

## CHURCH AND THE CITY

### The Church Begins Anew

By Father P. David Fink

During the last week the American Bishops have been struggling in day and night meetings to articulate directions for the Church in the United States. Despite the fact that the compromise solutions arrived at will probably offer less than I hope, the process of struggle and growth is exciting.

A similar injection of hope was received during the past month by watching fledgling parish councils in action in Rochester and Chicago. Both councils, each a little over a year old, were out of the incubators but not exactly hale and hearty as yet.

Bishops meeting in serious debate, parish councils in the throes of organization, these are the glories of Vatican II.

The Church in her ponderousness may shudder a bit; some of her passengers and crew may be frightened as she changes directions, but the Church is swiftly moving toward a new course.

All these meetings made me pick up again my dog-eared copy of that marvelous Joanne document on the Church (Lumen Gentium).

The constitution on the Church is clear and positive in its mandates: "A layman, by reason of knowledge, competence, or outstanding ability . . . is permitted and sometimes even obliged to express his opinion on things that concern the good of the

Church . . . Let this be done through agencies set up by the Church for this purpose.

"Let pastor . . . willingly make use of prudent advice . . . assign duties to him in the service of the Church allowing him freedom and room for action. Further let them (Bishops and pastors) encourage the layman to undertake tasks on his own initiative . . ."

In these days of multiplying boards and conciliar structures there is room for some serious reflection upon what we see developing so far.

1. Bishops, pastors, mothers superior must take these new structures seriously. Playing "democracy games" with advisory boards set up as "fronts" for the same old autocratic decision-making will only widen the credibility gaps.

2. The first members of provisional structures may have to be appointed, but as the body develops sufficient self-identity, its members must be chosen by an open election process. Appointed officials rarely rise to heights of creative action and necessary institutional change.

3. Organizing workable, responsible conciliar structures at any level is back-breaking, time-consuming work. Experience shows that significant organizations take three years or more to develop identity, clear goals and efficient procedure. We



forget that Jesus never even finished the training period of the apostolic council. He left it to trial and error and the Holy Spirit.

4. An organization cannot be developed to do "Mickey Mouse" work.

A parish council faced with a million dollar building project will not be content with deciding only the color scheme for the finished buildings. A school board whose main thrust is the annual fund raising event is hopefully a thing of the pre-conciliar past.

Jesus could not have drawn followers and developed organizational commitment without vital issues. His program was very concrete, very social: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them."

5. When people come together over serious issues there will be conflict, disagreement, compromise, failure as well as success. Only "Pollyanna" believes in a world which grows and develops creative people without struggle and strife.

The Church in our time is returning to its ancient biblical beginnings.

The many-splendored Church of the Acts of the Apostles is much more the contemporary model than later, less traditional forms based on imperial Rome and Renaissance princedoms.

### Pope Authorizes Examination of 'Chair of Peter'

Vatican City — (NC) — Pope Paul VI has authorized a scientific examination of the ancient wooden chair that Catholic tradition calls the Chair of Peter and that Catholic piety has enshrined in St. Peter's basilica.

It will be the first time the chair has been removed from the great bronze reliquary of Giovanni Bernini (1598-1680) for 101 years.

The purpose of the examination will be "purely scientific," the announcement said, and all data will be put before the world's scientific community. This may result in better preservation of the relic, it was added.

The press office said the scrutiny of the chair "will have a purely scientific aim of investigation and of survey, so that authentic and precise information and data about the precious relic may be put at the disposition of scholars of the entire world, and open . . . eventual steps for its better preservation."

### Archbishop Colas, Missionary, Dies

Bangalore, Mysore — (RNS) — Archbishop Auguste Simeon Colas, reported to be India's oldest Catholic missionary, died here a month before his 92nd birthday.

Noted for his social reforms and his bold stand against caste distinctions, Archbishop Colas worked tirelessly to increase the native Indian clergy during his 26 years as head of the Catholic Archdiocese of Pondicherry and Cuddalore.

## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

### On the Virtues of Keeping Silent

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

When Father Robert McNamara's history, THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, came out last Spring, I bought two copies: one for myself, and the second for a brother who has always had an interest in parochial history. His wife remarked: "I've never seen George devour a book the way he has the history of the diocese. He's familiar with many names and incidents. He reads a section, then recounts it to me. I won't have to read it. He is certainly entranced with the book."

Our St. Bernard's history professor, Dr. Frederick Zwerlein used to squize his nose and tell his students: "It's important to get facts recorded between boards." By boards, of course he meant book covers. So we are grateful for so much that Father McNamara has put between boards.

