Preach the True Faith, Pope Exhorts Bishops

Washington, D.C. — (RNS)— Distressed over "ambiguities, uncertainties and doubts" among Catholics concerning es-sentials of faith, Pope Paul ex-horted bishops around the world to remain cognizant of their "grave and urgent duty" to proclaim authentic Christian teaching.

He indicated that such basic doctrines as the Eucharist the. Church as the "instrument of salvation," the priestly ministry, prayer and the sacraments, the indissolubility of marriage and respect for life, and even the "divine authority" of Scribture are not safe from attack by a "radical de-mythologization" in the world today.

In a 4,600-word "apostolic exhortation" directed to "all bishops in peace and communion with the Apostolic See," the Pope said that the "present po-sition of the faith demands of us increased effort" so that God's word may be presented "without falsification."

The Pope's message was issued to mark the fifth anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council.

Urging the world's bishops to continue their task for "handing on the faith in its fullness," Pope Paul warned that "many of faithful are troubled in their faith by an accumulation of ambiguities, uncertainties and doubts about its essentials."

Pope Paul warned the bishops of tendencies in the world "to reconstruct from psychological and sociological data a

Christianity cut off from the unbroken tradition which links it to the faith of the Apostles, and a tendency to extol a Christian life deprived of religious elements."

He said the People of God have an "inalienable and sacred right' to receive the Word of God, the entire Word of God, and that the Church is the rightful dispenser of the Word.

Commenting on sociological surveys, such as those on population control, he acknowledged their usefulness in discerning thought patterns, but warned that conclusions from such surveys cannot, of themselves, "constitute a determining criterion of truth."

He expressed "encouragement and support" for theologians and Scripture scholars as well, but then cited a German bishop's statement which affirmed that theology "can only find its norm in the Church. .. " among

Similarly, he noted, human scientific research is limited in examining revealed data be-cause the data itself transcends the analyses, "both in origin

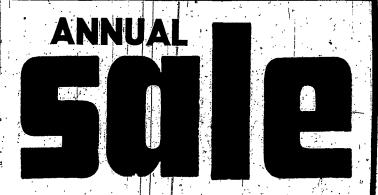
Urging bishops to speak out despite fear of criticism, Pope Paul said: "However necessary the function of theologians, it is not to the learned that God has confided the duty of authentically interpreting the faith," but to the bishops who are "repsonsible . . . before God. It is for the bishops to tell the people.

Urging openness to questions, tience with those "groping patience with those "groping for the light," friendship and forebearance with those seeking to "reach their Father's house, Pope Paul warned of the diffi-culty of making correct assessments. He called it one of the "most difficult" but also one of the "most necessary" tasks of bishops today. Accused of Anti-Union Plot

Sacramento, Calif. — (RNS) — Six men have been indicted by a federal grand jury here on eight counts of violating the 1968 Gun Control Act in an alleged plot to thwart Cesar Chavez.

The charges ostensibly linked the six men to a Nov. 3 dynamite explosion at the headquarters of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), the Chavez union, in Hollister. However, the assistant U.S. Attorney, Bruce Babcock, said that for purposes of the indictment, the plot did not progress to the point of actual destruction. He said an undercover agent who made purchases and discussed them with the conspirators indicated the explosive devices were aimed at causing "a little trouble" for the

The defendants, of Modesto, Calif., are all truck drivers or laborers.



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