

Quiet Revolution Takes Place On Collegiality at Synod

(Continued from Page 1)

which hardly mentioned the original working paper and which was distinctly more Vatican II-minded.

Leo Cardinal Suenens of Malines-Brussels, Belgium, one of the most outspoken demanders for a new look in the Church, told the second working session of the Synod of Bishops that everyone agrees wholeheartedly with the primacy of the Pope, but that there are some who treat it as an "absolute monarchy."

The Belgian cardinal said that all agree with the concept of the collegiality of bishops as expressed in the motto "with Peter and under Peter." However, he said, questions arise when the two doctrines of papal primacy and collegiality have to be applied.

Cardinal Suenens was not alone in his concern for the lack of clarity, both theological and in practical application, which seems to exist in this area — one of the main subjects for debate by the synod.

In fact, the consensus of the 19 speeches delivered during the day stressed the need for more and better development of the theology behind the concept of collegiality as it was developed and reemphasized during the Second Vatican Council.

John Cardinal Wright, former bishop of Pittsburgh who is now prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, turned from the fundamental subject of collegiality to a question posed by the synod's agenda itself: relations between the Holy See and bishops' conferences.

He cautioned the conferences against exposing themselves to the peril of nationalism, which he said has caused schisms in the past.

A bishop, he said, should be considered such not so much because he belongs to a national episcopal conference but rather because of his close links with the pope, in union with whom he exercises his own pastoral ministry.

The Pope's presence at all meet-

ings was greeted in the synod hall as a gesture of respect for the collegial unity of the pope and his brother bishops and had been suggested, frequently by various Church leaders long before the synod met. During the first synod two years ago Pope Paul attended meetings only very infrequently.

Another surprise was the announcement that Latin would no longer be required for speeches. Instead, the synod fathers are now permitted to talk in English, French, Italian, German, Spanish or Portuguese.

It was also announced that the Synod Fathers would begin meeting separately with each of the heads of the top administrative offices of the Roman Curia beginning that same day.

At the fourth working day of the synod, the 140 synodal Fathers were treated to a brief tour of the moon by American astronauts Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin Aldrin, who made a special visit to the Vatican as part of their round-the-world trip following their return from the moon. The insertion of the Apollo 11 space explorers formed a strange but timely contrast with the deliberations of the synod, which is in effect exploring the interior structure of the Catholic Church.

Again at the Oct. 16 session, as in preceding meetings, there were demands that the whole problem of the relationships between the pope, as the primate of the Church and vicar of Christ, and the bishops, as the successors of the Apostle, be turned over for special study to the newly established international commission of theologians.

French theologian Jean Cardinal Danielou said there is a "very grave crisis" in the Church today and that the Christian people await and want from the synod indications for remedies to the problems.

However, he added, the crisis must be confronted with a firm and unique authority of the Church where doubts are being raised not only about the authority of the pope but also of the bishops. As for the doctrinal prob-

lem underlying collegiality, Cardinal Danielou said it should be referred to the theological commission.

Bishop Carlo Colombo of Milan, frequently a theological consultant to Pope Paul VI, presented a firm defense of the prerogatives and independence of action and decision belonging to the pope. Acknowledging the collegial power of the bishops, Bishop Colombo nevertheless warned that "one must not conceive the authority of the college and its exercise (of power) in such a way as would lead to the diminishing of the full and real liberty, which is not only juridical but also moral, of the Roman Pontiff."

The synod's fifth working session terminated its study of the theological basis for the relations of the pope and the college of Catholic bishops of the world by referring it to the future and specialized study of theologians.

Effectively, the theological discussion is over and the synod now gets down to the practical details of the day-to-day relationships and problems existing between the Roman Curia and the newly established conferences of bishops. Later a third subject will be studied: the interrelationship of the various national conferences themselves.

With the reading of reports from all nine working groups into which the synodal Fathers were gathered, the long-ferred sundering of the synod into pro-papal conservatives and pro-collegial progressives revealed itself as an empty phantasm.

The reports of the working groups showed substantial agreement on the Pope's right to reach decisions that bind the whole Church, and on the opportuneness and desirability of active participation of the world's bishops in decision-making.

