

Around The Country

Church Reunion Imperative, Jesuit Says

Chicago—(RNS)—Churches must feel an "urgency for reunion" to stop an "erosion of enthusiasm for the ecumenical movement," a Jesuit priest told a convocation at Lutheran School of Theology here.

Father Thomas E. Ambrogio of Woodstock (Md.) College, asserted that "our ecumenical sails are flapping badly in the dying breeze."

"I think we must acknowledge that we feel no real and pressing imperative about church reunion," he stated. "We are thrilled just to be talking together . . ."

Church reunion, he said, "is an imperative of the mid-20th Century Christian ethos in a distinctive and inescapable way. If the Christian ethos is to have a future at all in the world that is abiding, that future must include far more than ecumenical cooperation between separated Christian communities, however salutary that might be."

Bishops Urged To Clarify Vietnam Issues

New York—(NC)—PAX, a Catholic peace association, has asked the bishops of the United States to clarify their position on the Vietnam war and to support conscientious objection to the war.

In a resolution adopted at its annual meeting, PAX called U.S. bombing in Vietnam "indiscriminate" and said since the bishops of the world had condemned indiscriminate bombing as a crime against God and man "the American bishops should clearly state what U.S. Catholics should do about the war."

The resolution asked that the bishops "publicly state either that it is or is not morally permissible to participate in these acts of war or else to state that it is the right and duty of each individual to decide whether he will or will not participate."

Episcopals Ask Pope's Assent to Birth Control

San Francisco—(RNS)—The executive council of the Episcopal Diocese of California has asked Pope Paul VI to issue a statement approving birth control. They asked him in a letter to speak "in a manner that will elevate grace over law."

The executive council, composed of 27 lay and clerical members advises Bishop C. Kilmer Myers. The letter stated: "We believe that the horrors and consequences of overpopulation are much greater than any evil that might be considered inherent in contraception itself. . . . We recognize that millions of persons in the emerging nations of the world look to you as the Holy Father, and that it is precisely in these nations where the horrors of overpopulation are rapidly becoming most obvious."

Liberties Union Fights Inter-Faith Center

St. Paul, Minn.—(RNS)—The Minnesota Civil Liberties Union said it is prepared to go to court to restrain the State College Board from permitting construction of an "interfaith religious center" on the campus of Mankato State College.

The Rev. Richard N. Tice, CLU vice president and pastor of Simpson Methodist Church, Minneapolis, said the proposed center "violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the separation of Church and State provisions of the Minnesota Constitution."

The attorney general has ruled that the college board's request, that construction of the facility would be legal.

Seminary Rector Asks Laicization

New York—(RNS)—Father George Weber, M.M., rector of the Maryknoll (N.Y.) Seminary has resigned and asked for laicization, including dispensation from the vow of celibacy.

The 38-year-old priest had been rector of the seminary since July, 1965, and had previously served for six years in Tanzania.

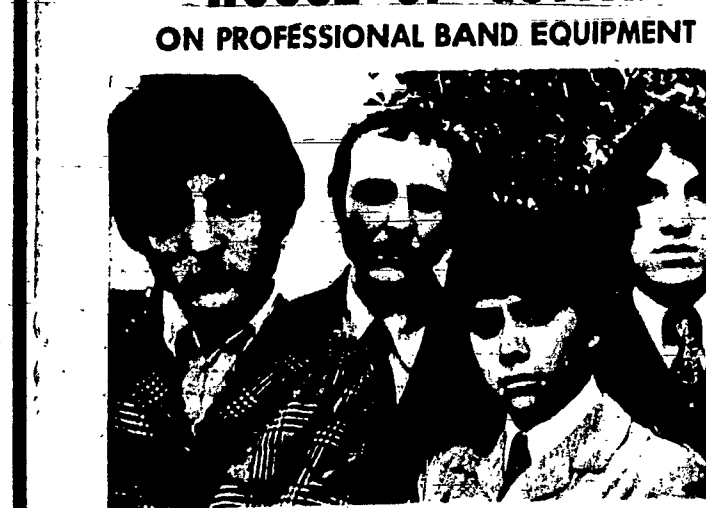
A Maryknoll spokesman and Father Weber, who was contacted by Religious News Service in Detroit, have both confirmed his resignation but denied reports that he has married. Both sources said that his resignation was "for personal reasons."

Father Weber said that he had offered his resignation at the beginning of January, that Maryknoll had accepted it and had "kindly submitted to Rome my request for laicization, which includes a request for dispensation from the obligation of celibacy."

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Asks For: Theology in Today's Language

Zagreb, Yugoslavia—(RNS)—Franjo Cardinal Seper, former Archbishop of Zagreb and now the pro-prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has outlined his plans for encouraging modernization in the Roman Catholic Church.

In an article written for the Zagreb weekly newspaper Vjesnik u Srijedu, he said that one of his first undertakings in his new assignment would be "the promotion of theological research for the translation of old theological truths into the language of the present day."

He also called for "a confrontation with contemporary problems," noting that these problems "include that of birth control."

Parts of Cardinal Seper's article were devoted to Catholic-Orthodox relations in his native Yugoslavia and to other issues facing the Church.

In Yugoslavia, he said, Catholic-Orthodox relations are already "good." For further improvement of these relations, he urged more exchanges of both students and teachers between Catholic and Orthodox seminaries.

Cites Need For Agreeable Disagreement

Louisville, Ky.—(NC)—A Catholic editor declared here that "great charity among those who disagree" is an urgent need in a Church endangered by extremists of both left and right.

"We have real problems, real divisions in the Church today," said Dale Francis, columnist and editor of Twin Circle, National Catholic Press.

He addresses a PTA meeting at Holy Trinity parish here.

One chief division, Francis said, is between those who are disturbed by every change, who feel the Church is moving out from under them, and who want the Church again the way it used to be; and those who think that change itself is good, that if one thing can be changed, everything can be changed, who call into question even the most basic of Christian beliefs.



Honorary Degree for Father Lavery

Hofstra University of Hempstead, Long Island, conferred an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on Very Rev. Charles J. Lavery, C.S.B. (right), president of St. John Fisher College, in midyear commencement ceremonies held last Sunday (Feb. 11). He was cited for his "devout dedication and effective leadership in both sacred and secular work, especially in the field of higher education." Pictured with Father Lavery are Dr. Clifford Lord (left), president of Hofstra, and Mr. Hoyt Ammidon (center), chairman of the board and chief executive officer of United States Trust Company, who received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree at the convocation.

St. Louis U. Urban Affairs Center

St. Louis—(NC)—St. Louis University has established a Center for Urban Programs as "a response to a clear need in the community."

Father Paul C. Reinert, S.J., university president, said the center will engage in teaching, research and community service related to urban problems.

Father Reinert said establishment of the center was made possible by a \$100,000 gift from an anonymous donor commemorating human rights activities of the late Joseph Cardinal Ritter of St. Louis. The University hopes to obtain other funds from foundations, government and private sources, he said.

JFK DEDICATION TOUR

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