

Dutch Catechism Criticized By Cardinal Commission

(From Courier-Journal Sources)

Rome — A commission of Cardinals, backed by Pope Paul VI, demanded that the progressive Dutch catechism return to strict Roman Catholic Orthodoxy on at least 10 disputed points.

Publication of the declaration by six Cardinals named by the Pope to study the catechism brought into the open the long-standing dispute over the catechism and threatened to widen the already significant breach between the Vatican and the ultra-progressive Dutch church.

The document traces a long history of negotiation between Dutch and Roman delegates.

The changes demanded were in the Dutch catechism's liberal, nonliteral interpretations of such matters as the existence of angels, original sin, the virgin birth of Jesus, the nature and significance of the Crucifixion, the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, church authority and moral theology.

The results of the study were made known by the Vatican press secretary, Msgr. Fausto Vallainc, at a news conference at which he made special note of the document's language with regard to proposed changes made by the Holy See's commission.

"Naturally the declaration says nothing regarding the opinions that are still debatable, leaving these at the full liberty of theologians," Msgr. Vallainc said.

Msgr. Vallainc also noted that the tone of declaration is very positive in its approach to making changes.

"It recognizes the uncommon qualities of the new catechism; it praises its pastoral, biblical and liturgical character; it approves the effort made to present the Christian message in a manner suited to the modern mentality.

"It should be noted that the declaration does not make any condemnation, but underlines those formulations which are incomplete or inexact without, however, ever using the word 'heresy.'"

The Dutch Catechism is a serious and thorough discussion of the bases of the Roman Catholic faith. It is addressed to adults and is not the list of questions and answers for children preparing for First Communion that is usually associated with the term "catechism."

It has had a large sale in the original Dutch edition and in English, French and German translations. The translations were published without the episcopal imprimatur — sanction by at least one bishop — that is ordinarily required for a doctrinal volume. The first printing of the English-language edition bears the imprimatur of the Most Rev. Robert F. Joyce, Bishop of Burlington, Vt., who later withdrew it.

The Cardinals took pains to recognize the "praiseworthy pastoral, liturgical and biblical character" of the catechism and the "laudable purpose" of the authors to present the faith "in a way adapted to the understanding and the thinking of the present-day man."

The eight-page document was signed by the members of the special commission. They are Joseph Cardinal Frings of Cologne, Germany; Joseph Cardinal LeFebvre of Bourges, France; Lorenz Cardinal Jaeger of Paderborn, Germany; Ermengildo Cardinal Florit of Florence, Italy; Michael Cardinal Browne of the Roman curia, and Charles Cardinal Journet of Switzerland.

The document pointed out that "contrary to the wish of the Dutch hierarchy and without prescribed correction, an English translation of the new Dutch catechism was published;

and likewise more recently a German translation has appeared and finally a French translation."

The document then proceeded to list ten major points in the Dutch catechism which should be subject to change. They are:

1. God the creator (not only of the world but also of angels and of souls). The catechism should teach that God has created angels and creates immediately individual human souls.

2. Original sin or the fall of all men in Adam. The catechism is to teach the doctrine that man in the beginning rebelled against God and so lost for himself and his offspring that sanctity and justice in which he had been constituted, and that he handed on a true state of sin to all through propagation of human nature.

3. The conception of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. The catechism should teach that the Blessed Mother was always a virgin in fact and not merely in a symbolic sense.

4. The "satisfaction" made by Christ our Lord, Jesus, the son of God, freely died for our sins and thereby abundantly compensated for them.

5. The sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass. The sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in the Church of God as the Eucharistic sacrifice. In the Eucharistic sacrifice, Jesus as the principal priest offers himself to God through the consecratory oblation which priests perform and to which the faithful unite themselves.

6. The Eucharistic presence and Eucharistic change. It is necessary that in the text of the catechism it be brought out beyond doubt that after the consecration of the bread and wine the very body and blood of Christ is present on the altar and is received sacramentally in Holy Communion.

7. The infallibility of the Church and the knowledge of revealed mysteries. It should be more clearly stated

that the infallibility of the Church does not give her only a safe course in continual research but the truth in maintaining the doctrine of faith and in explaining it always in the same sense.

8. The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood and the power of teaching and ruling in the Church. The catechism should make clear that the ministerial priesthood differs essentially from the common priesthood of the faithful.

Furthermore the cardinals asked that the new catechism clearly recognize that the teaching authority and the power of ruling in the Church is given directly to the Holy Father and to the bishops joined with him in hierarchical communion, and that it is not given first of all to the People of God to be communicated to others. The bishops receive their mandate from God, not from the people.

The catechism is also to point out that the Holy Father and the bishops in their teaching office do not merely assemble and approve what the whole community of the faithful believes.

It is also to be presented that the Holy Father has the full power of ruling.

9. Various points concerning dogmatic theology. The catechism should stress the value of contemplating the mystery of the Trinity, not only in the economy of salvation, but also in the eternal life of the divinity.

Care must be taken that the catechism does not seem to say that miracles can only be brought about by divine power insofar as they do not depart from that which the forces of the created world are able to produce.

10. The text of the catechism is not to make obscure the existence of moral laws which we are able to know and express in such a way that they bind our conscience always and in all circumstances. Solutions of cases of conscience should be avoided which do not sufficiently attend to the indissolubility of marriage.

Catechism Commentary Not 'Censure' of 'Heresy'

Vatican City — (RNS) — The Vatican's statement on the Dutch Catechism is more of a documentary or a white book than a condemnation.

