

Bishop Sheen Asks Prayers for Religious Vocations

My dear People of God:

Vocations are dwindling. We leave to others to seek out the causes of the decline. What is important is not to analyze the chemistry of the waters which flood the sinking ship of vocations, but to refloat it.

Today a thousand devices are used to instill vocations such as deluging our youths with letters, pamphlets and appeals. But Our Lord gave only one way — and that was prayer. He prayed before He chose His apostles; He prayed before He chose His disciples. Then came His words about prayer, "And when He saw the crowds He felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd."

Jesus saw the harvest of souls greater than the reapers.

More were ready to be saved than there were preachers to save them. Without reapers, the harvest would be lost.

To win these workers, Our Lord said to pray to the "Lord of the Harvest." Who is the Lord of the Harvest? It is the Heavenly Father, "My Father is the Husbandman" (John 15/1). But why did He say pray to the Lord of the Harvest? Because prayer is desire. Only the Church which wants priests will have them.

Now here we come to the basic reason for prayer — our English translation of the bible says that if we pray, God will "send laborers into the harvest." But in the original Greek, the word is "ekbalein", meaning to "drive", or to send with haste and urgency, or to compel as if there was always a human unwillingness to be overcome. (Exodus 4/10, 13; Judges 4/8; Jonah 1/3).

The same word is used to describe how the Holy Spirit "drove" Our Lord into the wilderness to be tempted and tried in all our human situations. It is also used to indicate the Power of God driving out the devil from those possessed (John 13/31) and the money changers from the Temple (John 2/15), and finally, it is used to indicate the constraint the Good Shepherd used to force a sheep that delays unduly in answering the call of the shepherd, (John 10/4).

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The conclusion is this: 1. Vocations come from prayers to the Heavenly Father of souls. 2. If we pray, the same God who used His Divine Power to drive out devils and push reluctant sheep to the sheep fold, is the same God who will drive vocations into the hearts of the young. 3. There could be, for example, a hundred thousand young men and women who feel dimly the call of God to serve Him, but because we do not pray, that extra "push" or "compulsion" or "drive" which God alone gives, is lacking.

It may be a little disappointing to us that the solution to the problem of vocations is so simple, when we thought it was public relations, pictures of movies playing tennis and smiling like Hollywood teenagers. We have been inclined to follow every human resource before we come to what seems to be that "unpractical" one of prayer. We have misunderstood the problem. We are not face to face with a decline in vocations, but rather with a decrease in prayer. This is where we must begin.

To this end, we ask all priests: 1. Beginning with the second Sunday of Easter, to insert the IMPERATA for vocations until further notice. 2. Before each class every day, in Catholic schools, and before each class for public school children receiving instructions, instead of the same prayer said daily, let the teacher read one

or more verses of Scripture. The readings for the rest of the year will be from the Acts of the Apostles (when possible use the Jerusalem or the Phillips translation which is easily understood by the young). After reading, all students will recite the following prayer:

"Heavenly Father, Lord of the Harvest of souls, choose from among us, laborers for souls, through the merits of Christ Our Lord."

3. In the homes, at the end of grace after meals add:

"Lord, infuse young hearts with vocations."

We are profoundly convinced of the truth of the words of Our Lord, that He will put vocations where they were not, if we have faith in prayer. We trust in Him who said: "Without Me you can do nothing."

Prayerfully in Christ, FULTON J. SHEEN Bishop of Rochester



At the Last Supper, Jesus used the bread and wine on the table before Him to institute the Holy Eucharist, the sacrifice and sacrament of His Body and Blood. The artist's sketch above seeks to capture the thought of how God still chooses to use ordinary things to be the means for His extraordinary accomplishments. The offertory prayer at Mass asks God that our gifts "may arise before your divine majesty as a pleasing fragrance."

A Year's Grace to Ponder Abortion Revision

By THOMAS R. SWEENEY, M.D.

Obstetrician, Gynecologist, Staff Physician, Rochester General Hospital

Now that the 1967 bill to amend the New York State abortion law has been killed by the Assembly Codes Committee, it is possible to consider such measures with less urgency, and hence, more objectively.

A 1968 bill has been promised by the author of the above measure, Assemblyman Albert H. Blumenthal (D., Manhattan).

The information to be presented here will hopefully be of help in arriving at a rational decision regarding this and any other similar forthcoming bills.

