

Women Speak in Former 'Men-Only' Bastion

By EVA MARIA JUNG
Special Correspondent

Vatican City — (RNS) — The voices of women are being heard increasingly in Vatican City, and members of the fair sex are receiving new honors.

Some of the new prominence given to women is permanent and institutional, as in the appointment of women to Curial congregations.

Some is largely ceremonial, though of historic importance—for example, the recent admission of the first two women to the status of Doctors of the Church, a title of honor given to the most respected and saintly writers of the past.

A lot of the recent prominence of women has been in less formal and settled contexts—at meetings of the laity, at press conferences and in the drafting of resolutions.

One of the most striking examples of their changing status was the inclusion of women in the lay delegation which visited the Synod of Bishops here.

A view (admittedly somewhat extreme) of the traditional status of the laity in general and of women in particular was received last year by the Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate. In a survey on the condition of the laity in various parts of the world, the committee asked how many lay people were working for the Church on the diocesan level. A Swiss diocese replied: "One servant and two cleaning women."

A very different picture was presented by the third World Congress of the Lay Apostolate. Less than one fifth of the dele-

gates were priests, and they were told by Maurice Cardinal Roy, Archbishop of Quebec, that they should keep quiet and let the laymen speak. About half of the delegates were women, and they did not keep quiet. Many sessions had women as chairmen and they conducted many workshops. A spirit of equally mutual respect and collaboration was evident throughout the Congress.

The women had had an international meeting of their own here, sponsored by the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, a few days before the Lay Apostolate Congress.

One way to survey the activity of women during these events is to look in at a few press conferences held in the Vatican Press Office. At one conference, given by the organizers of the Lay Apostolate Congress, history was made. For the first time, at such an event, more women than men were seated at the speaker's table.

There was Miss Rosemarie Goldie from Australia, who in spite of her youthful appearance is considered "the mother" of the lay congresses. She had planned all three of them—the first in 1951, the second in 1957 and the third one this year. She is also the first officially appointed woman in a curial office—vice-secretary of the Council on the Laity. (Four other women, members of religious orders, have since been given positions in the Sacred Congregation of Religious.)

Sitting next to Miss Goldie was Miss Alma Marie Herger from the U.S. Catholic Conference in Washington, D.C. She had come over to Rome to take care of the technical set-up of the Congress, which, with 215

3000 participants of both sexes, from 103 countries and all walks of life, was bigger and more universal than Vatican Council II.

There was French Macmouelle Marie-Ange Besson, who had travelled to the remotest parts of Asia and Africa to get people interested in the Congress. And finally there was Belgian Miss Maria Vendrick, another veteran of the Catholic lay movement, who served as program director of the Congress.

Another press conference was given in the Vatican press office by a woman, Spanish-born Miss Maria del Pilar Bellosillo, president of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, which with its 36 million members outnumbers the corresponding International Federation of Catholic Men. The WUCW's 16th Congress, held immediately before the big world congress of the laity and in preparation for it, had about 500 delegates from 55 countries, for the first time including even some nuns. They pointed out that the evolution of nuns must and does parallel that of all women.

Speakers at the women's congress complained that women have contributed very little so far to the progress of ideas and sciences and to the technical achievements from which they themselves are benefiting. They also complained that in most places women are still considered second class citizens and that many women themselves are content with this secondary role in life because they prefer the easier and safer way.

To get out of this vicious circle, education and encouragement are necessary, the women's Congress decided. One concrete step in this direction was undertaken by holding a week-long seminar in Rome for all the African women delegates to the World Congress, to follow up the ideas of the Congress.

Another sign of the new spirit in the Church was the Mass which the Pope celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica for the members of the Synod and of the Congress. At this very solemn ceremony, the voices of three women were heard. Each, alternating with seven men, and using their native language, recited the prayers of the laity, composed for them by the Pope himself. This was unheard of in the history of St. Peter's, where women do not even sing in the choir.

An even greater surprise came when the Pope announced in his allocution that he is going to declare two women, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Therese of Avila, Doctors of the Church. One of the four women who visited the Synod of Bishops, Mrs. Eleanor Shields, president of the National Council of Catholic Women in the U.S., addressed the Synod on behalf of the World Congress of the Lay Apostolate. She asked for more dialogue between the laity and the hierarchy and more democratic participation of the laity in the decisions of the Church at all levels.

