

Ecumenism Roadblock: Life Styles of Ministries

One of the fundamental problems facing the Christian Churches in the ecumenical movement and in their own internal life is the question of ministry or priesthood, its theology and life style.

At stake is a whole series of issues which run the gamut from such matters as part-time ministers, working priests and optional celibacy to theological and quasi-theological discussions of apostolic succession, the ordination of women and even whether the ordained has exclusive sacramental functions not shared in by the laity.

The priestly issues that are making headlines in the Catholic Church concern life style rather than basic theological matters—optional celibacy and worker priests. But there is a serious probing of fundamental questions of theology going on in the Catholic Church which affects the self-identity of its priests.

It also may have very important consequences for the future unity of the Roman Catholic Church and the major Protestant Churches, especially those of a non-episcopal nature.

In the Spring 1969 issue of the Journal of Ecumenical Studies Father Kenan B. Osborne, dean of studies at the

Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley, suggested that such traditional, exclusive acts of the priesthood as the forgiveness of sins and the celebration of the Eucharist are not necessarily dependent on the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Similar views have been expressed by a number of prominent theologians in Europe, especially Father Hans Kueng in his book "The Church."

A number of American theologians hold these same views and have urged a reconsideration of the sacrament of Holy Orders as a "theological necessity" for Roman Catholics.

Theological questions on the nature of the priesthood were explored this Summer at the annual meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America and at the Second Seminar of European Bishops.

The demand for greater democratization of Church structures is moving in a parallel direction with theological emphasis on the priesthood of all believers.

Theologians and church historians note that the elements which have created a distinct "priest caste" in the Church—celibacy, distinctive dress and specialized functions, did not

develop until after the Fourth Century.

A convergence of theological discussions and pastoral level appears to be taking place in many parts of the world. At present the convergence is most evident in the minor areas of clerical dress and place of residence, both of which are taking on a more secular character at the same time that theologians are speaking of a desacralized Church and ministry.

The Detroit Archdiocese under John Cardinal Dearden, the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, has given great leeway to its priests on such matters, allowing them to decide where they shall live and what type of clothing is appropriate.

Several religious orders of priests in the U.S. have established similar policies, particularly for those in university work or inner city apostolates.

Thus in Milwaukee the Capuchin Franciscans have two of their priests engaged in an experimental worker-priest apostolate. One is a taxi driver, the other a department store clerk. Both offer the Eucharist and catechetical programs during the evening in their apartment.

A somewhat related program is taking place in New York City where the problem of providing religious ministry to the inhabitants of high-rise apartment houses is particularly acute.

Co-op City, a future housing complex for 50,000 people, has provided quarters for priests and nuns who will serve the religious needs of the low-middle income families. For both clergy and laity it will be a new experience to have the pastor living in an apartment rather than isolated in a rectory.

Increasing real estate costs and manpower shortages in all church ministries have accelerated the cooperative spirit among the clergy. This is so particularly in newly-developed locations where the Churches have no prior real estate holdings and in inner-city areas where the cost of maintaining separate structures has become prohibitive.

A long range effect on the ministry of the churches is expected to result from seminary programs already begun or soon to be initiated which promise a more ecumenically educated clergy.

From Boston to San Francisco theological seminary unions have been organized along ecumenical lines while preserving the autonomous character of each institution.

Seminaries outside such unions have frequently formed associative or cooperative federations to offer a wider range of programs including courses in the religious traditions of other Churches or faiths.

Some Catholic educators have half seriously complained that the best theologians of their Church are now teaching at traditionally Protestant institutions. Very few Catholic seminaries, in turn, do not have Protestant theologians on their lecture lists or on their staffs.

What effect will this ecumenical education have on the priests and ministers of the coming decade?

Father Christopher Mooney is president of Woodstock College, the Jesuit theologate which is in the process of moving from rural Maryland to the center of New York City. The move has been in the planning stage for the past two years and this September the first students will come to New York.

They will live in small groups in apartments and participate in cooperative programs between Woodstock, Union Theological Seminary

and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Father Mooney shares the view of a number of other Catholic and Protestant seminary educators that it will most likely stimulate a greater consciousness of one's own religious heritage and identity.

Closer ties with persons of different religious traditions will make the individual more conscious of the meaning of his own tradition, but not in isolation from the others," he said.

Thus Father Mooney believes that the graduate of such an educational program will have "a much stronger sense of identity as a Catholic or as a Lutheran and not a 'wicky-wicky' false unity which ignores the fundamental values of one's own heritage."

Whether these expectations prove true or not, it would seem fairly obvious that profound changes in seminary education will produce significant changes in the future clergy in regard to how they view themselves and their ministries. Such developments will help to refine and possibly perfect those presently taking place on an experimental basis in the Churches.



