

Who's Running the Store?

By Father Richard Torrey

Ten years ago yesterday, October 9th, Pope Pius XII died. Three weeks later, Pope John XXIII was chosen as his successor. How greatly have the Church and the lives of Catholics changed in those ten years!

Reflection on the pre-John Church and concern for the present should be made with an open-eye on another historic event: this weekend in Rome an international Synod of 148 Bishops opens an "extraordinary" two-week conference which may contain the most significant debate on the condition of the Church and its future than anything heard since the end of the Vatican Council in 1965.

"What clarity of faith, order and stability, unity and peace, prevailed under Pope Pius," is more than an exaggerated memory of the older Catholics; it is a fact of history.

Ten years ago the laity were sure they knew where they stood in faith and morals and liturgy. The clergy did not fight with their chanceries, were not restless about celibacy nor unsure of the drift of their theology.

The Church had many needs, and there was a tiny, squeaky minority of voices which said "Reform and Renew," but we did live in a fortress of strength, we thought.

And then Pope John, happily daring to buck traditions and reaching out for the approval of the entire world, threw open the windows of the Vatican to let the light and air of a changing world blow some dust out of the Church. Hoping to make the Church more respected by the world, he called for a Council, the first international gathering of Bishops in 90 years, to study the age-encrusted mind-set of the Church and write down a new understanding of how the Family of God should function in the modern world.

The Bishops met for a total of nearly eight months spread over four Falls. They published 16 long documents but when they closed their deliberations Dec. 8, 1965, they all agreed wearily: "The Council has ended; the Council has just begun."

Through Pope John and the Council we all were touched in a very short time by a vast transformation in the total Church, — both in our understanding of doctrine, our worship and sacramental life, our views

on authority and conscience, our relationship to one another and our posture before the non-Catholics of the world. But the renewal was not all well led, well done, nor universally received.

It became evident that the updating of the Church simply was not proceeding according to the new Documents proclaimed by the Council. Human nature, tradition, pride, ignorance, stubbornness, inertia and even passion slowly fouled the gears which tried to put ideas into action. A stagnation and a polarization of positions set in.

The Council was blamed for everything but, in fact, the Council was not being taken seriously enough.

One reason was that after the Council the problems in the Church were reform and renewal were needed descended upon us in one mighty rush. Our leaders and our theologians simply could not cope with so many questions simultaneously: questions about God and Scripture, Church discipline and private morality, participation by the laity and collegiality of the Bishops, marital relations and clerical vows, new lives for nuns and "new" theology to attract youth.

It was also painfully clear that post-conciliar renewal and reform were handicapped by an "authority vacuum". The demands made upon papal and diocesan authority rose enormously as a result of the new freedoms proposed by the Council and agitated by the temper of the times. Our leaders were not prepared.

The aloof, hidden and unquestionable superior discovered he was expected to communicate, to discuss, to justify his decisions.

He learned that his subjects wanted him pliable, and tolerant yet imaginative, purposeful and charismatic enough to stimulate allegiance without using force.

The Church felt the same crisis that was besieging the home, the schools, cities and social groups. External and formal discipline and the authority which used to reside in a title or uniform or an office counted for little. And the Church has had to ride with this same tide, with no more or less success than the families and school administrators and city fathers have had.

Theologian Father Hans Kueng writing on the slowdown of the Council reform recently said of our authority crisis: "There is a demand for inner personal authority, capable of producing genuine confidence, because it is based not only on title and claims but on human qualities, on competence and mutual cooperation. And it is specifically this type of authority which is greatly lacking in the Catholic Church."

The source of spiritual authority in the Church and the method of using it with effective power is the root topic of the Synod opening tomorrow. Who should make decisions in the Church? What authority can be exerted locally, finally and completely? What rights must a national body of bishops share with the Vatican or the Pope? In what is the Holy Father supreme and solely responsible?