While reading the history, I kept saying to myself: "With all the heroic struggles, pathetic weaknesses, disedifying quarrels and generous service within the church, I wonder at the bland disregard for history by the detractors of the Church."

To downgrade the Church has become a profitable vocation of many Catholic writers and lecturers within the Church these past five years.

It is possible—and we see it every day—for men to become so hung up on their own urgencies that they are psychologically unaware of the past. What is irritating is the frequent calm assumption that the Church: the people, the priests and Sisters, the bishops, have done little in the past. This is worse than nonsense. Legitimate concern for the present Inner Cities in no way excuses the implied misrepresentation that the Church has been indifferent to the needs of the poor and suffering even in the recent past.

For example, twenty-five years ago, Rochester's present Inner City was no problem. Most of the people there were hardworking, ambitious, stable Italians, Germans, Poles, Irish, Lithuanians and East Europeans, Jews and Gentiles. The social and economic and religious malaise now there is not an evolution from these people. Rather, it is the result of immigration from the South and the Islands of poor disadvantaged people.

Most of the work of the Church will never be bound in books. It will be remembered only by God.

Yet we would be base if we forgot that we are the heirs of the Church's charity and her stabilizing influence. For example, how many know the history of the charity in the founding of St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell, New York, which is a glory of the Church.

Hornell has a long tradition of railroad work. Railroad work was full of danger and terrible accidents in the years past. But in those early days, the lack of facilities for the care of the injured necessitated barbarous care.

In 1890 Father James Early, pastor of St. Anne's parish, was called to attend a man whose leg was crushed in a rail car accident. The victim was brought to a nearby saloon. He was set upon a table. The only anesthesia available was whiskey. The man was loaded with it to deaden the pain. His leg was crudely sawed off. The only antiseptic was whiskey, which was doused over his poor amputated stump. Such was the only care available.

Father Early was horrified. He got on the train for Buffalo. He begged the Superior of the Sisters of Mercy there for nursing Sisters to come to Hornell to take care of the sick. He was promised two or three Sisters. He returned to Hornell and bought a large farmhouse which became the first hospital in the Hornell Area.

From these simple beginnings the

Church, through her dedicated religious women have provided care for the people of the area for seventy years. And such care! Our delightful eighty-seven-year-old Sister DeSales who served Hornell sick for sixty-four years, recalls with a chuckle: "Oh, they were so crowded the Sisters gave up their own beds to the patients and slept on the floor. They thought nothing of it."

Ah I suppose that's one difference between the Church's work of yesterday and today. Yesterday's work was done without fanfare, or TV or press coverage. It was a quiet, exhausting, rewarding service to man done by the Church for the love of God and His children.

This is only one example of hundreds of thousands of services done in simple love throughout the diocese these past hundred years, which will never be recorded between boards. All honor to our Holy Church for this loving service, in its present, its past, and its future. Here is Jesus Christ working "yesterday, today, the same forever." (Hebrews XIII-8)

## Religious Policy Same, Czech Official Claims

Vienna—(RNS)—Dr. Erika Kadlecova of the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Culture has told a newspaper interviewer that the Czech government intends to maintain the liberal policies toward religion which have been introduced under the reform program of Communist leader Alexander Dubcek.

A similar statement was made in Germany by a well known Marxist philosopher, but another Czech statement, also originating from Germany, indicates pressures for a hardening of the line on religion.

Dr. Kadlecova, who first reached international attention during a Christian-Marxist dialogue last year at Marienbad, made her statement in an interview with Lidova Demokracie, the newspaper of the predominantly Christian People's Party.

She said it would be "politically illogical and absurd for the Czechoslovakian government to deviate from the Church policy followed since last January."

"Recent weeks and months have

proved," she continued, "that the pursuit of the Czech government's present Church policy is correct and has brought about a rapprochement between Church and state, between Communists and Christians. Religious developments in Czechoslovakia do not affect the internal affairs of other Communist countries."

Meanwhile, at a meeting of Catholic university students in Munich, the Czech Marxist philosopher Prof. Milan Machovec said that Marxists are "religious in one way or another and hope that religious values will be reintroduced into Marxist society."

But in East Germany, a Czech language broadcast defended the religious policies of the previous administration in Czechoslovakia. The "Vltava" Radio, which broadcasts from Dresden, East Germany, said that priests and bishops imprisoned under the previous regime "suffered only for the anti-state activities they committed" and that therefore it was "absurd to speak of wrongs done to Catholic priests and bishops in Czechoslovakia in the pre-January period."

## MEDICINE

### Religion's Place Emphasized

New York — (RNS) — Religion has a valid place in the "art of medicine" and is properly included in the medical college curriculum, according to a medical educator.

