

# Negotiate With Communists, New Vatican Art

(By Religious News Service)

A significant trend in current Vatican diplomacy is negoti-ating in the privacy of diplomatic offices.

A meaningful pattern is emerging from a mosaic of bits and pieces of information, constantly sifted in the press and in Foreign Offices around the world.

Deep implications were seen in the recent visit of Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny to Pope Paul VI. One related development was the sudden departure of a top Vatican negotiator for talks in Warsaw and possibly Moscow.

Reporting on Vatican diplomacy, particularly on discussions with Communist states, always involves a high proportion of conjecture. But it is surprising when one reviews the record, how often the conjectures of the past have become the reality of today.

The Vatican's chief negotiator with Communist countries is Msgr. Agostino Casaroli, undersecretary of the Sacred Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs. This congregation is the Vatican's bureau for non-routine, ticklish negotiations with governments basically hostile to the Church. It is a direct descendant of an agency founded in 1793 to negotiate with the revolutionary government of France. It has seen a lot of revolutions since then, and its affairs have never been more extraordinary than they are right now.

In Hungary and Yugoslavia, within recent years, the Vatican had reached agreements that seemed highly improbable when the first rumors began to circulate.

Now the reports are all about Poland and the Soviet Union. If there is any foundation for them (and such rumors are seldom totally without foundation) a year or more may be expected to pass before concrete results can be formally announced. Meanwhile, however, and interpreters of the Vatican diplomatic scene find significance in several items.

The recent private audience given by Pope Paul to Soviet President Podgorny touched off a round of speculations and counter-speculations in the world press, which Vatican spokesmen allowed to pass without comment. The nearest (and it was neither very near nor very definite) to a view of Vatican thinking on the subject was an article written by Federico Alessandrini, deputy director of the Vatican City daily newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano. Significantly, Mr. Alessandrini's remarks were printed not in the daily newspaper, which often prints its official Vatican announcements, but in a weekly magazine, L'Osservatore della Domenica, which has no official status.

His conclusions struck a balance of perfect indecision: "agreements, understandings, exchange of envoys; they can come about or not come about. No one can say, at least at this moment."

Typical of the more optimistic forecasts was a discussion in the Roman newspaper Il Messaggero, which said that the Pope and President Podgorny have agreed in principle to an exchange of personal representatives who would have diplomatic status without formal diplomatic status.

These representatives, Mr. Messaggero said, will have functions "limited to dealing with problems specifically indicated from time to time. This formula would tend to bypass the question of formal recognition by the two states."

The consensus among other commentators was that the Pope's prediction, though possible eventually, may be premature by a year or more. Both the Vatican and the Soviet Union are on record as being interested in the idea of some sort of diplomatic communication. The difficulty lies in reaching agreement on the terms of the relationship.

Are the Catholic "foreign missions" in a state of crisis? One hears the assertion with increasing frequency, and recent years have undoubtedly seen a deep re-evaluation both by the missionaries themselves and by the Catholic people in the traditionally Christian countries.

The close association of the missions for a hundred years with Western colonial expansion has left a residue of suspicion and some hostility on the part of the new nations.

The Vatican's recognition of the positive content of other religions, not only Christian but non-Christian, has made many question methods which stressed conversion as a violent detachment of the unredeemed from their "false" beliefs rather than their uplift through a process of purifying and Christianizing their imperfect faith.

France's outstanding Catholic news-magazine, Informations Catholiques Internationales, has gathered the views of its correspondents in 27 countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and America on the issue. The broad tapestry they have woven is encouragingly positive.

There is no drying up of the sources



Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny, during an audience with Pope Paul VI, receives reproductions of works by Leonardo da Vinci. The gift was a token of the Pope's "special esteem and keen affection for the great Russian people." Behind them are Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet ambassador to Italy (left), and Father Josef Olsr of the Pontifical Russian College in Rome. The papal audience was the first in history for a Soviet head of state.

Rumors of plans for Soviet-Vatican relations have emerged with increasing frequency since 1960 and reached a peak in 1963 when Nikita Khrushchev's son-in-law, Alexei Adzhubei, visited Pope John XXIII. Such conjectures were quieted temporarily after the death of Pope John and the retirement of Premier Khrushchev, but they are returning now with new persistence.

A more complicated situation, though perhaps one which will have public formal consequences before the Vatican and the Soviet Union reach a diplomatic agreement, is the relation between the Vatican and Poland.