For such participation, the working groups looked to fuller communication between the Holy See and the bishops, and to fuller exploitation of the institution of the synod itself. The synod as an institution seemed to be shaping up as the most likely central nervous system for collegial life and action.

By an absolute monarch and, at the same time, is not a democracy, how is authority exercised. Collegiality is the quick answer, and Vatican II had a lot to say about it in theory. But how is collegiality actually practiced?

It was at this point — last May — that Leo Cardinal Suenens of Malines-Brussels, Belgium, gave his famous interview saying the root cause of post-conciliar problems in the Church is the rigidity in the Roman Curia. The cardinal spoke out publicly because he wanted to ascertain public opinion in the Church, not only among bishops but all the faithful.

World reaction showed that substantial numbers of people were in agreement with Cardinal Suenens. Even though some bishops were a little shocked at the undiplomatic frankness of the cardinal's interview, bishops throughout the world, as the synod has now affirmed, concluded that the time has come for the Church to change its form of government.

As a result of the mobilization of public opinion — which the Curia had tried to squelch by first placing a secrecy veil over the schema and then rebuking Cardinal Suenens for his interview — the first, and rigid schema was upgraded by the time the synod Fathers arrived in Rome.

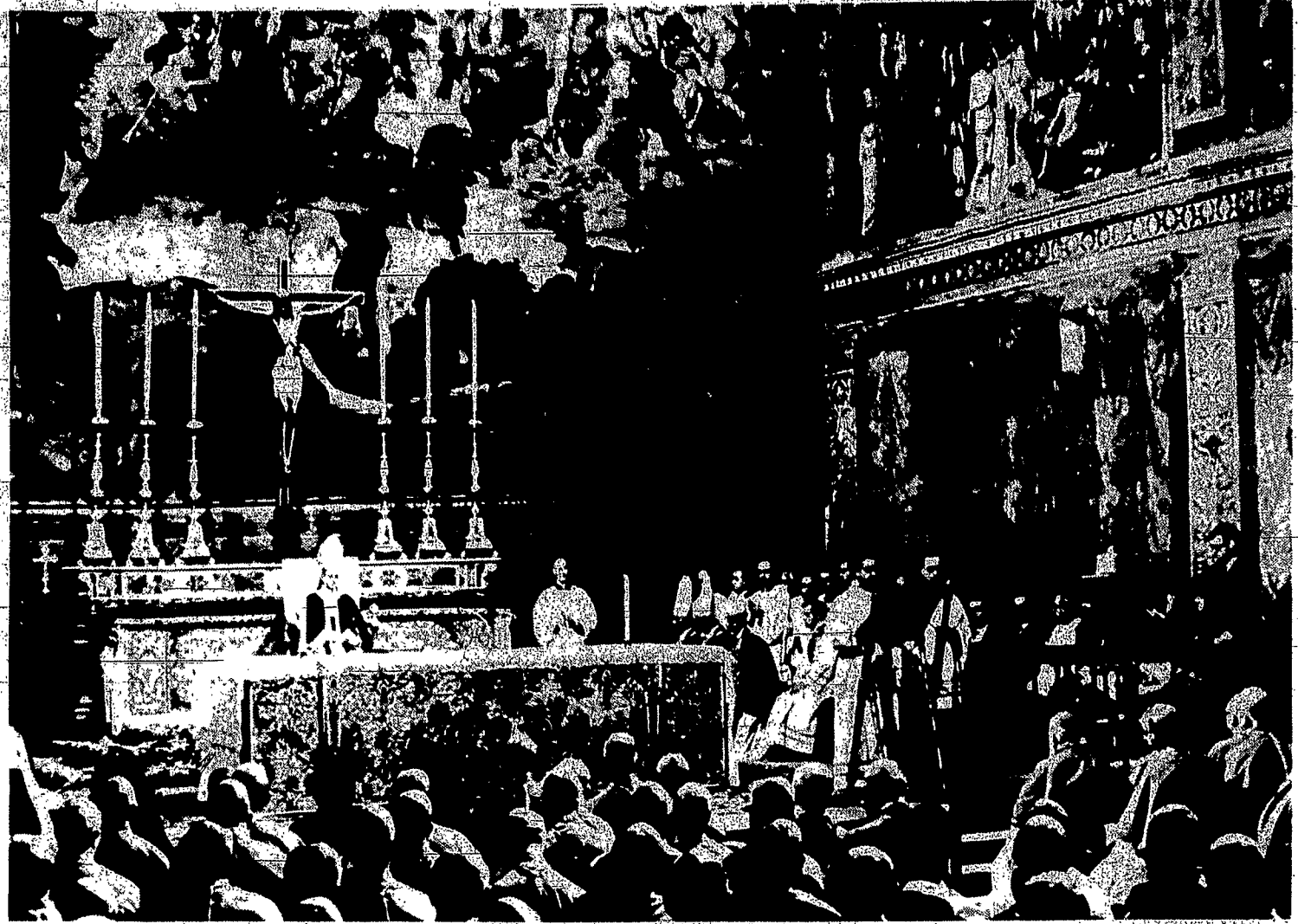
A three-page summary of the revised document, presented by Franjo Cardinal Seper, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, emphasized that the pope and bishops are united in a sacred ministry for which both sides are responsible before God. The Pope is certainly not a delegate of the bishops; He has supreme authority. But the bishops as a college share in that authority.