Dr. Milton O. Kepler, assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Nebraska medical college, discussed the "importance of religion in medical education" in the Fall issue of the "Journal of Religion and Health."

The journal is a quarterly issued by the Academy of Religion and Mental Health, an organization devoted to physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Dr. Kepler reported that the question of religion in medical college training is increasingly one of finding time for it rather than feeling it is misplaced.

He said that in 1966 he inquired about religious exposure for students in 100 medical schools in the U.S. and Canada. Sixty-eight schools responded. Of these, 27 had some provision for religion; 11 others felt a need for it.

Dr. Kepler noted that seven schools responded that no need for religious exposure was felt, 27 did not respond and some voiced hostility to religion in medical training. Still, there was 60 per cent which did offer exposure

or thought it important to consider.

The survey, Dr. Kepler said, indicated two schools of thought: "One felt that some kind of formal course should be given, while the other was equally insistent that this matter could not be formally taught, but rather must be transmitted to the students via the example and attitudes of staff and faculty."

The point at which religion has significance in medical education, the physician continued, is in the concept of "comprehensive care." "The student must . . . learn to cope with such problems as death, grief, tragedy, and less-than-perfect 'cures' as well as crippling and chronic conditions."

He also stated that there are indications that medical students experience growing displeasure with curriculum which "seems unconcerned with value systems . . ." In considering human values, religion is important. "There is evident concern and need for additional information about the religious nature of man," said the pediatrician.

He said that average applicants to medical colleges are weak in basic humanities. He suggested improving training prior to medical schools by encouraging attention to comparative religion, ethics, philosophy or religion and history of religion.

### Eucharist Custom Survey

Vatican City—(RNS)—Benno Cardinal Gut, president of the Council for the Application of Liturgical Reforms, has sent a letter to the presidents of all national and regional episcopal conferences asking for their opinion on whether Holy Communion should be placed in the hands rather than on the tongues of communicants.

The traditional custom, which forbids the faithful to touch the Communion wafer with their fingers, has been changed experimentally in a number of places—most notably in Holland but also in Belgium, Germany and France.

Many Catholics in North and South America have received Communion in their hands at experimental services, but the practice is not generally observed in parish Masses. Reception of Communion in this way was customary in the early days of the Church, as was Communion under both species—bread and wine. The bishops' conferences have been asked to reply to this question before Dec. 31.

## Witchcraft Back in Vogue

New York — (RNS) — Witchcraft is back in vogue, according to "America," the Jesuits' weekly magazine published here.

Writing in the Nov. 16 issue, Father Herman S. Hughes, S.J., assistant editor said there is evidence that witches and warlocks are increasingly an "in" thing.

He said that "black masses," the "ultimate" in devil worship, are performed today.

Father Hughes recounted a personal experience in which he saw two persons attempt to leave Holy Communion without consuming the hosts. The purpose, presumably, was to obtain consecrated hosts which are required for the debauchery of "black mass."

A primary indication of this renewed interest, he said, is the popularity of the book and film "Rosemary's Baby," the story of a coven of witches who assist the devil in bringing his natural son into the world.

By definition, a witch is a woman supposedly having supernatural power through a compact with evil spirits. A warlock is the male counterpart.

The history of witchcraft, as Father Hughes noted, goes far back into history. Demon worship was a feature of many ancient societies and vestiges of it hung on even as Christianity spread.

Father Hughes said that "witch hunts" in the Church began with Pope Gregory I in 600. Beginning in the 13th Century and continuing through the 18th, a series of papal encyclicals condemned demonology.

Early American history had its epidemic of witch-mania in the era of the Puritan oligarchy in New England.

In those earlier years, wrote Father Hughes, "most of the witches" . . . (as it is true today) were merely silly or pretentious old women or hysterical girls."

But, witchcraft can deliberately debauch the sacraments of the Church.

Father Hughes recalled asking a young man why he had participated in a black mass. The youth's reply was:

"When the Judeo-Christian religion no longer seems to fulfill our needs, whenever the world seems chaotic, people look beyond accepted religion for something else.

"In the Middle Ages the oppressed serf decided that since life was so plainly against him and he could find no help from God, God must be his enemy. With devil worship he thought he could show that he disagreed with God. So it is today, I guess."

Responding to the rhetorical question, "Does a personal spirit of evil exist as the devil?" Father Hughes suggested that theologian Karl Rahner gives the best reply in denying Satan as an opponent of God while asserting a belief in the "personal nature of devils."

Father Rahner sees certain "powers of the world" as evil "insofar as this world is a denial of God and a temptation to man."

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