Abortion means the termination of the life of an unborn child, one who possesses the potentiality of developing in the womb of the mother and, in due time, of taking his place in the world as a human person.

The central issue involved in the abortion controversy is whether or not human life exists before birth, and if so, when does it begin?

Richard P. Byrne is an attorney in a California law firm, has written one of the best analyses of the medical facts and the legal rights of the "person" in the womb.

Concerning human life, he states: "If it does not begin until birth, then there need be no restriction placed upon abortion whatsoever. But on the other hand, if it begins at conception or at some other time during pregnancy, we must approach the destruction of the unborn child with all the respect for human life we afford to those of us who were fortunate enough to have been born."

In 1953 the New York court in Kelly v. Gregory recognized the recently developed medical view that biological separability begins at conception and the mother's biological contribution from conception on is solely that of nourishment and protection.

Attorney Byrne continues: "Except for a few states that have not had an opportunity to reconsider their position, every state which has considered the question since 1946 now permits recovery for prenatal injuries and the modern, enlightened view is to grant this right from conception."

"The abortion advocates cannot directly meet the 'human life' argument as their position is contrary to the generally recognized medical view that human life begins at conception. Instead, they have tried to blur it by ignoring it entirely or when forced to take a position by claiming that it is a theoretical question and that the unborn child is somehow not human. Some of them characterize the unborn child as a growth like a tumor. Others call him a part of his mother, like an appendix. Many finally state that they do not know when human life begins and then shrug off the question as immaterial. This attitude of indifference toward the existence of human life is not only intellectually dishonest, but it is an unimpeachable, high value social policy, under the individual and the traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice that form the foundation of our legal system and laws and that we extend to all persons."

"The law," according to Byrne "has also long recognized that the unborn child possesses the right to live. This right was first evidenced in England by the rule requiring the staying of

the execution of a pregnant woman 'quick with child' until after her child's birth. This claim to life is also recognized in the United States. The most recent decision in this area involved a New Jersey case decided in 1964 in which a pregnant woman refused to consent to a blood transfusion because it was contrary to her religious belief. The court held that the unborn child was a distinct person whose right to live had to be protected in spite of his mother's religious beliefs and ordered the woman to submit to a transfusion if it became necessary to save her life and the life of the unborn child.

The recognized medical advances and legal principles set forth above certainly cannot be dismissed as the ravings of religious groups seeking to impose their will upon society through legislation, as the abortionists claim. Unless the facts are to be disregarded, it is clear that human life is involved in the abortion controversy. It is further obvious that for the unborn child, abortion is a fundamental infringement upon his personal and property rights, the most basic of which is his right to life itself.

The 1967 New York abortion proposal, the California abortion bill, has been presented as a moderate, even conservative, measure. However, while

it does not expressly authorize the mother to obtain an abortion because she does not want another child, the grounds are so broad that the total effect of the bill is to destroy the protection given to the unborn child and to give the mother the means by which she may terminate her pregnancy at will.

In forthcoming articles, other aspects of the abortion controversy will be considered. These will include the safety of the procedure, the measles question, the R.H. problem and a consideration of what has happened in countries which have legally broadened the indication for abortion. In addition, questions received will also be discussed.

Reminding the audience that the national mood has cooled toward civil rights, and that the upper and middle classes have always resented the disturbing of the status quo (because their needs are satisfied) he quoted the British economist Barbara Ward from her book Rich Nations and Poor Nations: "The affluent are ready to resist change with all the force at their command..."

We must live up to the spirit we profess, Father Fink repeated. Poverty in the midst of affluence is a moral wrong, and we must heed Pope Paul's warning in his latest encyclical stressing the obligation of nations to "have" to "have no."

In the past we have met in immediate needs of the poor-will not change their situation. But this "angle of mercy" is no longer sufficient—we need an awakening of social justice.

one thing seems agreed by all sides and it is that the Vatican's finances are very efficiently managed. In the Vatican those in charge of such matters are naturally annoyed that their successful stewardship is rather held against them. In Italy there are many Catholics who think that the Holy See should not only publish its budget and reveal holdings in the Italian economy, but also renounce all tax exemptions in the interest of preserving the religious mission of the Church from possible jeopardy by excessive transfers for the world's goods at the expense of trust in God's providence.

For those who are somewhat familiar with the money man business and are taking precursors this proposal seems utterly unrealistic.