When I arrived in Rome for the opening of the synod, a 10-year veteran of the Curia told me that he had never seen such tenseness and fear as the Vatican was then exhibiting. More than 500 accredited journalists arrived from around the world and the tightest security I have ever seen at the press hall was established. Vatican guards constantly checked our passes.

Pope Paul himself in his opening address set the open, frank tone of the synod with a call for unity and charity. His speech was remarkable for its serenity as he set the bishops on an open-ended journey to workable collegiality, only offering guidelines that the Church must reject both totalitarianism and democracy.

The tall Belgian, Leo Cardinal Suenens speaking in the presence of the Holy Father, set the record straight that he, one, least of all himself, was attacking the primacy of the papacy. We are in accord on the primacy which is attributed to Peter and also on the collegiality which unites us to Peter. But we must be frank and recognize that there is tension in the Church between the monarchical and the collegial tendencies, at the basis of which lie two different theologies of the Church.

All right, everyone is now saying as we gather under the magnificent October sunshines in the sidewalk cafes near St. Peter's. "The Church is for collegiality. What about the hard issues, the election of the pope and bishops, priestly celibacy, marriage problems?" Well, of course, we just don't know. The synod certainly isn't going to solve all these tough questions.



Synod Scene

The Synod of Bishops was officially opened by Pope Paul VI in the artistic splendor of the Sistine Chapel. (Religious News Service)

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Vatican II Reasserted at Synod

By DOUGLAS J. ROCHE (NC News Service)

Vatican City — Even the pessimists were struck by the speed with which the spirit of Vatican II reasserted itself during the first week of the world synod of bishops.

Once more we saw the Church as a living and dynamic organism willing to look at itself in the light of the modern world and searching for the right kind of structure to meet the needs of our age.

Three points impressed me during the opening week:

1. The heavy weight of opinion — of both Pope and bishops — for a workable form of collegiality in which the bishops will share with the Pope in an organic way in Church government.

2. No revolt or nastiness was necessary in order for the majority of bishops to make their point that they are not mere delegates of the pope but have power by divine right. The Pope, by his personal attendance at the debates, gave not the slightest hint that he regarded this open ex-

pression of opinion as disloyal to him.