Poland, a nation with a basically Roman Catholic population and a Communist government, has been entangled in complex Church-State problems since the end of World War II. After a long period of open hostility which went so far as to imprison many bishops, the Polish government has gone through a series of alternating "freeze" and "thaw" relationships with

the Catholic hierarchy, uneasily testing the relative strength and determination of the two forces.

The most recent dispute, dealing with state supervision of courses taught in Polish seminaries, has been resolved. Poland controlling non-religious studies, the Church controlling theological courses.

Indications are that now the Polish government, the Vatican and at least part of the Polish hierarchy are interested in overtures toward diplomatic relations. The concrete data are slight but they follow a pattern similar to the early phases of negotiations between the Vatican and other Communist countries — negotiations which, in Yugoslavia and Hungary, have led to formal agreements short of full diplomatic recognition.

The two most notable developments, recently, were a private papal audience given to Archbishop Boleslaw Kominek, Apostolic Administrator of Wroslaw, and the departure for Warsaw, shortly thereafter, of Msgr. Casaroli.

## Moscow Publishes Book On 20th Century Popes

Moscow — (RNS) — Pope John XXIII is cited as an exemplar for his successors in a book, "From Pius IX to John XXIII," just published in Russia by the Soviet Government Publishing House.

The book gives biographical details of the Popes of the last 100 years and analyzes their ecclesiastical and diplomatic policies.

A major part of the book is devoted to Pope John XXIII. It stresses that although he began his pontificate by issuing in 1959 a decree forbidding Catholics to cooperate with Communists — "probably because he was still under the influence of a policy inherited from Pius XII" — he soon changed his views.

Later, the book says, he became an opponent of all who advocated wars against communism.

The book claims that Pope John "decided that his Church must give up the anathemas and excommunications favored by his predecessors and work with other methods." When, during the first session of the Vatican Council, certain of his bishops had tried to draw the Council into a campaign against communism, John XXIII rejected their proposals.

"He rejected all the traditional policies of his predecessors and tried to understand and recognize all the new things happening in the world. As the supreme head of the Church, he saw its adaptation to modern times as a way to strengthen and retain the influence of religion on the world. But at the same time he was strongly against any war and a great supporter of the idea of peaceful coexistence of the different ideological systems and an advocate of cooperation between Catholics and Communists."

## New Era Opens for Christian Missions

of missionaries, there is rather a significant growth of awareness and involvement among the general Catholic public in Western Europe and North America. The Council decree on mission activity is being understood as calling for something more than "pennies to buy black babies," leaving the work to the religious orders, and mission societies.

Everywhere, diocesan priests and lay specialists are becoming increasingly important. Social commitment is expressing itself in parish adoption of parish, like the Long Island parish which looks after one of its priests in Korea and lay missionaries in Liberia.

What is extremely interesting is the growth of a sense of mission in countries where either Catholics are few or a shortage of priests exists. Two African mission congregations are sending African priests to other parts of the continent, from Congo-Kinshasa to Cameroon, and from Nigeria to Sierra Leone. This demands heroic commitment for an African, whose tribal ties mean far more than those of family and community in the West.

India is moving in the same direction. Several Indian priests work among people of Indian ancestry in Guyana in South

America. And India's bishops have approved a training program for missionaries to other parts of Latin America. Ceylon's Catholics have not gone so far, but they are talking in similar terms. As for Latin America itself, Mexico has missionaries in Japan and Peru, and in the Latin American bishop's conference (CELAM) recently created a mission section.

Also significant is a new realization that Christian disunity is an obstacle, often insuperable in practice, to a meaningful announcement of the good news, and that Christians can reduce the obstacle when they cannot yet eliminate it. The Council decree on the missions has had a good effect, though I think the impact is greater at home than on the missions. That, no doubt, is partly a time-lag in communication, illustrating the need for help in informing the Church leaders who cannot afford to buy books and current publications.

It is hard to generalize. In much of Latin America, for example, the current level of eccumenical understanding would have been unthinkable ten years ago. But often, both in Latin America and Africa, old bitterness between Catholics and Protestants survive. And in Africa many Christian missionaries regard the "break-

away" syncretisms of African sects as the work of the devil rather than as real attempts to incorporate Christ into a living culture.

A concrete example is the collaboration of the Swiss Catholic and Evangelical Mission Councils. They have developed common radio programs and common projects of aid to the poor nations.