Outside Notre Dame

The fine detail of this sculpture, showing the Madonna and Child with two angels, near the top of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, is revealed for the first time in centuries after workmen scrubbed the facades, clean of a thick coat of accumulated grime. The cathedral's facade is now as breathtaking as the structure itself is impressive. (RNS).

Priest on Clergy Who Quit: Many Should Not Have Begun

(NC News Service)

Toronto — "There are priests who should never have been ordained. They lack the psychological and moral maturity required. How they got through (the seminary) is a mystery of providence and incompetence."

Father Raymond Durocher, O.M.I., associate editor of The Canadian Register, in a talk on celibacy to downtown Serrans, said he has known about 20 priests who have left the priesthood.

"I would say that half of them should never have begun."

"Thank God for the mercy and wisdom which make edus easy for those of the last decade or so who have been thus trapped."

"Insofar as the Church was responsible, we must pay the price of scandal and scorn."

He was speaking of "unfit priests" and listed two other groups — the unfortunate and the unenlightened. Of the "unfortunate," there are priests whose formation or habits did not prepare them for unfore-

seeable changes. Some worker priests, for example, were sent full of zeal, into situations beyond their depth."

He referred to them as "pruned, as contrasted with the unfit, who are purged. Alive and fruitful, they have been lopped from the tree by the Divine Gardener, perhaps even by Vatican II. Perhaps they were intended to be priests for a specific time or for a specific place. Their destiny must give pause to the Church. But now they are going and gone."

Father Durocher added: "The Holy Father has well pointed out that his teaching on celibacy, as well as on birth con-

trol, is unacceptable without the light of Christ."

"As the Pope says, it is unthinkable that the Church would have erred for so long a time to the detriment of souls in such a matter. The Pope observes (in his encyclical on celibacy) that although conditions have changed throughout Catholic history, they have merely served to bring out the underlying motives for the law of celibacy. . . . It is no longer in order to compare celibacy with matrimony to bring out its qualities. It stands alone. In religious life, celibacy has now become the first response."

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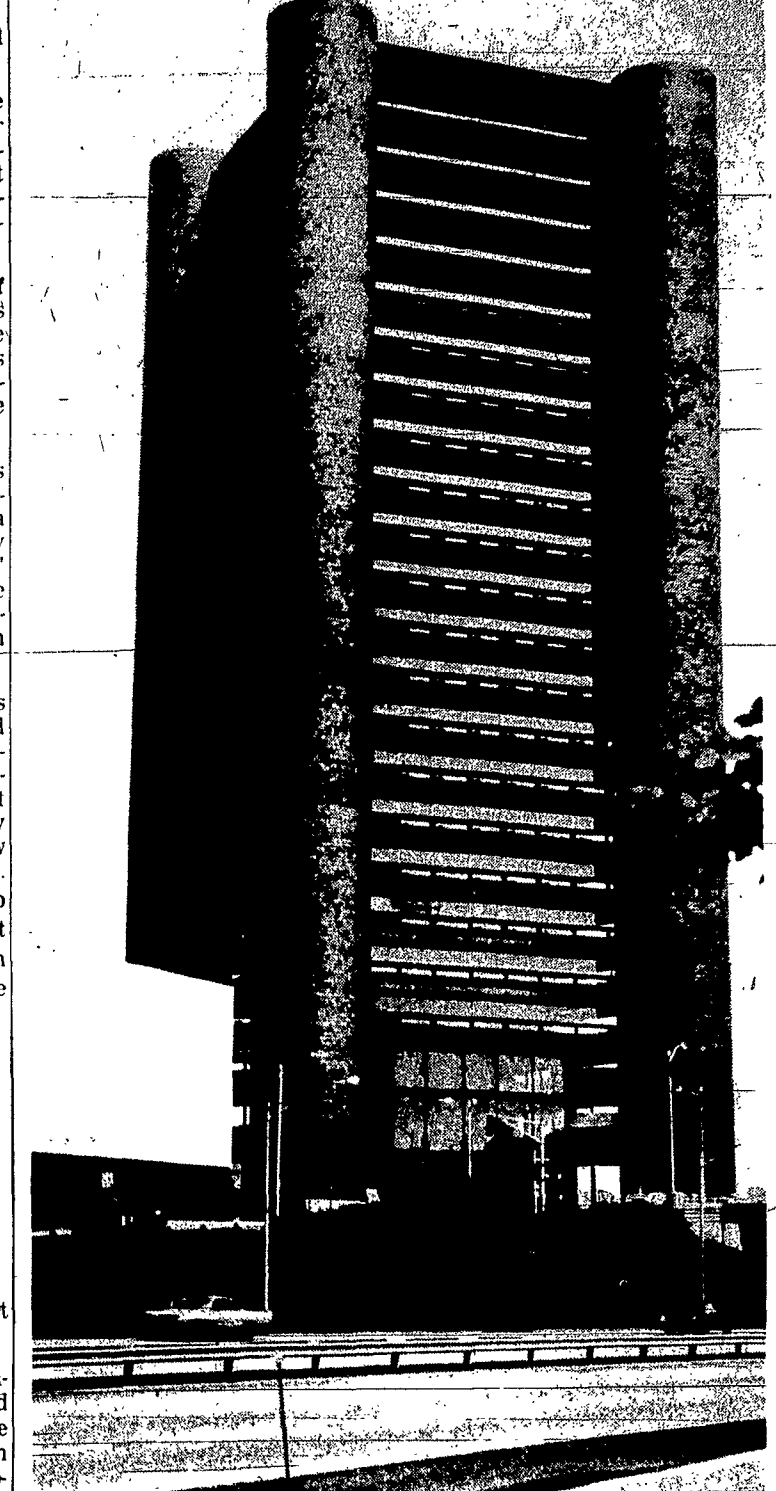
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The new 23-story international headquarters of the Knights of Columbus has an unusual architectural design whereby the floors are completely open and, aside from the center elevator shaft, all the service units are located in huge reinforced-concrete supporting towers 30 feet in diameter. The tallest structure in New Haven, the 320-foot building was dedicated during the 87th annual meeting of the 1.2 million-member Catholic fraternal society's Supreme Council or top legislative and policy body.

