

The Pope's Trip to Bogota



Papal Question: Quo Vadis, Latin America?

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Vatican is putting great hopes on next August's conference of the Latin American bishops which meets immediately after the World Eucharistic Congress in Bogota, Colombia.

Not only will the conference be inaugurated by Pope Paul VI himself but it will bring together 200 churchmen already alert to the historic crisis now sweeping the Church in the hemisphere and ready to do something about it.

Detailed preparations are well advanced through constant consultations between the Bishop's Conference (CELAM) and the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. The discussions will last for at least two weeks and if the achievements, as expected, are notable, a pattern will be set for regional bishops' meetings elsewhere in the world.

The Pope, it is expected, will limit his intervention on the occasion to general outline, leaving the prelates' wide latitude for opinions. Since the topic is the "Application of the Vatican Council to the Situation in Latin America" there will be a wide range of questions — the style of the apostolate, the formation of the clergy, the relations of the Church to the teeming unlettered millions and the social question in general in an area where the disparity between rich and poor is so pronounced.

"The Pope," said one expert closely connected with the preparatory work, "may well take note of the vast social changes convulsing the sub-continent and ask, 'Quo Vadis, Latin America?'"

The Colombia meeting is the second of its kind. In 1955, Pope Pius XII, in a providential move, summoned a more modest and exploratory meeting in Rio de Janeiro which was attended by only 100 bishops. As events turned out, it was conciliar before its time. The Vatican is now confident that the groundwork laid at this meeting will make of the Bogota conference the beginning of a new phase in the life of the Catholic Church.

The conference will not enact any new Church laws in the canonical sense. One of the results of the joint deliberations may be the formulation later of some general or particular canonical directives. It is expected that the meeting will conclude with a message to the peoples of Latin America emphasizing the religious mission of the Catholic Church and

the opportunities of all Christians to exemplify in their own lives the life of Christ, particularly in giving aid one to another.

How this program can be applied or "integrated" intelligently to countries of such wide differences in culture and economic development is of course one of the problems facing the bishops.

Your Church Bulletin: How Well Is It Read?

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the family waste basket after a hurried glance a few days later, or even carefully studied—but the pastor or assistant or secretary usually never knows their impact and rarely receives any comment.

Parishioners take their church bulletins too much for granted, never knowing the conscientious zeal of the person who gathers the notes and arranges them for the printer or mimeo-stencil. They forget the lengthy pulpit-reading of Mass intentions, parish doings, personal notices and statistics which, before bulletins, always consumed so much time and compounded so much Sunday boredom.

This COURIER JOURNAL series hopes to drop praise and approving commentary on many fine parish bulletins by name, criticize others with general observations and make suggestions for improving the journalistic style of many.

Some bulletins are uniquely professional in writing style, layout, contents, emphasis and balance. These parishes usually take a similar care (and expense) to have a special printing job. In others, (perhaps the mimeographing only makes it seem so), the news-notes are simply piled together

without emphasis for importance aesthetic value or clarity.

Special stars today go to the following for the appearance and attention-holding style of their bulletins:

Father Raymond Heisel's weekly effort at Holy Trinity, Webster, combines the usual parochial notes in brief and light fashion, spiced with several line-cuts and excellently reproduced photos of parishioners. Best feature in each issue is Fr. Heisel's column "Pastorized," recounting his week's observations with a teasing smile. The bulletin consistently reflects a genial ecumenical spirit and warm pride for the people of the parish.

Elmira's Sts. Peter and Paul's Church publishes "The Chimes". Weekly variations of layout, good reproduction of photo-offset pictures and gracious, signed pieces by the pastor, Monsignor Philip McGhan, makes this a distinctive bulletin.

Holy Cross Church, Rochester, seems to have the most people doing the most things in the most euphoric state of any bulletin we see. The notes of the coming and part vents are cheery and enthusiastic.

(More stars and particular commentary next week)

Paradoxes Abound in Italian Vote

By FATHER R. A. GRAHAM, S.J.