On the other side is a letter an Episcopalian priest in South Africa recently wrote me. "We have been meeting every month for nearly a year. There hasn't been much sign of progress nor much evidence of any real desire for unity. In fact the idea that our disunity is not sin but rather a good sign we found quite common. On the other hand, I have come across some who do show clearly that they realize why we say that present disunity is the result of sin."

The final major change is the integration of the missions into the national life and culture. This means that indigenous bishops and clergy make the decisions, that tutelage in convents and schools is ending, that the common good of the whole community takes precedence over the institutional goals of our disunity. They are making changes, but they are proceeding with a smoothness that testifies to the presence of the Spirit.

Besides the Church-State situation in Poland and the question of Polish-Vatican relations, which are certainly the subjects of current discussion, the Vatican may be planning other ecclesiastical changes in Poland. Among the possibilities are the naming of one or more new Polish cardinals, probably including Archbishop Kominek, and the appointment of one or more Polish bishops to the dioceses in territory which was formerly German but has been administered by Poland since World War II.

The Vatican has given administrators to these dioceses (Archbishop Kominek is, for example, administrator of Wroslaw, formerly the German city of Breslau) but has avoided the formal or permanent appointment of ordinaries until the status of the territory is established by treaty.

The prospect is that long negotiations will be necessary before relations between the Vatican and Poland can be treated on a routine basis, but both parties are interested in such relations and the obstacles, at present, do not seem insuperable.

Recent events in Vatican diplomatic life exemplified the fact that Vatican diplomacy has a way of overcoming difficulties. Among the more than 60 diplomatic representatives presently accredited to the Vatican are two of the newest presented their credentials in February. They were from Haiti and Yugoslavia, countries at opposite ends of the political spectrum but both the scene, within recent years, of Church-State difficulties which led to the imprisonment or expulsion of Catholic bishops.

Against such a background, the ultimate establishment of Vatican diplomatic relations with Poland or the Soviet Union — probably long before such relations are established with the U.S. — seems quite possible.

## Letters to the Editor

Editor,

The theological impact of Vatican II and the revolution in modern educational theory are leaving a deep impression on the teaching of theology on many Catholic campuses. Efforts of college theology departments to update their programs were emphasized in the latest Bulletin of the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine (SCCSTD).

In Montreal Marianopolis College has completely revised its theology program to make it more relevant to its students. Its theology program now includes courses with these titles: "Introduction to Scripture" which emphasizes the Exodus-Covenant, Paschal Meal and foundation of the Church; "Faith and Identity," a reading-discussion course which covers the work of both traditional and modern theologians as well as men like James Joyce, Teilhard de Chardin, Martin Buber, and Rounit. In another course, "Seminar in Contemporary Theology," the students investigate the thoughts of Protestant theologians such as Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, T. J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton (of Rochester) as well as Catholic theologians Karl Rahner, Bernard Haring, and J. L. McKenzie among many others.

On the other hand, Boston College has placed heavy emphasis on the expansion of its elective program to suit the varied interests and needs of its student body. Seniors may elect their fourth and final theology course from 40 different offerings. Included among the courses offered are: "Secular Christianity," which is taught by a priest professor from John XXIII Seminary in Boston; "Jewish History," given by a rabbi; and "Social Ethics in the Business World," presented by a Jesuit priest. Boston College students have responded enthusiastically to these and other theology courses specifically designed to relate to their own fields of concentration.

At the same time, a greater number of Catholic colleges are beginning to make a major in theology available to students who desire it. This puts the theology where it belongs, on an academic par with other elected fields of concentration such as English, History, and the Sciences. The result is that fewer students today feel that they are "wasting their time" by taking theology courses.

This represents merely a sample of the current vitality and growth going on in Catholic theology departments. The needs of the students facing contemporary situations demanded a re-evaluation of the categories traditionally considered the "nuts and bolts" of theological thought. Emphasis on Biblical theology, Church history, contemporary Catholic, Protestant and Jewish theologians, as well as modern authors and artists is an attempt to meet the students' desire and right to a broader and deeper knowledge of their faith.

—Stephenie McCormick  
Rochester

Editor,

This is to offer best wishes for your continued fine "Courier." We have been saving our copies, and forwarding them to my husband's sister, who is a Unitarian nun working in Virginia. She enjoys keeping in touch with the old home town, and looks forward to receiving the "Courier." It is a bit of a bother to do this, though, and as a birthday gift to her, we would like to give her her own subscription, to begin as soon as possible.