During the four sessions of the Vatican Council several petitions had been made to have women speak up in the Council hall, but they were always refused. Now, only two years later, women were sitting in the Synod, not yet as members, but as guests, and had a very friendly chat with the cardinals and bishops during coffee break.

A major sign of the new status of women in the Church was the resolution on the subject drafted and overwhelmingly approved by the Lay Apostolate Congress. Its text is as follows:

"Considering the Baptism, incorporation human beings (both men and women) in Christ, constitutes them 'persons' in the Church without distinction of any kind,

"Remembering St. Paul's words condemning all discrimination between human beings,

"Convinced that woman's place in the Church depends on social and cultural circumstances and that her status in most countries is evolving towards complete equality of rights between man and woman,

"The third World Congress of the Lay Apostolate wishes to express its desire that women be granted by the Church full

rights and responsibilities as Christians, and a serious doctrinal study be undertaken into the place of women within the sacramental order and within the Church.

"Furthermore, the Congress requests:

"1. That competent women be included in all Pontifical Commissions,

"2. That qualified women be consulted on the revision of Canon laws which concern women, in order to give full recognition to the woman's dignity and to all women greater possibilities of service to the Church."

These are very strong requests, which will certainly strengthen the women in their individual and organized struggle for their full development.

The resolution pushes open the doors, closed for almost 2,000 years, to the participation of women in the government of the Church and eventually also to holy orders, by declaring women "persons" in the juridical sense of the world without distinction and restrictions of any kind.

Of course, there is still a long way to go; but it will surely not take another 2,000 years.

Papal Peace Efforts Praised

United Nations — (RNS) — U.N. Secretary General U Thant said here it was "gratifying" to learn that ecumenical cooperation among all religions, ideological and cultural groups was actively being sought by the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace now meeting in Rome.

In a cable, coinciding with United Nations Day celebrations, the Burmese statesman stressed that the task of peace-building was as important as peace-making. He welcomed "dialogues" between various religious faiths as "indispensable for creating the understanding and solidarity which true and long-term peace demands."

Undelivered

Vatican City — (RNS) — Sources here indicated that a telegram sent to Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, Primate of Poland, by Pope Paul, was not delivered to him.

The message, sent at the opening of the Synod of Bishops here (Sept. 29), said the Pope regretted Cardinal Wyszyński's absence from the opening of the Synod and hoped that the cardinal and the Polish delegation would be able to attend other sessions.

God's Glory Unity Theme

New York — (RNS) — The National Council of Churches and the Catholic Graymoor Priory of Garrison, N.Y., are again jointly distributing, for the third year, the prayer leaflet for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Jan. 18-25).

It will be used at special unity services in the U.S. during the Week, whose theme for 1968 is, "To the Praise of His Glory" (Ephesians 1:14).

The Week of Prayer is sponsored internationally by the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order and the Catholic Association for Christian Unity in Lyon, France.

In the U.S., the observance is promoted by the NCC's Department of Faith and Order and the Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, a unit of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Graymoor Fathers—formally known as the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement—have

long sponsored the Chair of Unity Octave, during the same period in January, when Catholics around the world pray for Christian unity.

With the growth of the ecumenical movement and the holding of interreligious unity services by Christians, the common prayer leaflet was developed for use in this country.

A preface to the leaflet for 1968 says of the Week's theme of praise to God, "We must learn again that the church is not to seek earthly glory but to take the form of a servant and remain subject to God."

"Yet in this very glory of God we are exhorted to live in hope; in the hope for its full revelation when His kingdom finally comes and all creation is reconciled in His city of peace. The visible unity of all Christian people throughout the world would point to that cosmic unity. So our prayer this Week shall be to the praise of God's glory."

Avoid Sensationalism Prelate Tells Press

Yakima, Wash. — (RNS) — Bishop Joseph P. Dougherty of Yakima, publisher of the diocesan weekly Our Times, in an address stressing professionalism in journalism, cautioned Catholic newsmen to avoid sensationalism.

There is a compelling need in the Catholic press, he said, to report to readers the changes in the Church, but this reporting should not stir up dissension and cause friction.

