

# 'Waverings' - the Price of Vitality

Paris — (RNS)—France's Roman Catholic bishops have replied to a letter in which Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, Pro-Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, warned against "perilous" viewpoints threatening the Catholic faith by implicitly rejecting its negative aspects.

In his letter, sent last July to national episcopal conferences, Cardinal Ottaviani warned against "abuses" of freedom in the Church and erroneous interpretations of the Second Vatican Council doctrines which he said prevailed in various areas. He condemned "strange and audacious opinions arising here and there which are more than slightly disturbing the souls of many of the faithful."

The French bishops' reply, set forth in a statement which ran ten pages, was the highlight of a plenary session of the episcopal conference held in Paris. The key passage of the reply read:

"The conclusion of the bishops is positive and serene. Doctrinal difficulties exist and a concerted effort is already in progress to surmount them. But the missionary impulse and spiritual hopes reinforced by the Council will easily prevail over motives for concern."

The statement said the French bishops did not want to reply to Cardinal Ottaviani's letter by analyzing one-by-one the points he raised. Rather, it said, they preferred to offer a reply centered on three themes: God and Christ; the Church; and Man and his Life.

The statement said the bishops regretted that Cardinal Ottaviani's enumeration of ten "abuses" "cut into slices" questions which they believed formed a whole. It said they regretted above all that basic questions concerning Christ ranked fifth on the Roman cardinal's list.

In their reply, therefore, the statement added, the bishops stressed that all that concerned God and Christ took precedence over any other considerations.

At a subsequent press conference, Archbishop Rene Louis M. Stourm of Sens said that in France one could not speak of "doctrinal errors" but of "waverings" only.

He said that in regard to the

theme, God and Christ, the French bishops held that atheism and the new philosophies required urgent thorough philosophical, theological and spiritual study.

Under the theme of the Church, he stated, the bishops dealt with the Catholic sense of authority, the values of Christian institutions, the role of the sacraments and the formation of faith.

"Regarding man," he added, "they discussed what a sense of

sin and a moral conscience are today." Archbishop Stourm said that in outlining the causes of doctrinal difficulties, the bishops pointed to such elements as the development of a scientific mentality and various aspects of modern life, stressing that greater theological research is needed.

At the same time, the archbishop reported, the hierarchy underscored the role of the laity "in imparting vitality to Catholic thought in France."

Replying to newsmen's questions, Archbishop Stourm said that among the doctrinal issues

which created difficulties for many were the miracles of the Gospels, original sin, and moral concepts in certain situations.

The hierarchy's answer was drawn up by the Permanent Council of the French Episcopate which said it recognized the need for the plenary assembly to collaborate more closely from now on with theologians and various experts, both priests and laymen.

The Council also studied the consequences of a report on social and economic problems published by the bishops last March.

It said this document, which

severely criticized capitalism and defended workers' rights, had had a profound impact on big business circles.

The text of the French bishops' reply to Cardinal Ottaviani was the result of many exchanges. Coadjutor Archbishop Pierre Vuillet of Paris personally consulted more than a dozen bishops. Another dozen or so spoke on the subject at the bishops' plenary assembly held at Lourdes last October. The apostolic region of southern France sent a collective answer, and some 50 bishops forwarded individual replies to the episcopate's Bureau of Doctrinal and Pastoral Studies.



SHARON ANN PUFFER

## Sharon Ann Puffer Mass Offered by Bishop Kearney

Bishop Kearney offered the Funeral Mass for Miss Sharon Ann Puffer in Holy Ghost Church, Friday, Dec. 23. Miss Puffer, 18, of 2875 Manitou Road, Ogden, a first year student at St. Mary's Hospital who was graduated from St. Agnes High School, Brighton last June died unexpectedly at St. Mary's Hospital, Dec. 19, 1968. She had been ill one week.

Assisting in the funeral services were Father John V. Rosse, Father Walter Cushing and Father Albert J. Geiger.

Miss Puffer was born in Rochester and was graduated from Holy Ghost School, Gates. She was a member of the Future Nurses' Club, Freshman Chorus and Freshman Writers' Club, Latin Club, Timon Club, Biology Club and Red Cross Club at St. Agnes. She was also a member of St. Mary's Hospital Nursing School Glee Club.

Surviving are her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Puffer and a sister, Lynn Mary.

Father Bernard Dollen gave the blessing at Holy Ghost Cemetery. Arrangements by Harold F. Wood Funeral Home.

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## Robert Sage Funeral Rites

Funeral services for Pfc. Robert David Sage, U.S. Marine Corps, who was killed in Viet Nam Dec. 10, were held Wednesday, Dec. 21 at St. Michael's Church.

Rev. Benedict A. Ehmann celebrated Requiem Mass, assisted by Rev. Elmer McDonald, Marine chaplain, who preached the eulogy. Rev. James Baker and Rev. Paul Cloonan were in the sanctuary.

Blessing at the grave was pronounced by Father Cloonan and Father McDonald.

Private Sage, who would have been 20 years old Dec. 18 is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Sage of 108 Harris St.; three brothers, John W. Sage, and Phillip and Russell Sage, both in the U.S. Air Force.

Robert attended St. Michael's School, St. Andrew's Seminary and Aquinas Institute. Before entering the service, he was employed as a steward at Oak Hill Country Club.

**Vocations Increase**  
Dallas — (NC) — A 37.3 per cent increase in new candidates for the priesthood in the Dallas-Fort Worth diocese this year is indicated in a report by the diocesan vocation office.



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