

# From Postwar Smugness to Radical Involvement

By FATHER JOHN F. CRONIN, S.S.,  
Assistant Director, Department of Social Action, United States Catholic Conference



The genial Pope John, dead four years tomorrow, lives on in new life his Council gave to Church.

## No Requiem for Aggiornamento

Tomorrow, June 3, is the fourth anniversary of Pope John's death.

The aged Pontiff died in great agony offering his sufferings for the successful outcome of the historic Council he convened the year before.

Some Catholics thought his death would be "the solution" to the "turmoil" his Council had created.

Others — as this writer — consider Pope John God's providential gift to the Church to awaken it from complacency, to thrust it into the twentieth century — actually to prepare it for the twenty-first century.

It is, it seems beyond all doubt, evident that though Pope John died, his program of "aggiornamento" thrives.

Pope Paul — no matter what his critics may say — has resolutely pushed the Church ahead on that aggiornamento road of renewal — in ways we worship, in relationships with peoples of different religious affiliations, in our Christian responsibility to the agonies of the world.

Actually, to those who have faith, God's hand is so obviously at work that each pope of this century can be seen clearly as one more brick in the building of that mighty edifice which is the living temple of God.

An old Latin axiom says, "Vetere novis augere — Improve the past with what's new." This is the "continuum" which characterizes Catholicity — not a stagnant holding to the past but a dynamic progress built solidly on an ancient heritage.

So much of what is going on now in the Church was charted early in the century and before by Pontiffs like Pope Leo XIII, urging Catholics to take a leading part in the social problems of their communities — but we had to wait until riots spoke more convincingly to us on that subject, or Pope Saint Pius X, who told us we must take an active part in the prayers of the Mass and other church rituals — but we had to wait until restless, impatient "new breeders" began experimenting with their own ceremonies behind locked doors to admit the need for progress in this subject; and then Pope Pius XII who gave us the direction to go in Scripture studies and the vibrant concept of the Church as the mystical body of Christ — as stated in his two great encyclicals of 1943, and repeated Pope Pius X's liturgical directives in 1947. But these popes were too gentle with us. It took the vigorous though aged Pope John to prod us off dead-center.

It is, therefore, in gratitude that we recall his memory on his anniversary tomorrow.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

Washington — (RNS)—When I came to Washington over twenty-one years ago, the winds of change were beginning to blow over the Social Action Department, NCWC. The department, under the leadership of Msgr. John A. Ryan, had established itself as a voice speaking for those who were poor and powerless.

At first it was a lonely voice, not heard too loudly or too far. But the advent of the New Deal, and the ferment attending upon our great economic depression, gave new vitality to Catholic social action. The department, aided by many fearless Catholics, both clerical and lay, offered strong support for the new impetus toward social legislation and labor organization in our mass-production industries.

Much of this impetus had subsided by 1946. Msgr. Ryan was dead, and Father Raymond McGowan took charge. Father McGowan was not too happy over the new mood of postwar America, as union organization slowed down and the Taft-Hartley Act put curbs upon organized labor. He strove valiantly to promote the social teaching of the Church, in spite of the changed climate. He constantly quoted the social encyclicals of the Popes, particularly the great documents issued in 1891 and 1931. But many Catholics were more concerned with the latest speech of Sen. Joseph McCarthy and with the tensions created by Communist expansion.

Growing prosperity also contributed to a certain apathy. Yet the pace of activity at the department quickened, at least in part because Washington itself was a different city. The smoldering Southern city of pre-war years was now a world capital. Government had grown enormously and had scores of organizations centered here to influence the national policy. It was this mounting pressure that induced Father McGowan to step down in 1954 in favor of Msgr. George G. Higgins.

The change of leadership did not lead to any radical changes in policy. Nevertheless, a new climate was developing. For example, the formation of the National Catholic Social Action Conference and the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice were signs of the times. A new maturity was becoming evident in the area of Catholic social action. Planning for sustained growth was replacing the often haphazard, though charismatic, activities of the past.

By 1957, a small cloud appeared on the horizon of American complacency. The September incidents, when the schools of Little Rock, Ark., were desegregated, shocked many of us. These developments were to lead directly to the 1958 statement of the United States on "Discrimination and the Christian Community." This was both a powerful declaration of principle and an urgent call for action.

Here was the beginning of a radical change in viewpoint in the Catholic community regarding race relations. Previous Catholic action might be described as correct, but peripheral. For example, our department had a secretary for interracial matters. She was quite competent and did her work well in representing the Catholic community in matters affecting race relations. Yet, when she left the secretariat was permitted to lapse.

