



### Nun, Prisoner Of Vietcong, Set Free

Phubinh, So. Vietnam — (RNS) — Sister Rosa, 64, a prisoner of Vietcong guerrillas for ten months, is shown with children at a school in Phubinh, South Vietnam, where she was being lodged temporarily following her freedom. The Vietnamese Catholic nun was released by South Vietnamese forces which overran a Vietcong camp in the Vinhbinh Province and found 18 handcuffed and blindfolded prisoners.

## Pope Advises Optimism

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI told Italian college students here that Vatican II's call for a more active laity is particularly applicable to university life.

He said the Council teaches the laity to look at life with the "optimistic spirit of love and put at the service of every good cause the qualities we possess and all the cooperation of which we are capable."

"This is being said," he added, "with particular reference to that workshop . . . which is the university, the environment in which you work and strive."

Addressing delegates to a Rome meeting of the Italian Catholic University Foundation, the Pope urged students to "orientate your direction finders toward the signals that come from the light and the positive values that surround you."

Observing that "there are many things to be deplored in the world," he said students must strive for a clear sense of what is wrong in the world and what are its shortcomings and modern needs.

### Priests for Tomorrow



## Priests and Laity

By FATHER LOUIS J. HOHMAN  
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One area in the parish priest's life which is marked for change is his relationship to the laity. For decades, if not centuries, the relationship has been that of the active priest and the passive layman. There are many historical factors which explain this.

The reduction of the priesthood by the sixteenth century reformers together with the accentuation of the priesthood of the laity caused an equal and opposite reaction on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. Then in our country there was the "father figure" image of the priests among the early immigrants.

This was further compounded by the problem of trusteeship in the nineteenth century, which saw aggressive segments of the laity react to the absolutism of the pastor's rule by efforts to take over various parishes and make the pastor subject to their will.

These various actions and reactions finally settled into more moderate patterns, but by no means was the role of the laity given its rightful importance until Vatican II made the first step in that direction.

What did Vatican II have to say about the laity's relations with pastors? "Let pastors recognize and promote the dignity as well as the responsibility of the laity in the Church." The dignity and responsibility of the laity are theologically grounded. Every member of the laity is by Baptism a member of the family of God, a temple of the Holy Spirit of God, a full member of the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Church is not the hierarchy or the priesthood but rather the sum total of members of Christ, having him as their Head. Moreover, by Confirmation the Christian becomes responsible for the building up and the maturation of the Mystical Body. He becomes an active, adult member of the Church, a positive cooperator in the apostolate of the Church in proportion to his talents and time.

Vatican II continues, "Let them (pastors) willingly employ their prudent advice. Let them confidently assign to them duties in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action. Further, let pastors encourage lay people so that they may undertake tasks on their own initiative. Attentively in Christ, let them consider with fatherly love the projects, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity. However, let pastors respectfully acknowledge that just freedom that belongs to everyone in this earthly city." Constitution on the Church, p. 37.

It is a well known fact that much needs to be done in this particular area.

Parish priests end up doing numerous chores which could easily be done by the laity or, in many cases, more competently done by the laity. Running dances, athletic programs, entertainments are time and energy consuming and necessarily divert the priest from some portion of his pastoral functions. Care of finances, schools, buildings, architecture and many other activities should be in the hands of the laity simply by reason of their greater competence in these areas. Granted that not all parishes would have laymen of competence in these areas, many do and simply do not make use of them.

Fortunately there is a great upsurge evident in the use of lay talent for catechetical work, and the apostolic activity of the Legion of Mary has been found to be immensely beneficial to the parish. What is to be deplored is the idea some priests have that they are by vocation, factum and absolute in the running of the parish. For one thing, men dislike being cast in the feminine role, the passive role in the parish. Their interest will die if they are regarded as mere recipients of the pastoral ministrations.

There is strong evidence to indicate that this is a primary cause of massive male defection from the Church in other areas of the world. We should be well aware of the danger of this happening here.

What this all boils down to is the gradually more democratic operation of the parish. Pastors of our time must learn to gather around themselves the interested and competent members of the parish in a team effort. After all, the American citizen of our time is deeply imbued with the spirit of our democracy. It is operative in their businesses as well as their social organizations. In both it has a good record and they know well that they are competent to share in the operation of the parish.

