

# What's a Bishop to do according to Vatican II?

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through his episcopal consecration.

The principles thus established, there was need to indicate their application.

There had been before the Council a schema entitled "On Bishops and the Governing of Dioceses." Its bearing, everyone sensed, was uncertain, until the dogmatic consideration of the role of bishops was clarified. This having been achieved in the third session with the adoption of the Constitution on the Church, discussion was made simpler for a substantially rewritten document — and which were added elements from a discarded schema on the "Care of Souls" — of three chapters describing the function and the modes of action of a Catholic bishop amid, as the decree declares, "the conditions of human association which have brought about a new order of things in our times."

Chapter I of the decree, "The Relationship of Bishops to the Universal Church, and the Synod of Bishops," instituted by Paul VI at the beginning of the present session. It envisages this new "Senate of the Church" as a permanent manifestation of the principle of collegiality; noting that since this body "shall be acting in the name of the entire Catholic episcopate, it will at the same time show that all the bishops in hierarchical communion partake of the solicitude for the universal Church."

This collective responsibility, it is noted, should urge bishops to interest actively their faithful in the worldwide enterprise of evangelization, of aiding areas where priests are few and where the Church is excluded. It indicates a spirit of solidarity in the universal episcopate.

The Roman Curia is acknowledged as the ensemble of agencies of the Pope performing "his duties in his name and with his authority for the good of the churches and in the service of the sacred pastors." The decree, however, does not hesitate to express the desire that these departments of the Holy See "be reorganized and better adapted to the needs of the times, regions, and rites especially as regards their number, name, competence and peculiar method of procedure, as well as the coordination of work among them," a reorganization announced by Pope Paul more

than two years ago whose details have been under study by a committee headed by Francesco Cardinal Roberti.

As the Pope had suggested at that time, the decree urges that the departments of the Curia so part more fully to the supreme pontiff's thinking, the desires and the needs of all the churches. But the decree goes further. It states: "Finally, the Fathers of the Council think it would be most advantageous if these same departments would listen more attentively to laymen who are outstanding for their virtue, knowledge and experience. In such a way they will have an appropriate share in Church affairs."

The consciousness of the dignity of the diocesan bishop is manifest in the decree's demand that "the office of legates of the Roman pontiff be more widely determined" and that these local representatives of the Pope "be more widely taken from various regions of the Church." Moreover, save for cases which have been especially reserved to the Pope, the decree asserts that bishops, as successors of the Apostles, possess in the diocese entrusted to them "per se all the ordinary, proper and immediate authority which is required for, the

exercise of their pastoral office."

## Bishops to Elect Missions Head

New York (NC) — Bishop Fulton J. Sheen's successor as national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith is expected to be chosen at the U.S. bishops' annual meeting Nov. 14-18 in Washington, D.C.

Bishop Sheen, who has headed the national society since Nov. 1, 1950, was named Bishop of Rochester last week.

The bishop will continue as director of the society until a successor is chosen by the U.S. bishops and confirmed by the Holy See, a spokesman said.

A spokesman for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith said that under Bishop Sheen's direction the U.S. society has been responsible for more than two-thirds of the worldwide total sent to the Holy See to further the Church's missionary work.

Last year, out of a worldwide contribution of about \$23 million, the U.S. accounted for some \$16 million.

The bishop has traveled extensively in Asia, Africa and Latin America to get first-hand information on the problems of the world's poor and the needs of the Church's mission program.

His work as national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith has spanned the reigns of three popes — Pope Pius XII, who appointed him to the post, Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI.

The bishop was the only American appointed to the Vatican Council's commission on the missions for the duration of the Council. He is now a member of the post-council commission on missions.

Cardinal Spellman of New York, to whom Bishop Sheen has been serving as auxiliary, praised both Bishop Sheen and Bishop Kearney, whom he succeeds as bishop of Rochester.

The Cardinal described Bishop Kearney as a "wonderful shepherd to the people of Rochester" and "an old friend who has cooperated with me in many labors."

He cited his "deep respect" for Bishop Sheen and his "admiration for the extraordinary talents with which God has blessed him."

"All those talents and every ounce of his energy he has dedicated to the missions, to spreading Christ's kingdom across the wide world and to begging for God's needy everywhere. What he has done for the missions can never be measured, but it is certain that in every part of the world his name is held in grateful memory by countless thousands," he said.

The Cardinal said that in Bishop Sheen "the people of Rochester are gaining a distinguished leader in these challenging times which follow the Second Vatican Council."

concerning the ownership, increase and just distribution of material goods, peace and war, and brotherly relations among all countries."

Such teaching will be more effective to the extent that it takes into account the social circumstances in which the faithful live. Twice social research is endorsed. Moreover, the active assistance of the laity is supposed. For the bishops are told that "they should preserve for their faithful the share proper to them in Church affairs, they should also respect their duty and right of actively collaborating in the building up of the Mystical Body of Christ."

Aiding the diocesan bishop in the apostolate will be, depending on local circumstances, coadjutor bishops, auxiliary bishops, episcopal vicars, vicars apostolic, diocesan councils, all of whose duties are set down. Indispensable in all cases is the collaboration of priests, especially the diocesan clergy, who constitute "one presbytery and one family whose father is the bishop."