In the dioceses, there were often a Catholic interracial council. It was usually given some encouragement by the local bishops and did its work with varying degrees of effectiveness. But it was considered a specialized field of work, quite apart from other social-action programs. It would be almost unthinkable that the "power structure" of the diocese would become directly involved in its programs. This was not because interracial work was left to the "experts."

Three years after the Bishops' 1958 statement there was a dramatic turning point. This was a proposal by the dynamic young executive director of the National Catholic Social Action Conference, Matthew Ahmann, that a national conference on religion and race be convened. His suggestion was welcomed by national Protestant and Jewish leaders. Its presentation to the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops of the Administrative Board, NCWC was the beginning of a new era. Now race relations became the direct and immediate concern of both the national body of bishops and of bishops within their respective dioceses.

Chicago, for example, was considered a model in regard to the older type of Catholic interracial council. But when Cardinal Meyer attended every session of the National Conference on Religion and Race, and was just as diligent in participating in the follow-up Chicago inter-religious council on religion and race, the new era had dawned. When Archbishop Cody "delisted" the Chicago C.I.C. in favor of his own committee, this was but one more indication that race relations was no longer a peripheral and specialized area.

The National Conference on Religion and Race, held shortly before the death of Pope John XXIII, was a marvelous example of the ecumenism he inspired. Our department had always been ecumenical in its approach to social action, but the scope of our influence was limited. By contrast, the impact of ecumenical interracial action after 1963 can only be described as massive. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews joined to give a distinctive religious favor to the March on Washington and the March

from Selma. They testified jointly before Congress for the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 and the proposed Act of 1966. Widespread religious support was a critical factor in the passage of the 1964 Act. And this same spirit of unity prevails in such important local activities as Project Equality, to promote fair employment, and many open-housing campaigns.

The year 1964 marked another important forward step in social action. By this time the nation had become aware of the problem of poverty in our affluent society. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was supported by the religious community and churches and synagogues often joined together for programs of implementation.

There appears to be no slackening in the area of involvement by members of the cloth. If some race-relations programs falter because of white backlash, this fact must be balanced against the ever-deepening involvement on the part of theological students in the problems of the inner city and the poor generally. Over the long run, this trend can have tremendous importance.

It is for this reason that I can hardly repress a smile of incredulity when friends refer

to my "retirement." Teaching social ethics to the heady, idealistic youth of today is hardly a task to be assigned to the sick and enfeebled. St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore is national in its enrollment, so one could not even describe my reassignment as leaving the national scene. The challenge will be different, but it is real.

Yet I will miss working so closely with the dedicated men and women, of all faiths and even of no professed religious practice, who have been such a source of inspiration for more than twenty-one years. These are the often unsung heroes who work with limited resources on a limitless task. If theologians and scripture scholars can rightly claim credit for much of the new ecumenical climate that gladdens the world, they build partly upon foundations laid by the champions of social justice.

Our working together for peace and against poverty and discrimination was much more than a device to multiply our effectiveness. These programs gave us deep insights into the religious motivation of those who did not share our beliefs. Insight led to respect, and respect to love. These friendships and memories I shall ever cherish.

## Father Heads

Father Joseph Gerpal of McQuaid Jesuit Cornelius J. Carr, pro of the Jesuit Order.

He succeeds Father R...



FATHER GERPAL

## Father Ha 40th Anni

Father Roy F. Hagerty celebrate his 40th anniversary in the priesthood Sunday, June 11.

The Courier editor goofed week and left him out of list of priests marking milestone in their priestly career. We have no malice against him... as a matter of fact, he taught the editor when he was an altar boy.

FATHER HAGERTY will celebrate his jubilee Mass at St. Joseph's Church, Livonia, Sunday, June 11 at 12:15. A reception sponsored by Holy Name and Rosary societies will be held at the parish from 2:30 to 5 p.m.

Father Hagerty attended MacLacelle Conception school, Rochester, St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminaries. He was ordained on June 11, 1927 at St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York by the apostolic delegate to the United States, Cardinal Pietro Fumasoni Biondi.

Following his ordination, Father Hagerty served as pastor of Holy Trinity, Charlotte from 1927 to 1930. He was then assigned as pastor of St. Ambrose, Rochester, where he served almost 20 years.

He was appointed to parishes of St. Joseph's, Livonia and St. W...

## New Educ Set at Co

The recently elected Heart Cathedral parish rector, Father John J. formation programs of the parish, ranging from pre-education through adult groups—special instruction toward public schoolers—education as well as interests of parochial school students.