The Synod is an advisory body and it is not convening to write new or change old Church laws. It will study the workings of collegiality, the patterns of cooperation between the regional conferences of Bishops and the Holy Father. It may make recommendations to the Pope to decentralize the functions and authority of the Vatican departments. It will surely try to clarify the degree of power which a country's Bishops have over their own problems. It will discuss the kind of communications Bishops groups should have with the Vatican before they take a stand in teaching or disciplining their own dioceses.

This issue itself, power and communication, if handled thoroughly will be of greater long-range significance than a discussion of marriage for priests or contraception for families. Birth control and celibacy are problems which can be met with authority when the Church decides who has the power and how mutually to use it.

We have only two U.S. Bishops to speak for this country at the Synod — the Cardinals of Detroit and New York City. But let us hope that the Holy Spirit speaks to our times through the whole body of Bishops there to help the Church discover a new dimension of leadership and a new self-confidence to deal with the problems of today and the future.

COMMENTARY

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

The Rosary Is Still 'In'

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



The Albigensian heresy was a part of the Catharist movement in Southern France in the 12th and 13th centuries. It was an odd Neo-Manichean heresy which taught that all matter is evil. Hence suicide was praised, marriage relations considered sinful, generation an abomination, eating meat a wickedness.

Pious legend has it that Our Lady instructed St. Dominic in the rosary during these times and that he converted the Albigensians by preaching the devotion of the rosary to them.

However, pious legend is not always good history. Theollandists have traced the rosary as we have it, to the Dominican, Aln DeMaupe around 1470. St. Dominic died in 1221.

What is important is that this simple devotion is greatly blessed by the Church. It has been a spiritual bulwark to 500 years of Christians. It has kept the outline of the life of Jesus and Mary in the memories of the literate and the illiterate through the meditations on the mysteries of the rosary.

The rosary has been blessed by Mary who is "blessed among women" (Lk. 1:28) at her appearances at Lourdes, France, during 18 apparitions to St. Bernadette in 1858; and

during 6 apparitions in Fatima, Portugal, to the children, Lucia, Jacinta and Francesco in 1917.

Because the new Liturgy involves constant action during the Mass, some who used to say the rosary during Mass, now are not saying it at all. TV, recreation, interminable meetings, and just plain indifference are thinning this devotion. The sick and the infirm best testify to the consolation from the rosary, as we see their beads in their hands or on their stands. I was amused and edified by a man who was being brought to the hospital. As he was being carried out in a stretcher from his home, he called to his sister-in-law: "Be sure to bring my Blue Cross policy and my rosary beads."

Father Herbert Thurston, S.J., wrote: "That the rosary is pre-eminently the prayer of the people, adapted alike for the use of the simple and learned, is the daily experience of all who are familiar with it. The objection so often made against 'vain repetitions' is felt by none excepting those who have failed to realize how entirely the spirit of the exercise lies in the meditation upon the fundamental mysteries of our faith."

"To the initiated the words of the

angelical salutation form only a half-conscious accompaniment. It is a burden which we may liken to the 'Holy, Holy, Holy' of the heavenly choirs, surely not in itself meaningless."

Some Catholics turn up their noses at the rosary. Our Lord gives no room for spiritual snootiness. "Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mt. 18:3) Simplicity and intellectuality fuse into one unity in the truly Catholic intellectual.

About six months ago I stopped at Avon to visit Father Atwell. It is well known that we diverge in many views regarding what is true renewal in the Church. It is less well known that we are good friends. When I came into the rectory he met me with a broad smile. He waved a booklet on the rosary, and said: "Welcome. Have a booklet. I'm giving a copy to each member of our Altar and Rosary Society." I exclaimed: "Good heaven's, Father Henry, you are the last person I should expect to be advocating the rosary. With the gleam of one who had just hit the bull's eye, he replied: "Why, I teach the rosary in the third lesson in convert instructions. It fits perfectly with the life of Christ."

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Of Housewives and Wise Men

By Sarah Child

In a spirit of ecumenism I joined the YWCA this fall. The number of new Protestant friends I've met, however, is open to question. My class, at least, appears to be teeming with Catholics if the scraps of conversation I overhear are any indication.

Tidbits such as "Sister Josepha sent home a note last night" and "It's Danny's turn to serve at early Mass this week but he's so hard to get out of bed" don't particularly sound like Methodist Momism to me.