That a greater harmony of wills, so fruitful for the good of souls, be fostered, "let the bishop call the priests into dialogue, especially about pastoral matters." Moreover, the decree continues: "This he should do not only on a given occasion but at regular fixed intervals insofar as this is possible."

As for priests who are members of religious congregations, they are subject to the local bishop in all matters of the apostolate, maintaining all the while the specific spirit of their own religious family as the bishop must not fail to insist.

By the very nature of their mandate and purpose, bishops are independent of civil authority. The right of nominating or appointing bishops, therefore, should belong exclusively to the Church and such privileges should not in the future be accorded to governments. Indeed, the decree urges civil authorities now enjoying such rights by reason of treaty or custom — Spain comes to mind — voluntarily to renounce them.

The final chapter of the decree is concerned with the collective exercise of episcopal authority, notably in the form of national episcopal conferences. Here the United States pioneered by establishing after World War I the National Catholic Welfare Conference as the voluntary but common instrument of the American hierarchy.

In the interest of more effective apostolic action the decree wants bishops belonging to the same nation or region to organize an association which will meet at fixed times. Such a project is "practically completed, since it is the national episcopal conferences which will nominate the majority of members of the Synod of Bishops, the 150-man "Senate of the Church" which will make available the experience of Catholicism through the world for the guidance of the Pope.

Among the additional tasks of these national episcopal conferences will be a review of the

present boundaries of dioceses and ecclesiastical provinces, the creation and supervision of inter-diocesan projects and the support of the diocese composed of those in the armed services.

For the conduct and attitudes of the individual bishop the decree suggests, but not exhaustively, the day-by-day expectations of the exalted and central place accorded him in the Constitution on the Church. The present formula of promulgation of conciliar documents testifies to an effective recognition of the dignity of the episcopate, the fruit of profound, contemporary theological reflection. Thus, the decrees of the First Vatican Council were announced with this introductory phrase: "Plus bishop, servant of the servants of God, with the appropriation of this sacred Council..." The language of Pope Paul and of Vatican II is different. The pontiff begins with the announcement: "The decrees before this sacred Council have received the approval of the Fathers. We also... in union with the venerable Fathers..."

The spirit and structures of Eastern Christianity with its emphasis on a communion of faith and a unity built from local communities around their bishop were not notably present

at Vatican I. Its specific experience of synodal forms on different levels of Church organization is today influencing the Roman Church as Vatican II demonstrates.

With the inspiration and guidance of the present documents, what will be the style of the post-conciliar Catholic bishop of the next generations? He will be, to the extent that he is faithful to the teaching of Vatican II, essentially "pastoral in purpose and in attitude, mindful that the Word literally invokes Christ's charge "to feed" his sheep.

He will be devoted to people before programs, actively seeking contact with all men, believers and unbelievers; but especially with the poor and the disadvantaged.

He will know his priests and his faithful and will enlarge their spiritual horizons, communicating a universal vision of the concerns of Christ which are coextensive with those of humanity itself. He will be a personally-coasting thing, the servant of all.

## Marriage Theme At Catholic U.

Washington (RNS) — An official and two other members of the papal commission on birth problems are scheduled to address the first international and interdisciplinary symposium on "Christian Marriage in the Age of Vatican Council II" set for the Catholic University of America, here, Nov. 8-10.

The Vatican official is Father Henri de Riedmatten, a Dominican priest from Geneva, Switzerland, who is executive secretary of the papal commission

## Women to Be Clergy Advisers

West Paterson (NC) — Bishop Lawrence B. Casey of Paterson said here he expects women to play a vital role in the life of the diocese.

Speaking at the annual convention of the Paterson Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, he said women "will be called upon to act on parish school boards, the CCD, Legion of Mary, and projects affecting the general community welfare."

The bishop said it was his intention to name a woman to the board of directors of the new Paterson diocesan weekly, "The Beacon," which will begin publishing in January.

He cautioned the women against a spirit of "spiritual isolationism" and "I don't care" attitudes toward such pressing problems as public housing, illiteracy, urban renewal and social injustice.

studying family, population and birth problems.

Other Catholic experts on such topics as divorce, the rhythm method, sex education and moral theology are listed to participate in this first primary theological meeting to be chaired by a layman, Dr. John R. Cavanaugh, a psychiatrist here who recently completed a study of the experience of Catholic couples with the rhythm method. He is a papal commission member.

THE SESSIONS are intended, according to Dr. Cavanaugh, to "both clearly re-state the traditional position of the Church wherever this is possible, and to inform competent men and women of serious re-thinking which is being done in the various disciplines related to marriage."

Dr. Cavanaugh said that since the last 10 years there have been innumerable conflicting views presented on the theology and pastoral aspects of marriage, "it seems both possible and desirable now to clarify the thinking of clergy and laity on these questions." He said that the symposium was planned to answer relevant questions as clearly and correctly as is possible at this time.

At the three-day gathering, a total of six talks are scheduled, one each morning and afternoon. These sessions consist of three parts: the main talk; group discussion, divided according to specialization; and question-and-answer periods with the principal speaker.

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