"I feel the broad compass of this board," Father stated, "will increase our involvement in every religious education program here in terms of training in the Sacraments. Our Confraternity of Christian Doctrine School has completed its first year of re-training and is scheduled for expansion in the fall. A new plan for lay contact and instruction is currently a project."

## Marks 30th Y In Priesthood

Monsignor Philip E. Mass at St. Peter and Church, Elmira, will celebrate his thirtieth ordination anniversary on Sunday, June 4.

He will observe his anniversary with a concelebrated Mass at St. Peter and Church at 7:30 p.m. Father Vincent de Paul Church, Elmira, will celebrate his thirtieth anniversary on Sunday, June 4.

A luncheon for all priests and members of the parish will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vincent de Paul Church, Elmira, on Sunday, June 4.

A native of Romulus, Mr. McGowan is the son of late Charles and Rose McGowan. He attended school in Geneva and graduated from St. A. and St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester.

He was ordained on 1937 at St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, by the late Cardinal Edward Mooney, then bishop of Rochester.

## Revision of Present N.Y. Law Proposed

# Advocates Reticent on Abortion Hazards

By THOMAS R. SWEENEY, M.D.,  
Obstetrician, Gynecologist, Staff Physician, Rochester General Hospital

In the April 14 issue of the Courier-Journal, page 4, we reviewed the legal aspects of therapeutic abortion, mentioning the opinion of Mr. Richard P. Byrne, an attorney of Los Angeles, California.

His evidence, quoting legal decisions of New York State and elsewhere, established the legal rights of the fetus "in utero" even from conception. We have since his conclusion 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."

Unfortunately these points of law were not sufficient to prevent passage of a therapeutic abortion law by at least one state legislature since that time. In New York State the need to adjourn for the Constitutional Convention and the resultant desire to avoid controversial legislation helped to kill the therapeutic abortion bill proposed by Assemblyman Blumenthal in the 1967 session.

A promise of a 1968 bill encourages us to consider what such a law would mean to New York State. To begin, let us look at the safety of the operation.

ONE OF THE most respected textbooks used in teaching medical students is Williams' "Obstetrics," published in 1966 by N. J. Eastman, M.D. and L. M. Hellman, M.D., world authorities in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

On therapeutic abortions they write, "Vaginal therapeutic abortion is fraught with several hazards, including danger of perforating the uterus, hemorrhage, retention of placental fragments, and infection... Even in normal, healthy women, the mortality and morbidity rates of the operation are considerable... The likelihood of these complications increases sharply after the twelfth week (of pregnancy), and perhaps several weeks earlier in primigravidae (first pregnancies); for this reason the procedure should never be done vaginally when the duration of pregnancy has exceeded this limit. If interruption of more advanced pregnancy is urgent, abdominal hysterotomy (incision of the

uterus)... are the procedures of choice. They quote, "In 23,666 therapeutic abortions performed in Denmark, the mortality rate was 0.7 per 1,000 operations, while serious but non-fatal sequelae (complications) ensued in 32 per cent. These sequelae included 82 cases of

perforation of the uterus and 122 cases of infection.

"In addition, 113 cases of non-fatal but serious complications followed 5,320 abdominal hysterotomies, or 2.1 per cent. According to the eminent Japanese demographer, Yoshio Koya, not

less than 47 per cent of women in Japan experience postabortal complications following induced interruption of pregnancy in his country."

IN SPITE of the above statistics, Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, President of Planned Parenthood-World Population of New York calls legal abortion "magically safe."

In testimony before a committee of the New York State Assembly, he cited recent reports of 140,000 consecutive legal abortions in Czechoslovakia and 97,000 in Yugoslavia without a death. Even if these exceedingly optimistic figures released by countries behind the Iron Curtain could be believed, it is significant that, according to news media, Dr. Guttmacher did not include any complication rates in his testimony. It is also to be noted that the standard of medical care in either country is not as high as in Denmark or the United States, which adds further to one's skepticism.

A diagnostic dilatation and curettage (scraping of the lining of the womb) done in a non-pregnant patient is not without complications. In the average hospital a perforation occurs in about 1 in 500 to 1 in 700 such operations. Yet, in spite of this the enlargement and softening of the uterus due to pregnancy, and the consequent thinning of its walls and the increase in its blood supply, the conclusion is inescapable that in opening the neck (or the wall) of a pregnant uterus and interrupting the circulation of a normally functioning placenta (afterbirth), a physician will encounter both hemorrhage and tissue damage.