Actually religious denomination is the last thing anyone seems concerned with.

Come those first crisp days when the housewives in our neighborhood forget to open their front doors, take to turning up the thermostats and venture out only to give the baby a breath of fresh air or to dash across the lawn to borrow a cup of sugar, and I go stir crazy.

It is, I think I can safely say, a common ailment among mothers of preschool children.

The Monday morning Y classes, combined with an excellent nursery service, have proved an answer and

in some cases have inspired us to new activities.

As my neighbor's husband sardonically explains to his three little boys in easy earshot: "There's no reason Mommy can't go bowling Tuesday mornings. Since she didn't stay home and wash on Monday, there's no ironing piled up on Tuesday."

My own husband has so far confined his remarks to requests that I not store my styrofoam cones and balls on top of his dresser.

Believing four months is barely enough time to get ready for Christmas, our class in crafts began to make the three wise men rather early.

The clothes for the little figures are made out of velvet, brocades and silk scraps and our teacher stressed that we should try to use remnants from our sewing baskets rather than go to the expense of purchasing new materials.

Since my remnants are limited to chintzes from curtains I made for the six apartments I had before I got married, I've had to scavenge some in order not to spend any money.



I cut up a taffeta stole for the first doll, then a black silk kerchief for Caspar's face and am planning on snipping some gold braid from the lampshade in the living room to trim the third king's hat.

Our next project is a burnished pewter candlestick made out of peanut butter jars, wall paper paste and aluminum foil. I did draw the line mentally, however, at bringing in one of my wooden salad bowls for the base (turn it upside down and you get the idea).

After that we're making crystal ornaments from old cookie cutters and then we switch to canapes and cheery Christmas punch, etc.

I'm all set for materials for those projects too. Yesterday I ransacked through our 4-year-old's toy kitchen and took back my cookie shapes. Then I checked the entrance to our attic that I use as a pantry and found nine of the ten cans of sauerkraut I bought last year for an hors d'oeuvre recipe I discovered in my blender cookbook.

In fact I must remember to mention to the teacher that I can supply the whole class, if that is, they're all interested in sauerkraut balls.

RACL VIEWPOINTS

Msgr. Donohue's Priorities

By Paul W. Brayer

For the last two weeks in this column, members of the Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen (RACL) have discussed the urgent question of priorities in Catholic education.

The subject is particularly appropriate in the Rochester Diocese at this time in view of Bishop Sheen's call for democratic consultation on the problem of Catholic schools between parishioners and pastors before school closing decisions are made (Courier-Journal — 9/5/69).

It is encouraging to note that these crucial decisions will be made in consultation with the people who support these institutions financially, whose children are the beneficiaries of the education they provide and whose entire parish religious activity is influenced by the existence of these schools.

RACL, recognizing the need for thoughtful, calm and Christian consideration of the question, has invited Msgr. James Donohue, director of the Department of Education, U.S. Catholic Conference, to Rochester to speak at Mercy High School Auditorium at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 14. The views of this articulate Catholic educator are novel and thought-provoking. They have been widely publicized during recent years in America (4/13/68) and more recently in Look (10/21/69).

In the Look article, Msgr. Donohue is quoted as saying: "I don't want to sound trite, but we're at a crossroads. The Bishops of the Church have to decide what the teaching mission of the Church should be in the next few decades, and then reapportion the resources it has to meet that goal."

RACL feels that the people of Rochester should have an opportunity to gain more insight into his thinking in order to assist us in making the decisions we must make during the coming year.

The following quotes from Msgr. Donohue's America article will help to provide some background for the talk on Oct. 14. He wrote: "At a time when the nation's Catholic schools are faced with a financial crisis, and with the paradox of growing demand — for their services, and growing dissatisfaction with those services — a time when the Church itself is confronted with the challenge of the Vatican Council to 'co-operate in finding the solution to the outstanding problems of our time' — it is no longer adequate to seek remedies for each and every crisis. Rather the Church must determine its priorities and its goals, and use the resources at its disposal to achieve these goals."

