

# Cardinal Alfrink:

**Priest Who Can't Accept Celibacy  
Not Necessarily Disloyal to Church**

Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands — (NC)—A priest who can no longer live a celibate life is not necessarily unfaithful to his priestly ministry, Cardinal Bernard Alfrink of Utrecht told the opening session April 5 of the sixth and final plenary meeting of the Dutch National Pastoral Council.

The cardinal admitted, however, that there are many in the Church who object to allowing priests who have married to return to the ministry.

At its fifth session, in January, the Dutch pastoral council voted by an overwhelming majority in favor of optional celibacy for priests. Following the council the Dutch bishops declared that the Church in the Netherlands would be better off if there were optional celibacy, if married men could be ordained priests, and if priests who had married could, in certain circumstances, return to the ministry.

Cardinal Alfrink told the sixth session, however, that the Dutch bishops never intended to abolish celibacy. He said that Pope Paul VI had spoken of the possibility of ordaining married

men in his February letter to Cardinal Jean Villot, papal secretary of state, but admitted that the Pope had made some reservations.

(Considering the possibility of ordaining married men in priest-scarce parts of the world, Pope Paul in the letter to Cardinal Villot had said that he had "grave reservations.")

"(Would it not be a very dangerous illusion," the Pope had asked, "to believe that such a change in traditional discipline could be limited in practice to local cases of real and extreme necessity; would it not be for others a temptation to seek here an apparently easier answer to the present lack of vocations?"

(The Pontiff said the reasons given for a relaxation of the celibacy rule "do not seem to us convincing." He then reaffirmed his determination to maintain the present discipline.)

In his opening talk at the sixth session of the pastoral council, Cardinal Alfrink expressed the Dutch bishops' profound solidarity with the whole college of bishops and particularly with the Holy Father as head of this college."

# 'Erroneous Ideas' Assailed by Pope

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI declared here that the "crisis of authority" stems from man's detaching himself from his Creator and attaching himself to erroneous ideas.

Speaking at a special audience with a group of 40 members of the Austrian Union of Judges, the Pope said, "One rightly speaks of crisis in authority. The most profound reason for this situation is to be found in the tendency of modern man to detach himself from his Creator, and to have recourse to erroneous and falsely conceived ideas."

That is why, he told the jurists, young people must be encouraged to defend the "order which derives from the supreme authority of God and is above every arbitrary intervention of man."

## CHORAL FESTIVAL

The glee clubs of St. Agnes, Mercy and Bishop Kearney high schools, the youth choir of St. Mary's Church and the King's Prep Chorale will sing in a festival at 8 p.m. Sunday, April 19, in Kearney's auditorium.

# The Lord Wants Me Here

Mena, Ark — (RNS)—"Aunt Mary" Bittlebrun, reportedly the nation's oldest recipient of Social Security and the oldest Roman Catholic in the Little Rock diocese, attributes her long life to the "Lord's will."

"The Lord wants me here," she told some 200 friends who gathered at a nursing home for her 106th birthday party.

Congratulatory messages were received from Pope Paul VI and Bishop Albert L. Fletcher of Little Rock.

Mrs. Bittlebrun attended a special Mass offered for her at the nursing home following the new liturgy "with keen interest." She and some 100 friends received Communion.

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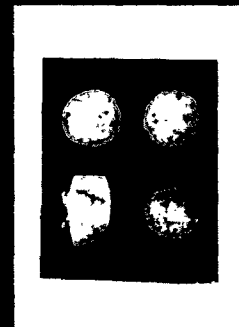
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