In a certain percentage of cases the latter will inevitably lead to infection. Accidental perforation of the thinned out wall of the uterus can lead to further complications, depending on the amount of bleeding and the extent of damage to other organs such as the urinary bladder and the intestines.

In the past, Dr. Guttmacher has edited an excellent book entitled "Medical, Surgical, and Gynecologic Complications of Pregnancy" (Williams and Wilkins, 1965). I am disappointed that a man of his ability did not have the intellectual honesty to inform our state's legislators that there are still complications encountered in the performance of a therapeutic abortion.

## Justice, Peace, New Unit's Ultimate Goal

Washington — (NC) — World justice and peace will be one concrete aim of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops when it opens a new office here on June 1 to promote these goals.

Inspired by Pope Paul's encyclical, The Development of Peoples, the new bishops' committee and its secretariat will be counterparts to the recently established Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace.

He said he views the program of the new committee as the "practical fulfillment of the Christ-Jean precept of charity in the global dimensions of the crisis of hunger."

Heading the secretariat here for the bishops' committee will be Msgr. Marvin Bordonel of the diocese of Alexandria, La., who views the new office as providing an opportunity for the Church to concern itself "with the central and key issues of our century." (The pontifical commission's secretariat is also headed by a priest of the Alexandria diocese, Msgr. Joseph Grenillon.)

Both Msgr. Bordonel and Bishop Dougherty stressed that the main contribution the new office will make is an educational one.

The purpose of the committee, Bishop Dougherty said is to "service existing agencies within the Church in the United States with information on the situation of the poor nations."

He said that its scope "will range from kindergarten through the university and beyond, to adult education programs presented through numerous Church groups" and other national organizations.

Msgr. Bordonel added that he believes such an education will do much to bring the aid of Catholics in the United States to the poor of the world.

Catholics, he said, have not yet been sufficiently challenged in this direction, but have shown in other areas that when challenged they will respond.

# Synod of Bishops Faces Vital Issues

By GARY MacEOIN

Rome — May stands out as the busiest month in Rome's year. The universally evident sign is the student on the bus and in the park diligently poring over notes in frantic pre-examination despair. I think the syndrome is, however, considerably deeper. The Romans respond to a centuries-old biological conditioning where they speed on their activities now in order to ensure no interruption of the summer-long slumber that starts with June's oppressive heat.

One of the more vexing problems which occupies ecclesiastical Rome these days is the impact which the Synod of Bishops is likely to have, when it meets in late September. I find that opinions today are very different from what they were when I was briefly in Rome last December.

At that time, those involved hoped or feared (depending on their interest) that the meeting would come or go without ruffling the placid surface of a Church administration just recovering from the upheavals of the Council years.

More recently, when the Synod agenda was announced, the view was prevalent that we might have in September a confrontation similar to that of the first session of Vatican II. To many people the proposed subjects seemed less urgent (liturgy, for example) or less ready for

decision (canon law reform) than other substantial issues which agitate many people in many places.

Today, on the contrary, I find a wide consensus among those who should know that there will be no need for a confrontation. They base their conclusion on a series of significant happenings in and around the Curia during the month of April. It may indeed well prove, when history looks back, that April 1967... was the crucial month for Vatican II.

The most dramatic moment was the clash between Cardinal Lerocar of Bologna, president of the Council for the implementation of Vatican II's decree on the liturgy, and Cardinal Bacci of the Curia. Bacci misjudged the strength of a movement designed to undercut Cardinal Lerocar and thereby to set back the effort of conciliar renewal in Italy and in the Universal Church. In incredibly bad taste, he wrote a preface to a booklet by a little-known Italian writer, Tito Casini, which described his fellow cardinal as a "new Luther" and a betrayer of the constitution of the liturgy.

With an entirely proper though for him unusual forthrightness, Pope Paul repudiated Casini and his curial patron at a meeting of the Council, April 18, headed by Cardinal Lerocar. Just a few days earlier the Pope had made a series

of changes in the Curia which altered substantially the balance of power and the lines of force. They included the resignation of Cardinal Cento, the transfer of Archbishop Staffa, one of the most obstinate opponents of collegiality, from the post of secretary of the Congregation of Seminaries, to a less sensitive position, and the naming of Cardinal Villot of Lyons as prefect of the Congregation of the Council.

