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**Don't Fear
Confusion**

By FATHER LOUIS J. HOHMAN
Diocesan Director of Vocations

Once upon a time the Roman Catholic Church seemed to present to the world a remarkably united front, not only in matters of essential doctrine, but even in the details of its organization. Then came John XXIII, the aggiornamento, Vatican II, and all that was changed overnight. Substantial numbers of Catholics today are more than a little disturbed by the seeming chaos in the Church. To them things are

The old comfortable, secure order has vanished and in its place is massive confusion. Some are no doubt afflicted with the checkerboard world syndrome. Everything must be black or white — the good guys wear the white hats and the bad guys wear the black hats, with the built in consolation that the white hats will inevitably triumph.

This latter attitude represents a singular immaturity or at least an abysmal ignorance of the world as it really is. It is not, we should add, the reason why many others are basically conservative in their attitude toward the changes in the Church. It is for one thing not easy to change after a lifetime of thinking and acting in a pretty much fixed manner. This is easily understandable and should be accepted by even the most liberal. There is also the inability on the part of some to distinguish the unchangeable, Divine elements in the Church from the humar changeable elements.

I sometimes wonder if even the hierarchy and theologians are able to do this in any definitive way, at least at present. Finally there are many individuals who are conservative because they see the stability of the Rock of Peter as being shaken, and in their minds that simply cannot be.

Obviously priests have chosen sides in this matter too, and just about every clerical gathering is marked by a discussion of some point involving liberals vs. conservatives. No one comes off winner — rather each usually becomes more deeply rooted in his own convictions. Still I sincerely think that it is precisely these discussions, not only among priests, but among the bishops and the laity which will eventually end the confusion.

A word about confusion. Do we have to regard it as something evil? The word has its origin in a Latin word which means to pour things together. From this we might get the image of the baby pouring jello and chocolate milk into peasoup. This would be an incorrect image. Rather it is like a chemist mixing chemicals — at least the outcome can be happy.

At the very beginning of the Book of Genesis we read of the creation of the heavens and the earth. And the earth says the Sacred Writer was "tohu wobohu" — a shapeless mass, a chaos. In other words, there was confusion, things were all poured together. Then comes the important line — the Spirit of God hovered over the chaos, began to unfold it, give it shape and beauty and meaning and order. So you see, the confusion was merely a part of the process of becoming.

Anyone who has had anything to do with young people knows that their most noticeable, if not most important characteristics

are confusion. They are confusing to their elders and are themselves confused. Which is just another way of saying that they are becoming — becoming integrated, mature adults. I would be much more concerned about a young man who was completely settled than about one who was confused, simply because the former was probably being a mere spectator to life, out of it, half dead. The confused young man would with guidance (especially of the Holy Spirit) become something.

Really this is a law of life. All living things emerge from some sort of confusion — from the grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies (disintegrates) to the young man mentioned above. Non-living things, once set, are stationary, orderly, but utterly without dynamism.

In this sense should we not be happy with the confusion in the Church today? It can very well be regarded as the sign of inner dynamism in the Church — the living reality of its becoming. We teach that the Church is indeed a living body — the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ. In his physical being he advanced not only in age but in wisdom and grace. Should we expect anything different in his Mystical Body, the Church?

The key to the whole thing is the Spirit of God working in that confusion, just as he hovered over the primeval chaos. (There might be a hint here for parents as to the importance of the spiritual in the lives of their children) We believe that the Spirit of God was active in Vatican Council II. We must believe that he will be continually active in the implementation of the acts of that Council. We must emphasize the virtue of faith but we cannot neglect the virtue of hope and trust in that same Holy Spirit.

Priests under their bishops are going to be the leaders in the unfolding of the Church for our times. Therefore I feel they above all must not lament the confusion but rather, with a solid trust in God, calm people's fears. They must themselves be and teach the people to be open to the inspirations of the Spirit. The hierarchy is not and never was the whole Church and as the Council tells us, the Spirit can reveal to the Church through the laity in whom He also dwells.

Priests must be willing more and more to "talk shop" in their gatherings and discuss the areas of confusion calmly and openly. Without open minds to the possibilities of the Church's evolution, there is the serious danger of creating a real block to the operation of the Spirit. We must remember that the real meat of the Council came from the grass roots over a period of many years previous to the Council.

And if we doubt our competence in theological matters,

Port Credit, Ont. — (NC) — A recommendation that Catholic laymen be ordained to serve as deacons at Canadian colleges and universities is likely to go to the Canadian bishops from a chaplains' meeting here.

It is one of several recommendations considered at a three-day study session here attended by 42 priests representing chaplaincy services at 35 English universities and colleges from Vancouver, B.C., to St. John's, Nfld. Eighteen runs of various religious communities interested in university work also attended.

In a tentative concluding statement, participants at the meeting here agreed that the arrival of the Church on the campus does not wait upon the coming of the chaplain. It is already there in the persons of Christian professors, staff and students, the statement said.