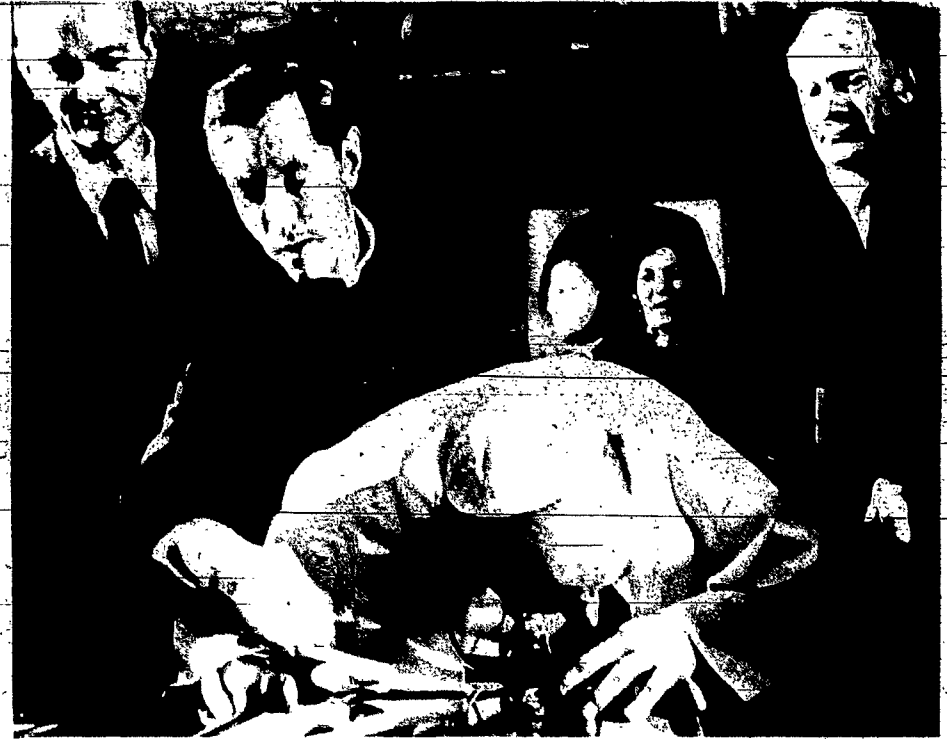
3. Public opinion enabled the synod to get immediately on the progressive track.

Pope Paul VI had called this extraordinary synod, embracing 148 members of the world's hierarchy, to advise him on the correct relationship between national conferences of bishops and the Holy See and among the national conferences themselves.

But as John Cardinal Heenan of Westminster, England put it in The Times of London, "The chief though undeclared purpose of the synod is to avert the undoubted peril of anarchy in the Church."

For ever since Vatican II, the question of authority has been coming to a head. The storm broke with the publication of the papal birth control encyclical Humanae Vitae, which, to the surprise of the Holy See, met with massive dissent in many areas of the world.

A spotlight was put on the key question: What are the limits of papal authority? If the Church is not ruled



Pope Paul VI, using a magnifying glass, inspects a micro-dot filled replica of the message left on the moon presented to him by the three American astronauts. Michael Collins, left, Edwin Aldrin, second from right, and Neil Armstrong, not in photo, visited the pontiff during a three-day visit in Rome. Mrs. Neil Armstrong is in the rear as unidentified priest assists the Pope. (RNS)

Bishops Warmly Greet Three U.S. Astronauts

Vatican City — (NC) — The synod of Bishops was moonstruck by the unusual visit of America's three-man team of astronauts which made man's first landing on the moon in the Apollo 11 flight.

Neil Armstrong told the warmly applauding 140 prelates gathered in the synod hall deep in the Vatican that the earth from space looks like "a blue and white jewel shining in the black void."

Armstrong, and fellow astronauts Michael Collins and Edwin Aldrin, on a round-the-world trip, visited Pope Paul VI in the Vatican hall before going down to the synod hall.

In talking to the synod delegates, they spoke of their experiences in space and showed colored slides il-

lustrating many phases of their remarkable voyage.