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Ex-Detective Now a Priest

Paterson, N.J. — (NC) — When Charles F. Grieco was a detective in nearby Paramus 10 years ago, and before that as a criminal investigation agent for the Army, his work frequently involved him with alcoholics and narcotics addicts.

Now he's Father Charles F. Grieco, ordained a year ago. And he has a new assignment in which he again will be dealing with the same people—but this time as a specialist in rehabilitation

work instead of criminal investigations.

Bishop Lawrence B. Casey of Paterson assigned Father Grieco to be director of the Mount Carmel Guild and its related agencies—the Mount Carmel Hospital for Alcoholics and the St. Dismas Treatment Center for Narcotics Addicts, pioneering diocesan institutions founded by the late Msgr. William N. Wall.

Msgr. Wall was killed June 29 when a tractor he was operating overturned on a

sharp incline and crushed him at a farm he operated for rehabilitation work with addicts.

Father Grieco, 40, gave up his law enforcement career in 1960 and began studies for the priesthood. He was ordained here in May, 1968. An assistant pastor in Morristown since then, he lost little time in returning to his interest in working in criminology and related fields.

He became chaplain at the Morris County Jail and was

appointed to the Morris County Drug Abuse Committee, devoting most of his spare time to counseling and lecturing on addiction.

As a man who has seen the tragedy of addiction firsthand, both as policeman and priest, he deplores the rapid growth of drug usage in the suburbs but warned against overreaction in another direction.

"Some parents are so afraid of marijuana that they no longer frown on drinking among teenagers," he said. "They forget that can cause just as much havoc."

GRADUATE PROGRAM SET FOR SEMINARIANS

Milwaukee, Wis. — (RNS) — Further steps in the reorganization of training for future priests of the Milwaukee Catholic archdiocese have been taken with the establishment of a graduate program at St. Francis Seminary leading to a master's degree in theology.

Previously the seminary had announced the introduction of high school, college and advanced theological programs of four years each, under a plan recommended by Catholic bishops of the United States for improving the quality of seminary training.

BOOK ON ROLE OF LAITY PUBLISHED IN BRAILLE

Techny, Ill. — (RNS) — A book on changes in the Catholic Church which treats of the role of the laity and the development of the liturgy will be published in a Braille edition, it was announced here.

The Liturgy and the Future by J. D. Crichton, published by Divine Word Publications, will be made available in a Braille edition for free loan by the Xavier Society for the Blind.

Catholics in Greece Have It a Bit Easier

Athens — (NC) — Observers here expect an easing of the difficult situation of Catholics in Greece because of the reorganization of the Ministry of Public Worship and Education in the beginning of August.

A special directorate has now been established for the non-Orthodox churches. Previously these churches were subordinated to the directorate for the Orthodox Church.

One of the first acts of the new directorate is expected to be the official recognition by the government of the Roman Catholic archbishopric of Athens, now headed by Archbishop Benedetto Prentissis.

The Greek Orthodox archbishop of Athens holds a position of top importance in that church, and the Roman Catholic archbishopric of Athens has been considered illegal.

About 95 per cent of the population belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church, the official

religion of the country. Latin Catholic number about 45,000, or 0.5 per cent of the total population. Other minorities include Eastern Catholic, various Protestant communities, Jews and Moslems.

Despite the prohibition against proselytism and interference with the official religion, the constitution also says that "there is full freedom of conscience and any known religion is free and can freely perform all its activities in relation to the cult under the force and protection of the laws."

Observers believe that the motive for the recent changes in the ministry of worship and education is the desire of the military regime to improve its image abroad through a better treatment of religious minorities in Greece.

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