The term "censure" used by some press dispatches certainly does not represent the basic conciliatory tone of the document.

The Vatican Press officer, obviously acting on instructions, pointed out that the statement is positive and full of praise for the catechism's pastoral, biblical and liturgical character. Its comments, he said are not "condemnations" and the term "heresy" is never used.

What will happen after this depends on the reactions to the Vatican's insistence on clear expressions of traditional doctrines.

What stirred the Vatican into releasing the position of the six-member commission of cardinals, largely chosen from the resident bishops in Europe outside of Rome, was the publication in Dutch newspapers of many hitherto confidential and secret papers, including a private letter of Pope Paul to Bernard Cardinal Alfrink, primate of Holland.

This documentation was released as a paperback in Italy last June by Mondadori publishers, Milan, with the

title, Dossier of the Dutch Catechism.

One informed source in Rome declares, "The truth is that the Holy See does not desire to impose on the Dutch editors what they call the 'Roman theology,' much less that they sacrifice its distinct merits, particularly its excellent presentation, so attractive to the modern reader.

"The Vatican only wants that the present text avoid expressions that the ordinary Christian might interpret in a sense not in line with the teaching of the Church. This is not too much to ask of a catechism, even for adults."

Does the catechism introduce new doctrines through calculated obscurities and ambiguities?

The latter interpretation seems to be held by some theologians in Rome and also in the Netherlands who point to the controversial writings of some of the contributors to the catechism whose ideas are faintly echoed in the catechism.

Finally, is the issue at stake the clash of two differing theological conceptions — one Roman, Hellenistic and scholastic, the other more in tune with contemporary forms of thought?

Council Clears Way for Catholics

New York — (NC) — The Protestant Council of the City of New York has dropped the word "Protestant" from its name in an ecumenical move aimed at encouraging Roman Catholic membership on both diocesan levels.

Beginning Jan. 1, the 25-year-old organization headed by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, will be known as the Council of Churches of the City of New York. The change in name came as part of a unanimously approved new constitution which provides for greater participation in council policy and decision-making by member churches on the local level.

The new constitution, approved at a meeting of the council's general assembly, also opens the way to membership for local "clusters" of Protestant congregations and Catholic parishes.

Eventually, council officials hope, the archdiocese of New York and the diocese of Brooklyn will be formally received into the council as denominational members.

In some areas, Catholic parishes and dioceses have joined state or city church councils.

Meanwhile Archbishop Terence J. Cooke of New York became the first high-ranking Catholic prelate to participate in a service of worship at the Interchurch Center, headquarters of the National Council and many major Protestant denominations.



Catholic Archbishop Terence J. Cooke of New York was greeted and honored by the Protestant-Orthodox National Council of Churches during a visit to the Interchurch Center, headquarters of the NCC. The archbishop is given a Bible by Dr. Gerald E. Knoff, NCC associate general secretary for Christian education. The Bible is a Catholic edition of the Revised Standard Version prepared jointly by the NCC and the Catholic Bible Association of Great Britain. (RNS)

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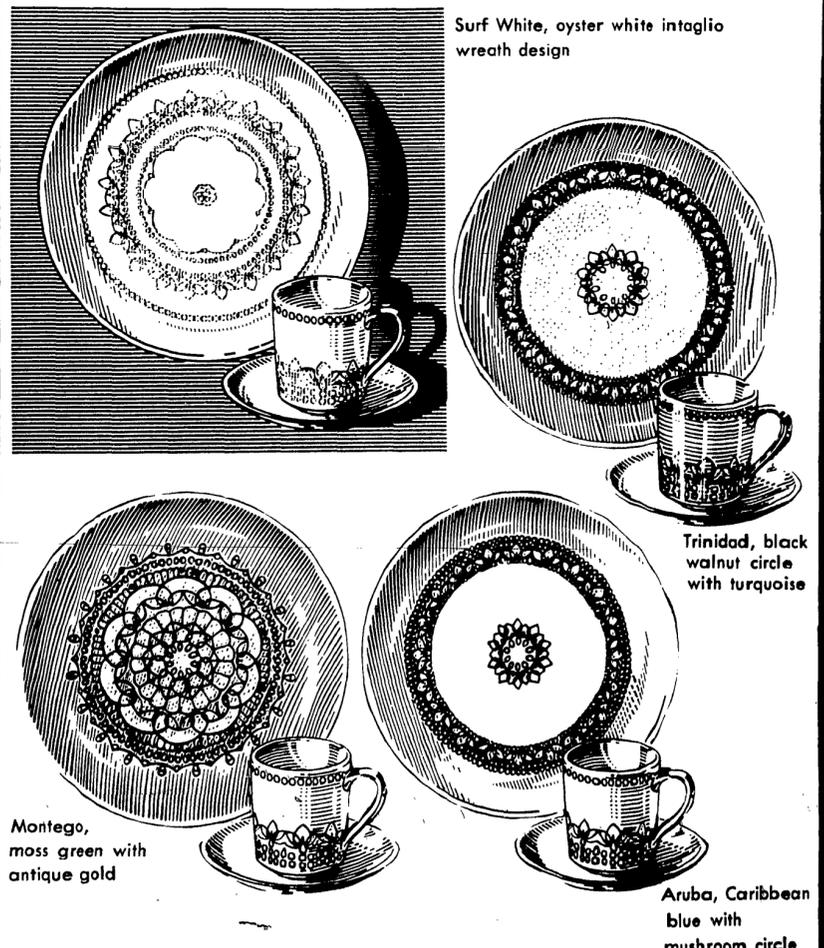
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