The afternoon program will be divided into three conferences-discussions periods lasting from forty-five minutes to one hour in length. A folk Mass in the Aquinas Auditorium will climax the afternoon.

Speakers moderating some of the 17 discussions include: Father David Fink, Vicar of the Inner City; Father David Connor of the Cornell University; Newman Center; Sergeant J. Burkett, a Viet Nam veteran and Father W. J. O'Malley, S.J. of McQuaid Jesuit High School.

All high school juniors and seniors wishing to attend should contact the respective heads of their sodality or youth group. Tickets must be secured before hand for admittance.

Dear Editor,

If your readers have used Christmas and Easter cards, in good condition, and they wish to send them to a missionary in India to make our poor Indian children happy, the cards should be mailed to:

Rev. Fr. Eusebio Petrin, Catholic Mission, P.O. Enagalkata, District Jalapurga, West Bengal, India.

To avoid customs duty in India, these words must be written on the package: "No commercial value — Used Christmas, Easter Cards — Printed Matter."

If the readers wish to receive a "Thank you," they should write clearly their address inside the package.

Sincerely yours in Christ, Fr. Eusebio Petrin

Church 'Wealth' a Perennial Topic

By FATHER ROBERT A. GRAHAM, S.J.

Rome—(RNS)—The wealth of the Church, real or fictitious, has been a favorite battle slogan of anti-clericals for the past century at least.

In Italy the subject is still good enough to produce some political capital for several parties of right and left. It is also good material for the sensational Italian press. Right now the topic is hot again with imminent discussion in Parliament of tax exemption for Vatican holdings in Italian securities.

In 1963 Parliament adopted a new law establishing a withholding tax on stocks owned by foreigners. A ruling by Finance Minister (Christian Democrat) Mario Martinelli exempted the shares owned by the Holy See. This directive was protested by his successor, a Socialist, and by the Socialist Party which alleged it was illegal, corrupt and nothing but "a gift" of the Christian Democrats to the Pope.

Mr. Martinelli, however, took the stand that he did nothing more than routinely apply the provisions of the 1929 Concordat. Article 29 of that Vatican-Italy document states that the Holy See is to enjoy all rights as to tax exemption to which Italian philanthropic, religious and educational institutions are entitled by Italian law. This legal stance is unassailable and was recognized as such even by the anti-clerical weekly, *Aspettando*, in an article appearing here March 12.

The question is therefore not one of exemption in itself but whether the Holy See or the Italian State as a foreign juridical unit may share the exemptions already enjoyed by Italian dioceses and other Church or humanitarian and educational institutions.

What made the problem boil over again is a decision of the Council of Ministers of the center-left government to put

active role in social progress than the bishops judged appropriate. Spain has had similar conflicts for the past year, and for much the same reasons: The archbishop of Madrid went so far as to get the police to seize an issue of a Catholic Action publication.

Similar differences have erupted in Canada, in Belgium, in Germany, in Argentina, almost everywhere. They show not only the dissatisfaction within the official bodies but also the fear that, if they do not move faster, the focus of power will shift from them to completely non-official bodies. That is happening in the United States, where movements are growing up and around Cross Currents, Commonweal and the National Catholic Reporter, movements that are starting to institutionalize, as witness the Institute for Freedom in the Church and the more recent National Association for Pastoral Renewal. It is even further advanced in England, where Stant has polarized Catholic opinion around two dangerously separated extremes.

One country which is strikingly free of all such expressions of lay frustration is Holland. In spite of the widely publicized reports of extremist tendencies, it

is noteworthy that the Dutch bishops, priests and lay are solidly united, especially when it is remembered that the unity does not come from a need to hold together against external enemies. On the contrary, Dutch Catholicism was never so free of outside pressures, Relations both with the State and with Protestant Churches and other ideological groups are excellent.

If one simple explanation can be given to a complex phenomenon, it is that the Dutch bishops have anticipated the desires of the priests and laity by implementing in depth the Council's call for the organized expression of public opinion. The Dutch Pastoral Council, which first met last November, involves all the people of the country in the decision-making process.

As is clear from a recent pastoral on the role of the priest in contemporary society, the Dutch bishops have not abdicated their authority. They have, however, agreed to use it in a manner similar to that of the pope when he ratified the Council decrees: It is an extension of the concept of collegiality, and I am sure we shall hear more about it during the COEPICAL congress.

