

# Dutch Catholics, Old Catholics Merge Parishes

**Rotterdam, The Netherlands**—(NC)—A group of 1,000 Roman Catholics and 100 Old Catholics in Rotterdam's inner city now have a single parish church.

The merging of the Catholic St. Joseph's and the Old Catholic Paradise churches (Aug. 18) marks another step forward in the rapprochement between the schismatic Old Catholics of the Netherlands and the Roman Catholic Church.

The merger of the two parishes was dictated by the exodus of residents from Rotterdam's inner city, which has depopulated the parishes and made two churches unnecessary. The selection of the Old Catholic building for the amalgamated religious community was made because St. Joseph's has been in need of extensive and costly repairs and was due to be sold.

The agreement between Bishop Martin Jansen of Rotterdam and the Old Catholic Archbishop Andreas Rinkel of Utrecht to form the single parish church here is in line

with a joint pastoral of November, 1966, by Bernard Cardinal Alfrink of Utrecht and Archbishop Rinkel in which the two churches in the Netherlands acknowledged each other's sacramental life and outlined guidelines for eventual reunion.

Holland's Old Catholics are members of several national churches considering themselves Catholics in doctrine and worship but not bound to the papacy. In recent years there has been a growing cordiality between the two churches in this country and

they have undertaken theological investigation of their differences.

Under the parish plan members of both churches will attend Mass in the Old Catholic church, but within the context of the current status of relations between the churches. The sermon at the first of such Masses (Aug. 18) was given by Father Jan Burgers in the Catholic services and Father Frans L. Kok in the Old Catholic rites. Father Burgers celebrated the Mass and Father Kok and another Old Catholic priest

were deacon and subdeacon.

In a press conference, Fathers Kok and Burgers said they expect to work in close cooperation, having only one midnight Mass at Christmas and joint Holy Week observances. Hosts remaining from the Old Catholic Mass will be used freely by the Catholics if desired, the priests said.

In a letter to Bishop Jansen, Archbishop Rinkel said that "the merger would have been impossible if there had not been an inward condition of unity." Archbishop Rinkel said the parochial merger was

"the work of the Holy Spirit." Bishop Jansen said in reply that "this cooperation is a hopeful sign for the future" and "a proof that we are looking for each other and that the time of estrangement is over."

Following the 1966 agreement between Cardinal Alfrink and Archbishop Rinkel, a joint pastoral commission was set up with a theological commission. The former was composed of three Catholic and three Old Catholic priests. In 1967 the pastoral commission asked the Vatican Secre-

tariat for Promoting Christian Unity for an official statement setting forth what has been accepted in the relations between Catholics and the Orthodox churches and applicable to the relations between Catholics and non-Catholics.

Earlier attempts at reunion were blocked by Roman Catholic restrictions placed on dialogue with the Old Catholics. The restrictions developed from the Vatican's reaction to the heresy-based foundation and complex history of the Old Catholics.

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The subject of the election of various terms, is that of Latin America the post-conciliar development of the Church in change.

A major focus of the Archbishop Heidegger's suggestion that the 22 bishops of Latin America Dr. Martin Luther King's advocacy of social change in the discussion centers men's, both his address recent visit to Colombia

**Roman Prelates Back C**

Bonn, Germany — Aaron Marton of Romania, and Patriarch of the Orthodox country, in a joint, faithful, condemned Czechoslovakia by the and declared their Czechoslovakian people

The Romanian pre and their whole demands of the restoration of the for free development enca.

The joint message used as rumors of the President, Nicolae Ceaucescu, might be "naïve" on for the suppression trends in the Iron C stirred U.S. and U.S. circles.

The Romanian go lost no time in denou invasion of Czechoslomanian Communist President, Nicolae Ceaucescu, and the national militia.

Bishop Marton wa of Rumanian commu when restrictions on a bishop were lifted of the government's the Church. The co in Rumania kept B prison from 1948 to finement until Augu

Last May the 1 priests in his catted time in 20 years.

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