The apostolate in this setting, it was also agreed, must be seen as rising from the specific needs of the university community, and not as something superimposed.

This apostolate, it was added, derives its character and dynamics, and even its forms, from the structure and spirit proper to universities.

It was in this context that discussion developed around a possible pilot project in which Catholic laymen established in the university setting might be considered for ordination as deacons to assist university chaplains.

**A Warning
From Pope**

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, in a message to the bishops of Holland, called for a halt to "certain ill-advised and erroneous opinions which at this time have obscured the purity of the Catholic faith on some points and troubled the firmness and serenity of many believing Catholics."

The Pope told participants in a pastoral conference at Utrecht — summoned to discuss ways and means of implementing the decrees of the Second Vatican Council — that "we expect from your studies a clear and firm profession of this same faith that removes all doubt as to its true formulation, and increases in the souls of the clergy and faithful of integral and loving adherence to the teaching authoritatively propounded by the magisterium of the Church."

Irish Envoy

Vatican City — (NC) — Pope Paul formally received Joseph F. Shields, new ambassador from the Republic of Ireland to the Holy See.

then we must read and study and read and study more. No time? I don't know the schedule of the parish priest? I ask in return — isn't there something less important in the schedule than this? I don't think we can leave this entirely up to the professional theologians, our guides though they be. The parish priest is at the grass roots and his contribution can be great.

Into the Church of our time the Spirit of God will bring beauty and greatness out of the chaos and confusion, but only if we cooperate and let him work in our minds and our hearts. In you, O Lord, have I hoped; I shall not be confounded forever.



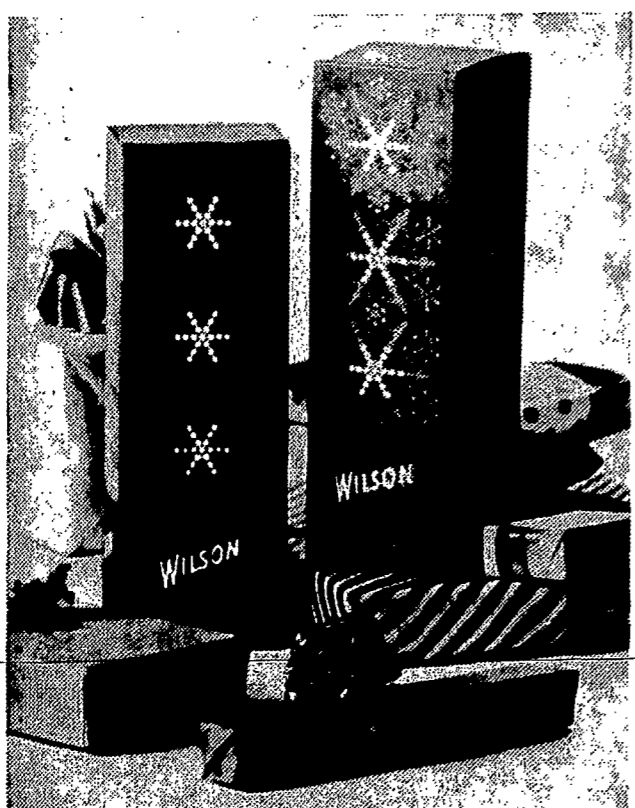
Garb for Priest in Japan

Chigasaki, Japan — (RNS) — Father Thomas Dowd of West Roxbury, Mass., a member of the Columban Fathers, models the change in approved street garb for Roman Catholic priests in Japan. At left, clerical outfit as it has been for many years; at right, the new and approved version. Father Dowd, chaplain to the convent of the Sister Adorers of the Precious Blood in Chigasaki, is one of 98 Columban missionaries in Japan.

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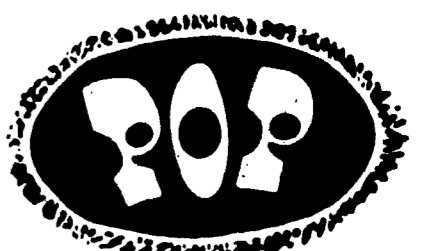
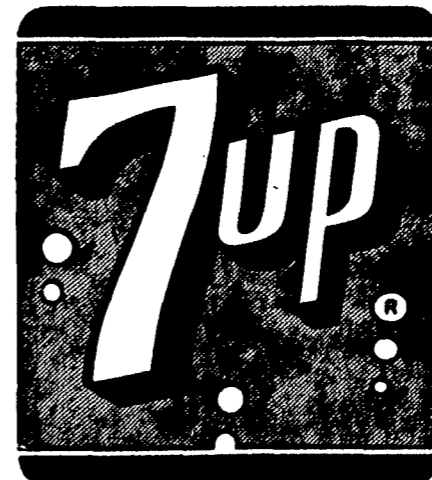
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