Pope Says 'Hedonism' Infects Modern Life

Vatican City—(RNS)—In an address at his weekly general audience, Pope Paul VI criticized a "hedonism" in contemporary society which makes "a sense of well-being seem to be the summit of human aspirations."

Discussing the theme of Christian combat against the seductions of the world, he lamented that "no one wants to fight against the devil, whose existence is denied, nor against the world, whose fascination and values are exalted, nor against the flesh, which has become the idol of pleasure."

Stressing that a Christian life should assert the necessity of an "implacable moral conflict," Pope Paul said that such a militant ideal is important because it "invigorates in an original way."

"Every Christian is a soldier of the spirit," he said. "He is a candidate for sainthood. He is pledged to witness."

Congress of Lay Apostolate Next October in Rome

By GARY MacEON

Rome — Next October, Rome will be host to the first meeting of the Synod of Bishops, created in response to a request of Vatican II, and also to the first post-Council meeting of COEPICAL. This awkwardly initiated body is the Permanent Committee for International Meetings on the Lay Apostolate, and a major item on its program will be a worldwide survey of the impact of lay participation in Church renewal.

The report will show that more issues have been defined than resolved. Indeed, the feeling in many countries is that the immediate post-Council period has brought a downgrade of the laity. I hear frequently a comment that was first made during the Council. When that body voted the collegiality of bishops, a cynic observed that Magna Charta's transfer of power in medieval England from the king to the barons left the common people worse off than they had been before.

The laity and lesser clergy who feel the parallel in the present situation may take heart from the historical evolution which finally enabled the benefits to trickle all the way down. But lay leaders

in many countries are insisting that the result did not come by a simple application of the law of gravity. It required a long and harsh struggle.

The organization of COEPICAL is such that the Congress membership will reflect principally only the so-called official Catholic Action, bodies directly under the control of the bishops and often existing primarily as fronts for the expression of episcopal views. It is not only in the United States that they seldom provide a clue to what people are really thinking.

Neither, however, is it only in the United States that they are feeling the need to become more truly representative. The recent resignation of the president of the U.S. National Council of Catholic Men because of "the failure of all our efforts to have a life of our own and serve as an instrument of dialogue with the bishops" was a mild incident in comparison with many in other countries.

France, for example, has had one clash after another for the past several years, with frequent resignations or firings of top officers. The basic cause of conflict has been a desire on the part of young Catholic intellectuals to take a more

active role in social progress than the bishops judged appropriate. Spain has had similar conflicts for the past year, and for much the same reasons: The archbishop of Madrid went so far as to get the police to seize an issue of a Catholic Action publication.

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"Life will never be comfortable for very long. We will never 'have it made' as long as we are real Christians," Father P. David Finks stated last Sunday evening to a capacity crowd at St. Cecilia's Church, Elmira.

Father Finks, recently appointed Vicar for Urban Ministry in the Diocese, was the final speaker in the current lecture series sponsored by Father Leo McManus, pastor of St. Cecilia's.

The biblical idea of judgment and the historical evidence in civilizations bring judgments of themselves, were both cited by Father Finks in emphasizing our social sin as a white, middle class church with no theology of poverty.

"The Christian church must be the church of the poor," he said and pointed out that we have not faced the fact that the "ne poor" are not supported by our church, with its agencies established in the past for dealing with the poor immigrant crowd. "What do you do with Catholic Charities when the new poor are not Catholics?" he challenged.

Reminding the audience that the national mood has cooled toward civil rights, and that the upper and middle classes have always resented the disturbing of the status quo (because their needs are satisfied) he quoted the British economist Barbara Ward from her book Rich Nations and Poor Nations: "The affluent are ready to resist change with all the force at their command..."

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Teenage Talk-Out Set For April 23

"Talk-Out '67", a series of group discussions for high school juniors and seniors will be held at Aquinas Institute Sunday afternoon, April 23, 1967.

The program which features a number of prominent clergy and layman speakers will begin at 2 p.m.

The afternoon program will be divided into three conferences-discussions periods lasting from forty-five minutes to one hour in length. A folk Mass in the Aquinas Auditorium will climax the afternoon.

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The Italian Government of Joseph P. Beaulieu, pastor of Rochester, making him a Star of Italian Solidarity. Americans and especially Italian immigrants over conferred by the Consul Mojo, at the Italian Gene City.