The pattern begun with the naming of Archbishop Garino as pro-prefect of the Congregation of Seminaries and Msgr. Moeller as sub-secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (former Holy Office) is now becoming clearer. Although the long-awaited decree on reform of the Curia remains unpublished, the reform is here. Pastors are replacing canon lawyers and diplomats in key posts.

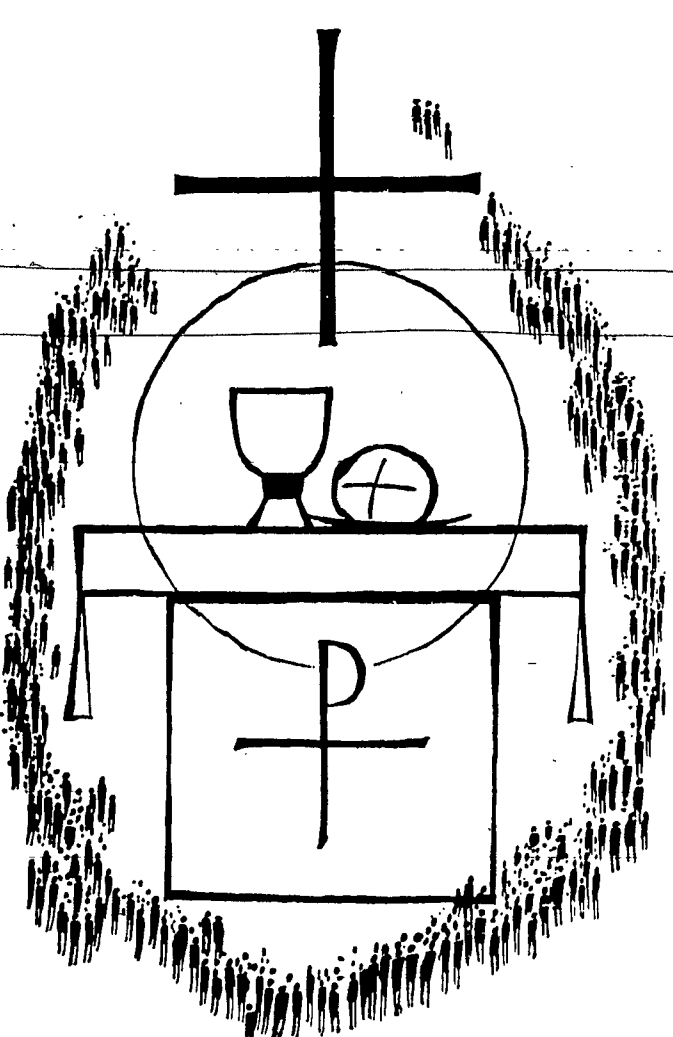
Yet another event of major importance is the structuring of new curial offices without reference to the old. The best example is the "Justitia et Pax" Commission for world development. Its first meeting has ignored curial procedures and set up its own, including a totally new and open approach to the press. The old solidarity of the Curia is accordingly being shattered. It is further undermined by an internal struggle for control between the ex-Holy Office and the Secretariat for State.

All these and other indices convince Vaticanologists that Pope Paul will ensure full freedom to the Synod to make its own agenda and formulate its own procedures.

The poor of the world, for example, will not be told that "we knew you were hungry but unfortunately the agenda was already finalized."

What is expected is that many additional subjects will be broached but not carried to a decision. After one or two months of discussions, the Synod will probably close with a call for a specified period of study of the issue defined, to lead up to another Synod for which the members will be newly elected by the various episcopal conferences.

The one remaining fear is not of curial control but of a possible ennuui on the part of the bishops themselves, an unwillingness to accept new problems so soon after the traumatic self-examination of Vatican II. In this context, it is hoped that the synod will have the support of observers from other Christian bodies and of theological periti, two elements not yet publicly discussed. They were both catalysts at the Council. The Synod could similarly benefit from observers to make it face issues honestly, and from periti to help it define issues in their true dimensions.



Jesus chose bread and wine to be the symbols of His Presence through the centuries.

The Catholic COURIER Journal

Vol. 78 No. 35 Friday, June 2, 1967

MOST REV. FULTON J. SHEEN, Ph.D., D.D., President

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association  
MAIN OFFICE: 45 So. St. — 444-7050 — Rochester, N.Y. 14604  
ELMIRA OFFICE: 217 Robinson Bldg., Lake St. RE 2-6688 or RE 2-3423  
ALBANY OFFICE: 168 E. Genesee St. AL 2-4448

Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.  
Single copy 15¢; 1 year subscription in U.S., \$5.00  
As required under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.  
Canada \$5.50; Foreign Countries \$6.75