If the parish remains the one organization in their lives in which they have no say, no active part, we can blame only ourselves if we find the merely Mass Catholics, and not very active in that either. We don't have to worry about trusteeship in the modern Catholic. Trusteeship was simply an exaggerated reaction and no such reaction is likely if today's pastor will welcome his parishioners to participation in the team effort.

It seems to me the time has come for the activation of a parish council. The formation of a relatively democratic senate of bishops is already under way. The bishops of the United States now have elected officials and more democratic procedures. Why can this not be brought down to the parish level and made infinitely more effective than the one man operations we have in so many parishes today?

Various committees, liturgical, financial, school (school board?), building, apostolic, youth, organizational, could lend invaluable assistance to the harassed pastor, while building up a spirit in the parish of really belonging and really caring.

This program would, of course, require a great deal of orientation, not the least aspect of which would be a realization that the pastor is the representative of the bishop and of Christ and that his decisions must be respected and obeyed. The parish is not an independent unit in the Church but rather a part of that greater family, the diocese, and then of the whole Mystical Body of Christ.

Granted such revisions in parish structure take courage to implement and it won't happen over night. But now, it seems, is the time to begin. The Ecumenical Council has said, "Go." Now is the acceptable time.

### Lutherans

#### Visit Pope, Holy Land

Vatican City — (NC) — In an audience with students and faculty members from a midwestern U.S. college, Pope Paul VI expressed the hope that their travels had given them greater affection and respect for their fellowmen.

"The world needs love today as much as ever," he told 37 professors and students of St. Olaf (Lutheran) college of Northfield, Minn. "It is love that moves men to the service of their fellowmen," he said.

The group had just completed a three-month study tour of Jordan and Israel.

"We are confident," the Pope said in English, "that you found inspiration in the Holy Land, a place consecrated by the presence of Our Lord and teacher. The remaining vestiges speak eloquently of the early Christians and encourage all to take to heart the message of love which Christ taught to men. During this holy season of Christmas, the memories of your stay in the Holy Land become more precious.

"Your travels have given you a possibility of seeing different peoples," the Pope said, "and we are confident that you found that all have basically the same aspirations. Pray that your experiences will increase your affection and respect for your brothers."

### Priesthood Continues

## Secret Rites In N. Vietnam

Mineola, N.Y. — (RNS) — Secret ordinations of Roman Catholic priests are being conducted in North Vietnam, according to Father Joseph Duc Minh, director of the Secretariat for Vietnamese Missions and a native of North Vietnam.

Father Duc Minh told the Catholic Star Herald of Camden, N.J., that he knew of several dioceses where "seminarians — often lay brothers and catechists — were living in pastor's homes and receiving a basic education in Catholic theology. They are ordained when the pastors feel they are adequately prepared to carry on the duties of the priesthood, he said.

"THE VIETNAMESE priest, who is stationed here, came to the United States five years ago to serve the secretariat for the Vietnamese Missions in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Since that time, Father Duc Minh has completed studies toward his doctorate in science at St. John's University in Jamaica, and acted as a chaplain to the Vietnamese students on the campus. Recently, he served as chaplain to 37 Vietnamese soldier-paraplegics now being treated at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Castle Point, N.Y.

In discussing the secret ordinations, Father Duc Minh said, "I know of one diocese where

20 priests were ordained last year."

Communists have been waging a war of subversion against the Catholic Church since 1949, according to Father Duc Minh. He said that approximately 600 priests have fled North Vietnam since that time, leaving the 700,000 Catholics in the hands of 300 priests, most of whom are elderly.

"The Communists have always tried to avoid any sign that they were persecuting people because of their religion," he said. "Priests and prominent Catholics would be arrested as political reactionaries, pro-imperialists sympathizers, or simply 'bad citizens.'"

The difficulty for the Catholic in North Vietnam is to bear witness to their faith in the face of an enemy which refuses to make martyrs out of religious believers, he said.

"They are the 'dry martyrs' of Christianity," Father Duc Minh said. "They can live as Catholics, but to do so means to impose on themselves each day physical sufferings and mental torture."

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