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Conscience A Stern Guide

Wilmette, Ill. (NC)—A Belgian theologian said here that freedom of conscience is not necessarily the equivalent of having a good time.

"Following one's conscience is frequently quite difficult and inconvenient," Father Piet Fransen, S.J., said. Father Fransen spoke at Loyola Academy.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to assume that because we like something it must be wrong, or that God dislikes it, he said. "This is a typical Jansenist attitude, very common in certain Christian countries," he explained.

"The beginning of following one's conscience is in fundamentally deciding not to listen to any voice of selfishness," Father Fransen asserted.

He said Christians must have an adult knowledge of their religion if they expect to enjoy their heritage of freedom of conscience. He said the key

to this knowledge was being able to distinguish the important issues from the side-issues, the things which can't be changed from the many which can.

Catholic Legislators Propose Divorce Reform

Albany — (RNS) — A new divorce reform bill was introduced in the legislature by three Catholic legislative leaders who have been accused of "stalling" on the earlier measure, known as the Wilson bill.

Supporters of the original bill immediately attacked some provisions of the second measure as being "unworkable," "cruel" and "unconstitutional" — and promised a floor fight.

The bill unveiled by the legislative leaders retains some of the Wilson proposals, adds several new grounds, limits out-of-state divorces obtained by New Yorkers, and sets up an elaborate reconciliation process designed to save marriages.

Sponsors of the second measure are Assembly Speaker Anthony J. Travia, Senate Majority Leader Earl W. Brydges, and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman John H. Hughes. The proposed legislation to revise the state's 179-year-old divorce law—which permits adultery as the sole ground—is being handled by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In a statement the three legislative leaders admitted that their bill "incorporates many

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Golden Rose, Gift to Shrine
Vatican City—(RNS)—Pope Paul VI blesses a solid gold rose sent to the Marine shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. With him at the ceremony in the Sistine Chapel is Msgr. Salvatore Capoferri, master of pontifical ceremonies. The papal roses are sent as a token of special reverence and devotion to cathedrals, basilicas and shrines.

New Theology Sees Church a Servant

(Continued from Page 1)

He said Catholic theologians believe in it and, furthermore, Catholic seminary students "simply will not stand for" a return to oldline theology.

• The role of laymen in the Church.

Dominican Father Yves Congar of France analyzed the relationship of laymen and bishops and said bishops should "listen willingly to the laity and leave them a considerable amount of freedom and initiative."

Redemptorist Father Bernard Haering, German moral theologian, discussed the concept of the "universal vocation to sanctity." He said it does not "diminish the special vocation" of priests and nuns but simply underlines the fact that "their special vocation to holiness is total service."

The question of ordaining women as deaconesses and even as priests was raised at the session at which Fathers Congar and Haering spoke.

Father Congar said he regards limiting the priesthood to men as part of the divine plan for the Church. Father Haering, however, was less sure and said he would "not want to close the door on" the idea of women priests. He said further that he could see no objection to ordaining women as deaconesses and noted that women are already carrying out functions appropriate to the diaconate—like preaching and teaching—in various parts of the world.

• Relations with Non-Catholics.

The Constitution of the Church has major implications for the future of ecumenism because of its teaching on membership in the Church, speakers said.

Father Congar said the constitution teaches that all baptized persons are "members of the People of God" although those outside the Catholic Church "do not enjoy all the benefits" of such membership. As for unbaptized, he said they too possess "an order or relation to the People of God" consisting at least in the fact that they are "called to salvation."

Paulist Father Thomas Strasky, an American priest on the staff of the Vatican's Secretariat for Promoting Christian

Unity, said the Council teaches that the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic" Church of Christ "subsists in" the Roman Catholic Church but is not identical with it.

Rabbi Marc M. Tanenbaum, director of the American Jewish Committee's Interreligious Affairs Department, called mutual ignorance one of the biggest problems in Jewish-Christian relations.

He said relations between Negroes and whites, in that in both cases groups which up to now have related to each other by means of "abstractions, stereotypes and mythologies" are seeking to know each other as they really are.

• Revelation.

Passionist Father Barnabas Ahern, an American Scripture scholar, said the Council's Constitution on Divine Revelation makes it clear that "Inerrancy"—freedom from error—means when applied to the Bible.

The significance of "inerrancy," he said, is that "God's authorship of the sacred texts guarantees that the saving truths taught in this book and the saving realities described provide the sure way of salvation without error."

• The Church in the world.