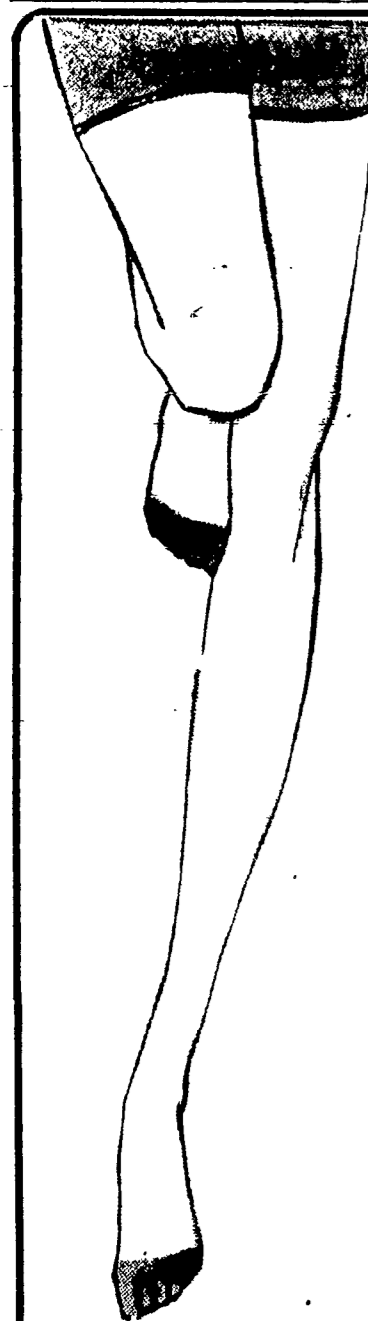
In addressing delegates to the Pacific Northwest Regional Convention of the Catholic Press Association, Bishop Dougherty said:

"A new function which I, as a publisher, see for a diocesan newspaper beyond its other potentialities is to prevent such dissension and friction — not by ignoring or suppressing the facts but by acting as a clear, open channel of factual information — not by a grand jury type of inquiry.

"The professional Catholic journalist, now more than ever,

must not be led astray by a desire for sensationalism or by placing a false and misleading emphasis on transitory events."

As much as people need to be informed of the changes in the Church, they must also be kept aware of the unchanging truths, the bishop emphasized. "The professional Catholic journalist must be self-disciplined; he must be aware of his function as a channel of communication between the various sectors of the Church; he must perform that function with skill and competence; he must not print news for the sake of sensationalism; he must use judgment and restraint; he must know the mind of the bishop; he must think of the long-range effect of what he writes; he must seek the future good rather than the immediate gratification of his own ego; he must not become a common gossip, relaying every innuendo and hint of scandal that comes his way."



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City taxes go up, services down.
County taxes go down, services up.
The city is managed by Democrats.
The county is managed by Republicans.

By ARTHUR MOORE
Special Correspondent

Mr. Moore, editor of Outlook, Methodist magazine, is a layman who has written widely on theological developments.

Vatican City — (RNS) — Before it opened, some observers here expected the World Congress of the Apostolate to be merely a pep rally.

By the time the 2,400 pants had finished the day Congress, this view had drastically revised. The press took the spotlight but emphatically away from the Synod of Bishops nearby.

From the opening at Thom Kersting's headquarters, it was obvious mood of the Congress was and aggressive.

Two subjects immediately surfaced as being of intense interest to the birth control and women in the Church. It was hoped to be more accurate to them as two aspects of the same problem — the laity to make their decisions.

In a series of workshops, these subjects were being discussed with greater and greater interest. The question of electing representatives to be the voice of the laity in Rome ran into devising a practical method of choosing candidates who not themselves be the clericalized bureaucratic control.

(Interestingly enough, it seemed to be no personal animosity against many of

Four Catholic Colleges Linked in Program

Detroit — (RNS) — Roman Catholic institutions of higher education here have begun a two-year test program to enable students in four to use the facilities of the rest.

Participating in the program are Madonna Mercy College, all women's institutions, and the National University of Detroit. They have a combined enrollment of over 11,000 students.

Under the program, students at any of the four schools will be able to take courses at other institutions for credit not offered in their own schools.

Father Malcolm T. J. J. J., president of the National University of Detroit, said a tentative agreement had been reached.

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