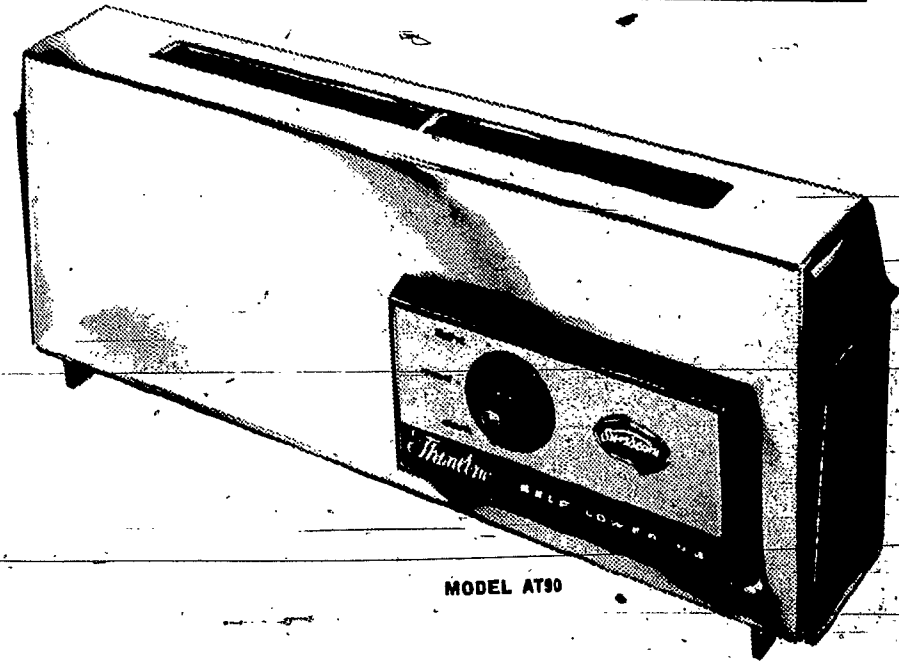
In a brief question period, after the slides the astronauts were asked about impressions regarding personal relations to God and any change therein. Armstrong replied, "Walking through the halls of the Vatican (they had made a brief visit to the Sistine Chapel to see Michelangelo's Last Judgment and other pieces), we saw the best of man's art work and it left me profoundly impressed. But as we traveled through planets and I saw with my own eyes, I was profoundly moved by God's art works."

The astronauts and their wives were received by the Holy Father in his private library for 20 minutes. The Pope had come from the synod meeting he had been attending.

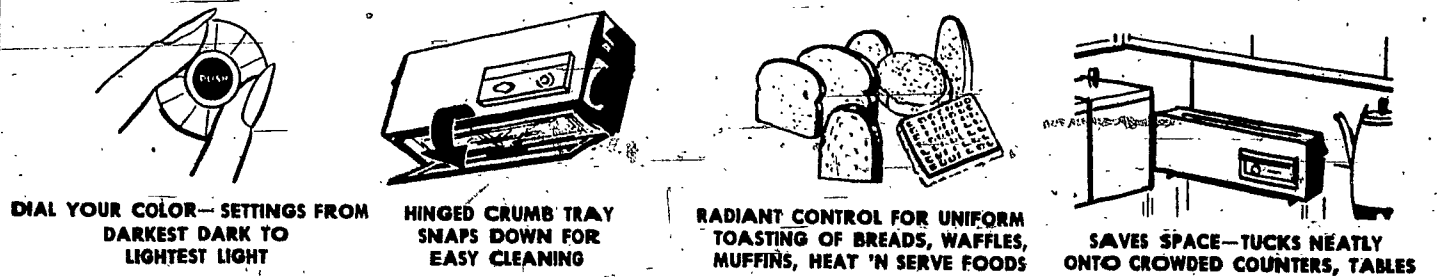
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Per

Father Almagro during recent visit high

Service At N

Washington — bishops will attend evening Mass, Nov. Shrine of the Immaculate here, marking the of the dedication upper church and Day.

Singing as a u sary Mass for the tory will be the C

Father Senten To 6

Milwaukee — E. Groppi, milita er, was sentenced six months in Wisconsin State in Madison on 5 demonstrators who made by the legis welfare budget.

A few hours at probation violati lost another leg Wisconsin Suprem state Assembly's against him. Th imprisonment fo out a hearing or 121-year-old law. was challenged attorneys.

Judge Duffy, d lasted less than Father Groppi to saying the pries the patience of st Sept. 29 action of his probation.

The original Judge Duffy in trial on the cha rest during an in August 1967. and Father Groppi probation for two ye

Fr. Groppi 'Moral Sup Archbishop

Milwaukee — E. Groppi "merit of any fair min priest or Religio to basic law than bishop William E. kee, said in a con jalling.

"The Church the teachings of justice and assu all of God's p racial, ethnic ground," the ar "Insofar as Fa cely dedicated worthwhile cause moral support citizen. This is his methods are ceptable."

Archbishop Groppi "accept'd perceptions." He in his zeal as ar ally prepared velopments."