The Council gave a major new orientation to teaching on the relationship of the Church and its members to the secular world, it was agreed. Father Ahern remarked that it affirmed the "tremendous truth" that "all worthwhile human activity is part of the creative plan of God and of the redemptive ministry of Christ."

The conference devoted considerable attention to special issues treated by the chapters of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. This in turn prompted the only statement issued by the conference—a declaration on world poverty decrying the "burning scandal" of Western indifference to the problem and urging Christians to work for its solution.

Canon Charles Moeller of Belgium said the constitution does not take up the problem of

contemporary atheism in order to launch "anathemas" against it but in order to understand and remedy it.

The remedy for atheism, he added, lies not only in a proper exposition of Christian doctrine but also in the lives of Christians. "The richness of the Christian faith," he said, "must appear more clearly, particularly in the realm of practical aid and effective charity."

Father Haering, speaking on the chapter on marriage and family life, called the conjugal act a "true word" which must express both "mutual self-giving" and the "procreative good."

He said the constitution teaches a doctrine of "responsible parenthood." But this, he added, is "not the same as a 'planned parenthood' with cold human reckoning."

A lively discussion of the relationship of ecclesiastical authority and the "prophetic witness" of individuals on social problems like war, poverty and discrimination sparked one session.

Participants agreed that authority must give the individual "prophet"—the freedom to express himself, but that the "prophet" must not try to pressure authority into making his position prematurely the official position of the Church.

• The future of theology.

Theology must come to grips with the problems of today and tomorrow—not yesterday—if it is to have a future, several speakers agreed in papers delivered at the close of the conference.

Father Burghardt said "tomorrow's theology dare not simply mouth yesterday's" as it seeks to meet the needs of a "God-forsaken" world which experiences God chiefly by His absence.

Dr. Albert Outler, theology professor at Southern Methodist University, said Catholic and Protestant theology will be "vitaly interrelated" from now on. He said they may be destined to share "not only a common history but also... a common fate."

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Council

Catholics of the Los Angeles archdiocese took another step back from the twentieth century this week.

A book containing the text of the Vatican Council decision banning books from arc san high schools.

The book bears the imprint (authorization) of more's Cardinal Lawrence.

Reason for the Los Angeles ban was inclusion of Catholic and Protestant and other scholars as well as Catholics.

The ban was decided on to the book's publication.

Jesuit Father Walter J. Abbott, associate editor of the book, said that the ban was "trying to 'immature' minds from generous ideas" the act taken "before he even had the book."

The Jesuit editor said the time Father Montini's letter to principl Feb. 10, no advance copy pages were in circ

A copy of Father Montini's letter made available to men pointed out the existence of "an movement of lay people archdiocese criticizing textbooks that are being in religion classes."

The school superintendent wrote that "because of no way of evaluating" Catholic portions of the volume "at the present and because of the strong reaction of lay to the idea of placing cularies by Non-Catholics hands of our students, that we should be very in this matter."

"I would advise again this book into the hands of our students."

Among the prominent Catholics who wrote Dr. Albert C. Bennett, president of the "Theological Seminary"

Pope Greet Patriarch On Birthday

Vatican City — (RNS) Pope Paul VI sent 801 day greetings to a "my loved brother" — Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, leader of Eastern Orthodoxy.

In the message, written on behalf of the Pope's Patriarch of his "profuse brotherly affection in Our Jesus Christ."

He noted that the Patriarch's birthday is March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, one of the most important feast days of the Virgin Mary, "the Mother of God under patronage your long, good life has been carried the service of her Divine grace."

The pontiff also recalled the events of 1965 when the Patriarch and Pope annulled mutual communications leveled at their predecessors in 1954.

He said that the "reconciliation" had "strengthened bringing peace and brotherly charity."

Crucifix Irks Court Witn

Nuremberg — (RNS) law suit was postponed nity here when a witness refused to testify so long as a crucifix was prominently displayed in the courtroom.

The witness, an attorney undergoing questioning under the oath of a secular court should be to testify under the oath of religion. He maintained the practice of placing crucifixes in courtrooms unconstitutional, holding the state and its justice are required not only to be neutral in observance.

The presiding justice postponed the trial until a one-sided witness could be received from the court.

Prelate Prai Strike Lead

San Antonio — (RNS) Cesar Chavez, leader of the National Farm Workers Union, which has been picketing grape fields in the San Joaquin Valley in California for months, this week received warm praise from Roman Catholic Archbishop Robert Lucey of San Antonio.