Enclosed is our check for \$500. Would you please have someone notify us in time for renewal, so that Pat may receive each and every copy? Sometimes it runs almost like a serial magazine!

—Mrs. Thomas J. McGarry  
Spencerport

## College B

"The most challenging kind of Church today" was the description of Richard T. Torney, chaplain of the Community, in a recent talk to parents of Notre Dame High School students.

Father Torney, chaplain at Cornell for the past seven years, also informed the parents what to expect at a secular university, how best to choose a college for their son or daughter, and how to follow up a program of religious values after high school years.

Every student experiences a shock in going off to college, Father Torney said, and the Catholic student is no exception. Now because of confusing changes in the Church, the shock can be even greater, even in a Catholic college, where a student must adjust to a new social and academic milieu even though his classmates may have similar moral values.

## Father Do

By THOMAS H. O'CONNOR

Redemptorist classmates of Father Michael G. Downing, C.S.S.R., rector of the Notre Dame Retreat House participated in his funeral Mass at St. Joseph Church, Rochester, Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Bishop Kearney who extolled the work achieved by Father Downing in this diocese gave the absolution at the Mass. Chaplains to Bishop Kearney were Very Rev. Joseph Berton and Rev. Joseph Winiacki, Redemptorists.

Bishop — Thomas F. Reilly, C.S.S.R., missionary bishop of San Juan, Dominican Republic, also a classmate, was in the sanctuary with Redemptorist Fathers John P. Clerkin and Joseph Kenny as chaplains.

Concelebrating the Mass were: Very Rev. Ronald G. Connors, provincial of the Baltimore province with Redemptorist Fathers Raymond Boesch, Richard Moran, John Krimm, Joseph Noll, Joseph Burns, Francis Salmon, David Scharrock.

In attendance were Right Rev. Monsignors John E. Maney, Donald J. Mulcahy, John M. Duffy, Dennis W. Hickey, Frank T. Hoefen, Charles V. Kelle, William P. Kelly, John S. Randall, Richard K. Burns, Very Rev. Msgr. Gerard Krieg, and 70 Redemptorist priests and brothers, priests of the Diocese of Rochester and laymen. Handling church arrangements were Redemptorist Fathers Leo Dunn and Robert Coughlin.

Officers of the Laymen's Retreat League of Rochester were active bearers. Delegations attended from the Knights of St. John and veterans' organizations.

The "Tower of Grace," the newly erected Notre Dame Retreat house overlooking Canandaigua Lake on West Lake Road, where Father Downing died Feb. 28, 1967, could well be a memorial to its first superior.

He was the superior of the retreat house at 246 Alexander St., Rochester from where he and his confreres of the Con-

## Faith Mac

"Where a man's heart is, there also is his treasure" — and there can be no doubt, where the heart and the treasure of Father George J. Weinmann were centered.

His faith and devotion to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist cost him the sacrifice of his life — a martyrdom not by another man's hatred but by his own unlimited love.

Such was the theme of the eulogy of Bishop Sheen for the priest who died in the flames of St. Philip Neri Church gutted at noon on Monday, Feb. 20. Father Weinmann died Wednesday, Feb. 22, and the funeral Mass was offered at St. Ambrose Church, Monday, Feb. 27.

Sister Lillian Marie, a teacher at the parish school, died in the fire in a vain attempt to aid Father Weinmann escape from the burning building.

Parishioners and friends filled Holy Redeemer Church for the nun's Requiem on Friday and St. Ambrose Church for the pastor's funeral Mass Monday. The final rites wrote the closing chapter to the life stories of two heroic and generous souls.

Father Weinmann's 49 years in the priesthood had not been, in a worldly way, spectacular. He was loved and respected for his constancy at his duty. "You knew he'd always be there," was the comment of one parishioner.

He was born Feb. 16, 1890, in Rochester, son of George Weinmann and Elizabeth Bauer Weinmann.

He attended Holy Family and West High Schools in Rochester, St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminaries.

Father Weinmann was ordained June 8, 1918.

His first assignment was as assistant pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Seneca Falls, where he remained until 1919 when he was transferred to be assistant pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church, Rochester where he served until 1927. While there he was named administrator of Annunciation Church in 1923 and served in that capacity until 1938.