual and legitimate love of man and woman."

The Pope touched at length on the birth control issue during an audience to delegates attending the 13th Congress of the Italian Women's Center. In what some observers said was a clear indication that he favored

retention of the Church's ban on artificial contraception, the Pope cited the teachings on this subject by Popes Pius XI and XII.

He stressed that these teachings did not constitute "a new or inhuman law," but were instead "a doctrine of honesty and wisdom."

Pope Paul began his talk by noting that the Second Vatican Council, in its constitution on the Church in the Modern World, had discussed marriage and the family.

However, he said, "it was impossible to have an exhaustive treatise in the Council hall in this matter, especially with regard to the serious and complicated problems of the norms dealing with birth" and it was for that reason he had set up the special commission in 1964.

He said the commission had been entrusted with the study of the complex and delicate problems of marriage "under the various aspects—scientific, historical, sociological and doctrinal—and it was being given the widest cooperation of bishops and experts."

"We invite you," the pontiff told the women's group, "to await the results of these studies, accompanying them with your prayers. The magisterium of the Church cannot propose moral norms unless there is certainty, the Church is obligated to carry out researches and examine many questions from all parts of the world as they are proposed for her consideration."

"This operation," the Pope cautioned, "will often be lengthy and difficult."

He went on to summarize the contents of the chapter of the Vatican Council's constitution on the Church in the Modern World dedicated to matrimony and the family.

"Matrimony and the family," he said, "are not the work of man alone, but come from God. They are the work of God and respond to a divine and essential plan. By means of matrimony and the family, God has united two of the greatest human realities: the mission to transmit life and the legitimate love of man and woman through which they have been called upon to complete together a reciprocal gift which is not only physical, but above all spiritual."

"In this light, married couples will find a natural and necessary way these laws of unity, indissolubility and faithfulness. The conditions of present-day life—different from that of the past in many aspects and varying in different nations—certainly do not justify egotism or a timidity without faith in God in the accomplishment of this primary mission of spouses (the transmission of life)."

It requires, instead, "mature and conscious decisions" in the "search for the greatest good," the Pope said.

"Christian married couples," he added, "will find in the duty of love the light to solve their personal problems. In the observance of the divine law, God has, in fact entrusted to their responsible decision—the task and joy of transmitting life and no one could substitute for them or force their will. But they should aim at a truly full and universal love, at a love toward God, at love toward the children—a reciprocal love for which each seeks the welfare of the other and does not impose one's will."

"The law of love toward God, toward the spouse and toward the children, with the consequent responsibilities clearly indicates that matrimony and a Christian family call for a moral undertaking. They are not an easy way of Christian life, although it is the most common, that which the majority of the sons of God are called upon to undertake. It is rather a long road toward sanctification which is nurtured with joys and sacrifices of each day of life when it is guided by the law of God and imbued with love."

War on Divorce Denied

Wilson had accused Tobin of being "in opposition to meaningful divorce reform."

"On the contrary, our efforts and our cooperation with the joint legislative committee has been directed toward expected action on legislation at this legislative session," Tobin said. "We had the opportunity on Sept. 29 and Dec. 1 to appear before public hearings to give our views," he declared.

The spokesman for the state's Catholic bishops then reiterated those views in a seven-point statement:

"1. We believe in the perma-

nence of marriage, and we maintain that society must find feasible programs to protect and foster such permanence.

"2. Legislation on marriage and divorce is concerned not only with the rights of individuals. It has profound effect upon society and family life. We are disturbed over the present heavy toll which marriage dissolution and remarriage levy upon families and children.

"3. We do recognize that fraud, collusion and perjury have been brought about through the misuse of our present matrimonial laws and procedure.

"4. We are aware that there are those in our pluralistic society who do not agree with our belief that marriage is indissoluble. Despite inference to the contrary, we do not seek to impose our beliefs upon the civil law of marriage and divorce.

"5. As responsible citizens interested in promoting the common good, we have urged and will continue to urge that divorce and the right to remarry be carefully guarded.

"6. If the evidence clearly establishes that the common good in New York will be advanced by some modifications

in the grounds for divorce, we urge that such change must not be permitted to foster or encourage dissolution of marriage.

"7. Accordingly, we again express our concern that the grounds for divorce not be broadened—that the law could, in effect, be permitting divorce by consent."

"We are preparing now to appear at the public hearing on Feb. 25, at which time we will have comment to make on the specific provisions of the proposed bill," Tobin said.

The only basis for divorce in New York is adultery. Critics of the current legislation claim, in effect, that it does more harm than good. It results in persons simulating adultery, seeking divorce in other states, or entering illicit unions, critics say.

The reform bill would extend the grounds to include sexual deviation; desertion for two or more years; extreme cruelty; sentencing of a spouse to prison for five years or more; and voluntary living apart for two years or more. It would also set up a conciliation court whose function would be to provide marriage counseling for marriages deemed salvageable.

State Law May Change, Catholic Doctrine Stays

Current debate on reform of the New York State divorce law and the fact that well-known Catholics are sometimes reported as getting "divorced" does not change the Catholic Church's claim that "once married, always married."

In a nation that includes people of many and diversified religious beliefs, the Church does not seek to impose by law its own faith and practices on others.

The Church sometimes permits its own members, in those marriages where continued living together is impossible, to obtain a civil divorce solely for the legal effects, but Catholics are not thereby authorized by the Church to marry again.

Catholic officials are convinced that the Church's prohibition against easing civil divorce requirements is based on more than just religious reasons—on complex sociological and psychological reasons as well. These officials, such as Mr. Charles Tobin, who serves as spokesman for the Catholic bishops of New York State, are anxious that these factors be thoroughly considered in any proposed revision of New York State's 179-year old divorce law.



Orphans Caught in War's Path

South Vietnam (RNS)—A small child is held by a Vietnamese nun from the Catholic orphanage in the Mang Bang village of South Vietnam as they await evacuation by a U.S. helicopter in the face of a Viet Cong attack. Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Brigade rescued all personnel from the orphanage. The GI's also evacuated 30 families from the village.