Later in the article, the author states his idea of what the priorities should be: "They (the schools) must do nothing less than is demanded of American society at large. They must not initiate crash programs and operate them on whatever additional resources can be wheedled from the faithful and from the city, state and federal governments. These resources are already heavily burdened. They must instead devote their own present resources to meeting this need and do so by radically altering the present priorities within Catholic education."

"These new priorities must be: '1. Devotion of the necessary portion of resources — money, facilities,

people — to the education needs of the urban ghetto. (See Courier-Journal RACL column Sept. 26 entitled "Christians and the Ghetto.")

"2. Religious education.

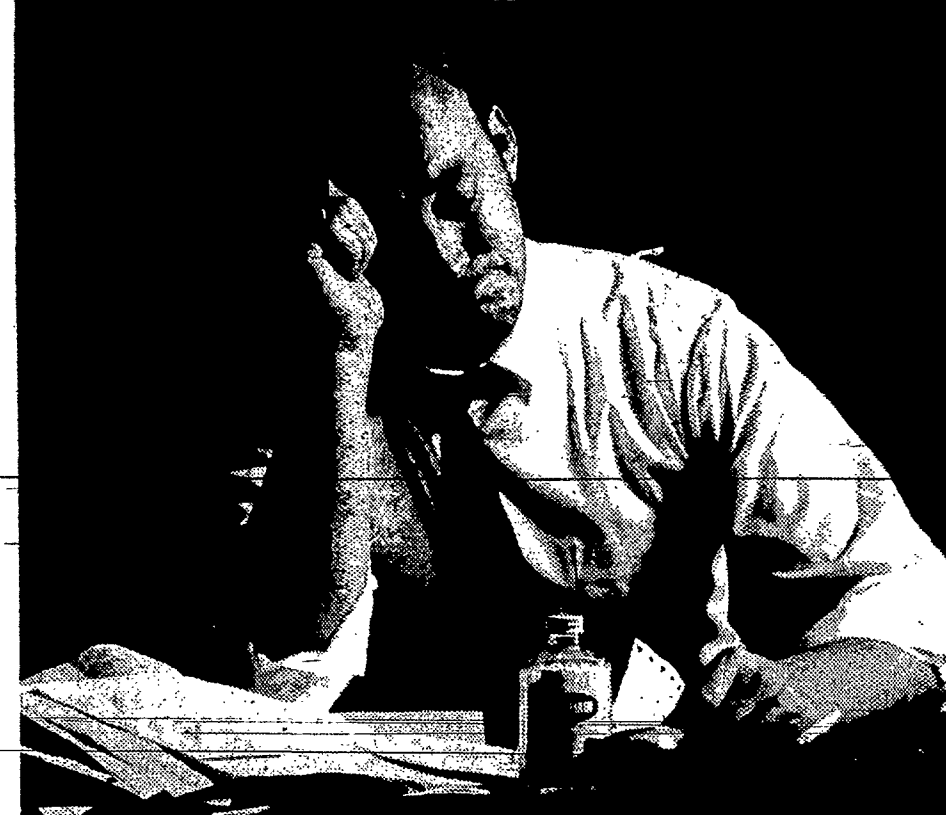
"3. The operation of elementary and secondary schools.

"It should be made clear once again that we are here talking about priorities that determine the use of money already allotted to Catholic education — that 50 per cent of Church funds now spent on diocesan and parochial schools. This does not mean stealing money from some other Church operation for ghetto education, nor does it necessarily mean that new funds over and above those already available should be sought, although perhaps that should be done too.

"Establishment of these new priorities does mean that many current educational programs would probably be phased out. It means, too, that some other current educational programs would be strengthened, and new ones created. It also means that those that are retained would probably take on new responsibilities, or would at least undergo considerable reorganization so that the principles that govern them under present conditions would not interfere with their operation under new conditions."

RACL does not take an official position on these proposals at this time but does take the position that as concerned Christians we should consider them, along with any other new ideas, before we participate in and contribute to the democratic consultation called for by Bishop Sheen.

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