

Jesuit Says:

Superiors to Blame For Priest Exodus

San Francisco — (RNS) — A Jesuit sociologist contended here that extensive research indicates that the exodus of Catholic priests today is not caused by clerical celibacy but by a superior, bishop or Christian community that "drives the priest out" of the active ministry.

Speaking at a meeting held at the University of San Francisco—timed to coincide with the semi-annual Conference of the American Catholic bishops — Father Eugene Schallert, S.J., discussed the reasons for the exodus from the Catholic Church on the part of priests, nuns, seminarians and even laymen.

Father Schallert, director of the Institute of Socio-Religious Research at USF, noting that Vatican II has a "liberating influence" on people of all faiths, pointed out all priests or sisters who leave have been dramatically influenced by the Council.

"There is a marked tendency towards idealism among priests and this idealism may well be a source of great strength for the Catholic clergy." But, he added: "It may also be their Achilles' heel."

Father Schallert said priests are clearly directed towards change and they feel they are increasingly faced with a situation which they define as "structurally inflexible."

The problem is that priests neither "repudiate the need for authority nor . . . accept present structures." Yet, "they are anxious to serve the Church in some capacity."

He stressed that most nuns and priests interviewed fell into two general categories: those who felt strange because the Church was changing so rapidly, and those who felt strange because it was not changing rapidly enough.

"Both groups are thus frustrated and alienated," he said. And these include both the "drop-outs" and the "stay ins."

After several years of research it was determined, said Father Schallert, that the problem of the exodus was not co-extensive with the problem of clerical celibacy.

But he noted that although priests and nuns do not leave to get married, predictably "most will marry."

The Jesuit scholar said that the "crucial other" is not a prospective spouse, "but someone of extreme significance to the person who is leaving." He stated:

" . . . to the degree that there is a personal element involved in leaving the active ministry, the individual who drives the priest out of the active ministry is his superior, or his bishop, or in some cases, the Christian community of which he is a member.

"When any one of these . . . represent to the dropout all that he finds objectionable in the Church, then a kind of despair sets in. The individual gives up hope of realizing his ideals and gets caught up in a long process of leaving the active ministry."

Cardinal Hits French Anti-Semitism

Paris — (NC) — Cardinal Francois Marty, archbishop of Paris, has charged that France is in danger of falling into racism.

He made his comment in an article in the official bulletin of the Paris archdiocese following a public incident in which passersby were called "dirty Jews."

Warning against what he sees as growing anti-Semitism throughout France, Cardinal Marty said: "I felt solidarity with my Jewish brothers. I thought of the sons of Abraham whom I welcomed during the war in my country church . . ."

"I felt ashamed as well," the cardinal continued. "Such insults defile an entire country. They are the symptoms of an even deeper illness. France is in danger of racism. I say firmly: we must cure this disease, rebuff this sin, forbid words of hate, ban racist articles and publications."

Several Catholic leaders have recently condemned the spread of anti-Semitism and warned Catholics to distinguish between the political and religious elements of Israel-Arab disputes.

P. R. Catholics Urged To Oppose Two Bills

San Juan, P.R.—(NC)—Archbishop Luis Aponte of San Juan issued an islandwide call to Catholics for a protest to the governor and the Senate against two bills liberalizing divorce and abortion.

The bills have cleared the House of Representatives and now are in the Senate. The divorce bill would permit character incompatibility as a cause while the abortion measure would permit abortion in cases of "extreme danger" to the expectant mother and also in cases where pregnancy resulted from rape and incest.

"In a country where in 1968 there were 11,110 marriages, 11,902 divorce suits and 9,506 divorces granted, we feel there is no need to open more doors with new casuals which would facilitate divorces," the archbishop said.

The divorce bill is bad enough, but the abortion measure "is even worse," Archbishop Aponte declared.

"Here there is a play with

human life. Here there is an attempt to forget about the Fifth Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill.' For a mother not to suffer the consequences of an unwanted birth, it becomes necessary to kill an innocent fetus—this essentially is what the abortion bill means," the archbishop said.

Pope to Ordain 500 Priests in Rome

Vatican City — (RNS)—The largest ordination ceremony in many years will be held in St. Peter's Basilica May 29, when Pope Paul VI ordains 500 new priests from all over the world.

Italian Radio said the extraordinary ceremony will be part of the celebrations commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Pope's own ordination to the priesthood, May 29, 1920.

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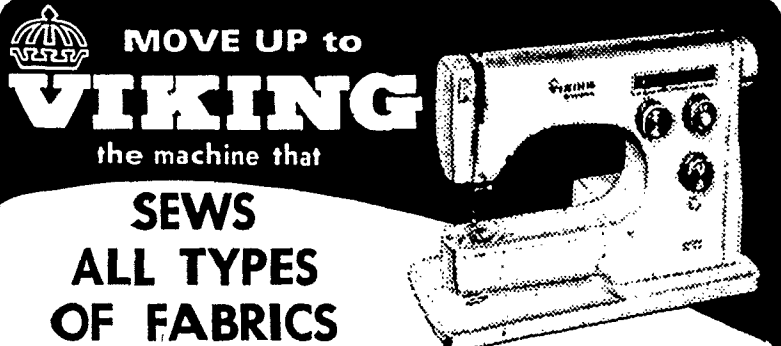
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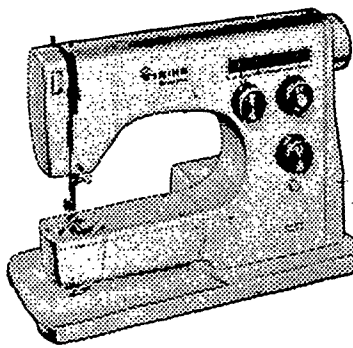
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