

'Modernism' Now Obsolete Says Scripture Scholar

Pittsburgh —(RNS)—A professor of Sacred Scripture at St. Louis Seminary declared here that it is time the Roman Catholic Church reassessed the "Modernism episode," and repudiated many of its vestiges remaining in the Church.

Vicentian Father Bruce Vawter, speaking at the 12th National and 5th Inter-American Congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, said "it is probably safe to say that no heresy ever marked the Church and its thinking and provoked such violent and lasting reactions as did this one."

(The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1911, defines Modernism as the system which "aims at that radical transformation of human thought in relation to God, man, the world, and life, here and hereafter, which was prepared by Humanism and 19th Century philosophy, and solemnly promulgated at the French Revolution." It was condemned by the encyclical, "Pascendi," on Sept. 8, 1907).

Father Vawter commented that "very often it was not the Modernists said that was wrong, but the reason for their saying it, it was rightly called 'the distillation of all the heresies.'"

But, he continued, "condemners . . . have a way of becoming proportionized rather than personalized; it is possible to know the 79 Balan errors by heart without ever knowing that there was a Michel du Bay."

"This is not to deny, too, that some of what the Modernists said was very wrong in any case, regardless of their reason for saying it," he declared. "But at all events, it is very true that many precious insights on which we now depend in our gauging of truth and relevancy, which we label nowadays personalist or existentialist or phenomenological; that much of the methodology which we take for granted in scriptural studies and positive theology; that some of the very terminology that we now find indispensable not only to ourselves, but that much of this first came into the Church through Modernist hands — or through hands that, by associa-

tion, were thought to be Modernist."

Father Vawter said, "It has taken a long time, and the end is not yet, for the average Catholic to sort out and distinguish between what was Modernist and what was merely modern."

He added that "it is still necessary sometimes to explain how 'Modernist' terminology is perfectly innocent and valid when divorced from the erroneous presuppositions with which Modernism employed it."

The priest said "the period of 'the Modernist crisis' was most definitely ill-suited to the assimilation of new insights into Catholic doctrine and practice from any source that had anything really new to say or which said it in a new way. It is indeed difficult to imagine the Church of that period affirming, as the Fathers of Vatican II affirmed, that the Church is 'the pupil of the Holy Spirit . . . concerned to move ahead daily toward a deeper understanding of the sacred scriptures so that she may unceasingly feed her sons with the divine words.'"

And this is a pity, Father Vawter continued, "since in that age precisely the human mind and consciousness and their processes underwent clinical analysis for the first time, and something really new became known about the human personality, the recipient and the vehicle of biblical revelation."

He added that "it was a great pity for many other reasons." He explained: "Philosophy, psychology, the Protestant experience, biblical study on every level — all had much to offer to theology in those times. It took the Second Vatican Council — in many ways the most genuinely ecumenical council of the Roman Church ever to be assembled — to show us how much, despite all, and regardless of official appearances to the contrary, the Church had been affected by those influences."

Father Vawter stated that "to the extent that the Second Vatican Council did, indeed, find itself and assert itself as the voice of the Catholic Church in the 20th Christian Century, and

in the spirit of its decrees, it may be hoped that 'the Modernist crisis' may be declared over and done with."

He said "it is not simply a matter of eliminating the anachronistic and simplistic oath against Modernism imposed at various stages of ecclesiastical preferment, hierarchical and academic; it means a declaration that the Church has gone on, that it has confidence in its present and future, that it is content no longer to be the Church of Plus IX or Plus X simply because it is now the Church of John XXIII and Paul VI."

The oath against Modernism ties the Church to Loisy and Lenan and Tyrell in a way that it should not be tied, and, perhaps, unintentionally opposes it to men like von Hugel and Newman and Acton in a way that it was never really opposed."

"The Church that produced the documents of Vatican II does not require the periodic reassurance of a loyalty oath of this kind," the priest concluded.

The CCD congress opened here with thousands of delegates from the United States, Canada and Latin America. Paul Cardinal Marella, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions, represented Pope Paul VI as his legate. Archbishop Egidio Vagnoni, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, was among scores of prelates attending.

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South of the Border will be the setting for Cardinal Mooney High School Women's Guild Card Party to be held at the School Saturday, Nov. 5, at 8 p.m. Proceeds will be used to purchase audio-visual equipment. Mrs. Charles Laramee, Mrs. Robert Wallace and Mrs. Eugene Wegman are chairmen. (Photo by D. Naggio)

Passionist, Father Hubble Earns Bronze Star Medal

Chaplain Nilus W. Hubble, a Lieutenant Commander serving with the U.S. Marines was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service as Regimental Chaplain with the Fourth Marines in Vietnam.

The citation from the Chief of Chaplains reads in part:

"Chaplain Hubble displayed uncommon valor, traveling in the area of the combat base at Chu Lai in spite of the inherent risks. During Operation Double Eagle, he disregarded his own safety and repeatedly exposed himself to hostile fire in order to provide religious guidance to men of all faiths. As Hospital Chaplain at Phu Bai, he ministered to the sick and wounded and provided comfort and encouragement when it was most needed."

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Hubble of Hilton, Father Hubble, a member of the Congregation of the Passion was ordained at the Passionist Monastery, Jamaica, L.I., on June 2, 1950.

Before entering the Passionist order, he attended Hilton grammar school and Aquinas Institute, Rochester.

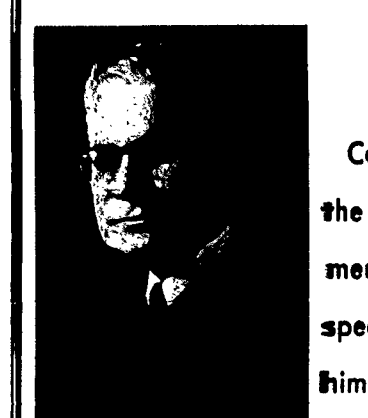
Mercy Guild

His admission coincided with an article in Commonweal, national Catholic weekly published by laymen, questioning the status and relevancy of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The article was entitled "CCD—RITE?"

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The Arm of Eve

Cleveland — (RNS) — "The Arm of Eve," drawn in 1507 by the famed German artist, Albrecht Durer, is among 160 works of art selected from a wide range of cultures and periods for a special exhibition at the Cleveland Museum of Art to mark its Golden Anniversary Year.

Mary Hoefen Requiem Held, Prelate's Kin

Solemn funeral Mass for Miss Mary Hoefen was celebrated by her brother, Monsignor Frank J. Hoefen, in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on Monday, Oct. 24. Very Rev. Gerard Krieg was deacon of the Mass, and Rev. Michael Volpe, subdeacon.

In attendance were Monsignors George Eckl, John Maney and George Schmitt; also, Reverend Fathers James Baker, Benedict Ehmann, Albert Geiger, Joseph Reinhart, Elmer Schmidt, Alexander Stec and William Trott.

Miss Hoefen, 83, of 423 Clifford Ave., died Friday, Oct. 21, 1968. In addition to her brother, Monsignor Hoefen, she is survived by three nieces, Mrs. Charles Leimberger, Mrs. Howard Kleisley and Mrs. William Fogarty; two nephews, William and Willard Hoefen, and several grandnieces and grandnephews.

Interment was made in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, where the blessing of the grave was given by Monsignor Hoefen, assisted by Father Volpe.

Arrangements by August M. Malex Funeral Home.

Kearney Mothers

Mothers Club of Bishop Kearney High School meeting Thursday, Nov. 10 at 8 p.m., school auditorium. Usable clothing and toys collected for St. Joseph's Villa. Entertainment by Eastman Kodak Musical Notes.

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