

# Another 'Leap Ahead' Needed at Bishops Synod in Fall

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Within the Church, he said, "the first preoccupation should be a carrying out or furthering of the promised reform of the curia, and this without prejudice to the Pope's right to appoint his own cabinet... What most thinkers outside the Church are looking for is proof that one institution in this troubled and turbulent world in which we find ourselves, despite our advances in science and sophistication, can truly renew itself from head to toe."

He called for an intense examination of the Church's image as an institution, particularly in relationship to the Council's "absolute insistence on the dignity of the Christian as one of God's people" and for a "frank evaluation... of how far and how efficiently the Church's renewal in each part of the world has been pursued."

This should be an objective evaluation using the most up-to-date methods, he said, for "there is no indication that the charismatic gift of episcopal intuition can supply the equivalent of facts and figures gathered by people who ring doorbells and who ask pertinent questions."

In this regard, he noted the synod is a different kind of gathering from a Council, since its members "represent explicit-ly the conferences of bishops

from the regions from which they were selected. They should therefore come prepared with sufficient knowledge of the problems the Church is facing in their own home territories, with fairly thorough statistics and with reliable analyses of the state of the Church in its belief and practice."

The Church is "waging a battle for the soul of the modern world," he said. "Old methods of preaching, teaching, warning and threatening are outdated

for the most part, primarily because they have proven useless. New methods are indicated, but they must be experimented with fearlessly. Where true scandal lies as far as so-called weak Catholics are concerned, and certainly for observant non-Catholics, is in the Church's failure to move swiftly with the gifts of the spirit into the philosophical and cultural vacuums created by the aftermath of two world wars."

In the realm of relations with

Non-Catholics, he said, the Church must show not only promises but concrete action, as for instance in its support of "absolute freedom of conscience."

The outside world should be able to recognize the Church today by the love Christians have for one another, he said.

"The synod of bishops should reduce suspicion and heretical nit-picking between Catholics of whatever tendency. It should

discourage reports from emissaries within or outside the Vatican who are constantly crying alarm over interpretations of doctrine, or at attempts to adapt a Catholic moral teaching to the difficult needs of the hour."

Another area he hoped the synod would amplify is the Council's teachings on the closer relationships which should exist between various parishes, dioceses and religious orders.

"Specific problems concerning family life, birth control, divorce and abortion, not to mention the moral degeneracy in society," he said, "will naturally always be subject to further clarification. But the problem of prime import immediately is that of clerical celibacy."

"This issue cannot be avoided any longer. It is said that a case a day is being submitted to the Holy See. What has to be studied at once, then, is the reason for these defections. Assuredly they indicate inadequacy somewhere along the line of clerical formation, and in the scrutiny of candidates for the priesthood before they advance to sacred orders and the obligation of celibacy."

"But even before taking up the fundamental problem of the relevance of celibacy for the priest in today's world, what attention is being given to conditions in which the celibate lives in a large or small diocese? In

tions, of ambitions and desires. It seems there is little true contact or comradeship between many bishops and their priests in a diocese, and little true cooperation between parishes by way of parochial activity, either at home or in missions. Might not this be a factor in the general loss of an ideal?"

He suggested that the synod also consider the possibility that polygamy is still common, converts be allowed to remain in that state on their Baptism and

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"be gradually converted to a thorough and therefore monogamous Christian life."

The use of the term "missionary" should be abandoned, he said, "since it has a distasteful ring in a colonial sense, and is not welcomed in the emerging nations." Monetary and technical assistance to these areas should be provided on a "church-to-church basis."

## With Non-Christian Religions

### Dialog will be 'Delicate'

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians has a highly responsible and delicate work," Cardinal Paolo Marella, president of the secretariat, said at a press conference here.

"It cannot follow rigid schemes laid down beforehand," he said.

The conference was called to give an account of the secretariat's progress since its establishment May 19, 1964.

Among the agency's tasks, he said, "it is necessary to define terms such as dialogue, reli-

gious values and the theology of the various non-Christian religions and to define them very clearly.

"It is necessary to avoid the evils of relativism and clearly, on the other hand, it is necessary to clear up misunderstandings between our faith and the other religions of mankind."

"The dialogue must take many forms," he said. "On the human level it must be based on mutual respect. The first exchanges of ideas are better limited to pure facts conveyed through personal relations. Later, these can be deepened

through theology and group encounters. But the greatest and most convincing dialogue that a Christian can engage in is the constant example of loyalty."

As an example of the "world-wide interest" awakened by the secretariat, Cardinal Marella quoted a Japanese Buddhist journal which has said that "the spiritual renewal of the Catholic Church has drawn all religions to a new climate" and that "ecumenism is a problem that no longer affects only Christians."

## Priests for Tomorrow



By FAY  
Diocesan

How did you happen to be like to ask this question certain mystery to the process and seminarians are simply it was like this. The whole plicated and obscure.

Many people still have a rather naive concept of how a boy becomes a seminarian. They think of these old time pictures which show Christ looking over his shoulder at a young man (a frightfully nice young man), with the caption beneath, "Come follow me."

I never was whispered to, and don't know anybody who was. I'll bet that romantic concept of the origin of a vocation has done more harm over the years than it ever did good.

Priests and seminarians looking back, see many things leading them to their choice. For a surprisingly large number — it was the original fascination with being an altar boy, being close to what was going on up there at the altar. There was a certain wide-eyed fascination with the quiet mystery of it all, the sense of its central importance, as well as little things like flickering candles and burning incense. There was the excitement of the solemn ceremonies of Christmas and Holy Week. And without our knowing it, there was the value we attached to the whole thing because we had to pay a price getting up in the dark and walking a good distance in bitter cold to serve the 6:30 or the 7:

Obviously this was but a very small beginning and wasn't for everyone who eventually became a priest. There were more important things involved — people. People like parents, for whom religion was very important and that most certainly rubbed off on us. We could sense, if not know explicitly their devotion to Christ, to the Church, to truth, to virtue, to the idea of service. They were after all, literally pouring themselves out for their children. There were other people too. The nuns in school. We howled incessantly about how tough they were and we dreaded ever being accused of being teacher's pet, so we kept our distance.

But underneath we felt deep respect for their obvious dedication and care for us. They maybe even triggered the whole thing by a simple question one day. "Did you ever give an thought to the possibility of going to the seminary?"

But above all, there was some one, someplace, with whom we could positively identify. This person was the living, walking reality of what we dreamed about being some day. O

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