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Italian elections of May 19-20 provide ample insight into the Catholic Church's place in politics and the problem of communism in Italy.

Both the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party strengthened their representation in the Chamber of Deputies, while the in-between moderate Socialists suffered humiliating losses. What conclusions can be drawn?

Paradoxes abounded. The bishops limited themselves to generic exhortations to "unity."

There was no mobilizing of votes from the pulpit. Democrats increased the number of deputies, yet the Christian and their share of the total vote, by comparison with the last general elections five years ago, some find in this proof that the party does not depend for its existence or growth on clerical electioneering.

Again, Italy in the past few years has bathed in the sunlight of remarkable economic prosperity, yet the Communist party made even greater advances than the Christian Democrats in terms of the number of extra deputies and share in the total vote. What has become of the contention that communism feeds on economic despair and loses its appeal when times are good?

The attitude of the Church during the campaigning was a combination of aloofness and exhortation. Last January, the Italian bishops, in an effort to "disengage" the Church from politics, disavowed any desire to impose an obligation on Catholics to vote Christian Democrat. On the other hand, they simultaneously stressed a vital necessity for Catholics to vote in a bloc.

Political unity, they thought, may not be a theological necessity but it is certainly a historical necessity. Catholics, they argued, were obliged to support the existing unity not because of any outside injunction but in the name of the personal responsibility of the voter in the interests of Church and country. The citizen's own conscience should determine him to support the human and Christian values menaced by the Communist and other ideological parties.

Supporters of this policy now find it justified by the results of the election. The political unity of Catholics, they say, is clearly an absolute necessity as a stabilizing force in a country that has already had one "march on Rome" and doesn't need another, black or red.

Pope Paul VI himself, as the foreign reporters commented, was

"poker faced." But on election day, speaking to the usual Sunday noon-day crowd in St. Peter's Square, he offered the hope and prayer "that every citizen fulfill according to his conscience and wisdom, the civic duties that . . . could be significant and decisive for the social, moral and religious values in this country."

This approach got substantial results. Though the bishops' appeal of January was assailed by some splinter groups as dictation of political choice, their dissent seems to have cost the Christian Democrats few votes besides their own. On

the other hand, it remains true that there are many Catholics — more than ever before — who did not vote the Christian Democratic ticket.

One public opinion poll claims that 21 per cent of Italians believe that it is possible to be a good Catholic and a good Communist at the same time. Presumably they voted Communist. But others, too, voted Communist as a form of protest against what they consider the inequities, the corruption and the injustices of contemporary political and economic life in Italy. This protest is silent but massive.

Temperance Leaders Criticize Cardinal

London — (RNS) — John Cardinal Heenan of Westminster created something more than "a storm in a teacup" when he told an anti-alcoholism conference here that alcoholism was a declining problem compared with drug taking.

The Roman Catholic leader addressed a conference at Westminster of leaders from all major denominations concerned with problems of alcoholism. Comparing the problems of drinking and drugs, he said:

"The problem now is drug-taking among the young. The conference wants to have a wide outlook on its work, not draw a demarcation between drinks and drugs. Let all the people who need you be your concern."

As the cardinal left the conference room the leaders of some temperance societies unleashed their wrath at his suggestion that drinking was less of an evil today than drug addiction.



'Resurrection City'

"Resurrection City," the community maintained on public land in Washington for the Poor People's Campaign, has received support from many Christian bodies. Above, a Roman Catholic nun is shown in the tent city as she made friends with Negro children. (Religious News Service)

Sibley's presents Dansk enamelware for colorful cookery



Dansk enamelware, the lovely, colorful cookware that goes from a casual barbecue to an after-theater party with elegance and ease. From left: one-and-one-half quart saucepan with teak handle, 13.95; two-quart casserole, use cover as trivet, 17.95; 14" buffet server, 17.95; four-quart casserole, 19.95; six-quart casserole, 22.95. In bright red, blue or yellow with white interiors. Sibley's Gifts, Fourth Floor; selections at Southtown, Greece, Irondequoit.

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