

# Biblical Commission Revised

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul VI has issued a decree revising the Pontifical Biblical Commission and linking it directly to the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The decree, a "motu proprio" (a rescript drawn up and issued by the Pope himself on his own initiative), was dated June 27, 1971. It was presented to newsmen at the Vatican press office on July 8.

The motives that prompted Pope Paul to give new form to the Biblical Commission — instituted by Pope Leo XIII in 1902 — are indicated in the decree's introductory section: "To assist in the advance of true teaching in Biblical studies; to provide for proper interpretation of Scripture; to foster greater coordination among theologians in their collaborative efforts with the Holy See and with one another."

Following the directives of the new document, the commission will be composed of 20 biblical scholars, representing various schools of theological thought and coming from many countries. They will be appointed for a period of five years, after which they may be reappointed.

The revamped Commission will henceforth be linked directly to the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, whose present prefect is Franjo Cardinal Seper.



Pontiff Opens New Hall

Flanked by prelates, Pope Paul VI gives his blessing at the end of his weekly general assembly, the first held in the massive new audience hall at the Vatican. Behind the pontiff is a huge tapestry depicting Christ's resurrection (RNS).

# Private School Pupils May Benefit

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cal, dental and therapeutic care and treatment . . . if such services are provided to the district's public schoolers, and are requested by the proper authorities in the private schools.

What constitutes a "health and welfare service"? was a key issue in the case. In the past, the state's public school districts have generally limited such services to parochial schools to those afforded by a school nurse, physician, and dental hygienist.

The Greece School District, represented by William Easton, argued that speech therapy could not be included in the "health and welfare" clause because it was instruction, rather than a service.

The Court of Appeals, in its deliberation, did not deny the instructional aspects of speech therapy as offered in the public schools; it did, however, find such therapy a legitimate "health and welfare service" as well.

According to Eugene Cusker, the court's decision seems to open the door for the inclusion of the other services to students in private schools: guidance, psychological testing and counseling, and home-school counseling for parents.

Cusker commented that it was significant that Easton, in his brief to the court, conceded that if the courts were to include speech therapy as a "health and

welfare" service, then the more obviously "health and welfare" oriented services would also apply to parochial school students, especially those dealing with counseling and physical education.

The decision will not mean more dollar aid for the Catholic schools, Cusker stressed.

And it may not even mean more services. The public school district, faced with the prospect of adding Catholic school children to its special programs, may simply eliminate some of them due to economic strains. Lay school boards of parochial schools may be particularly helpful in preventing this kind

of situation from developing, Cusker said.

"Since members of the school board are taxpayers they are more readily listened to by school officials," he said.

Although the actual benefits to parochial school students are difficult to predict, diocesan education officials are heartened by the court's decision.

"It marks the beginning of a new direction towards serving all the youngsters in a community equitably," commented Salvatore Musso, deputy superintendent of schools. "Up to this time, health and welfare services have not been provided equitably."

# American Nun to Head New Vatican Department

San Francisco — (RNS) — Sister Thaddea Kelly, the first nun ever named to head a department within a Vatican congregation, said here she hoped her appointment would be "a source of encouragement to religious women the world over."

A native of San Francisco, the 54-year-old Sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary said she will assume a new post in which she will help review and evaluate constitutions of women's religious orders and secular institutes.

The appointment was announced by Vatican Radio (July 6), and the broadcast stressed that Sister Kelly is the first woman to hold a "senior" Vatican post.

Technically she will head the Department for Constitutions for Religious Congregations of Women and Secular Institutes of the Vatican Congregation for Religious. The congregation oversees both men's and wom-

en's religious orders and secular institutes.

Sister Kelly said that religious communities have been revising their constitutions through the years. But she noted that there is much more "leeway" in standards laid down by Vatican II, especially with respect to experimentation and adaptation to modern forms.

The new Vatican official, who conceded that her appointment is a "break-through" for women but not any kind of personal triumph, suggested that the appointment was an attempt by the Vatican to give women a greater role in Church administration.

"Religious women, like lay women, have much to offer," she said. "And they are doing so much, in education, social work, nursing and the like, living lives of fervor and dedication."

# Federal Parent Aid Seen School Priority

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by the Rhode Island and Pennsylvania legislatures."

The court acted in the broad field of aid to church related educational institutions with three decisions announced jointly on Monday, June 28. The Court declared in two near unanimous decisions that the 1969 Rhode Island Salary Supplemental Act (Di Censo, 8-1) and the 1968 Pennsylvania Non-public Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Lemon, 8-0) were both unconstitutional in that they violated the First Amendment provisions of the US Constitution concerning the prohibition against the establishing of a religion.

However, the Court did approve, 5-4, the right of the Federal Government to aid in providing construction grants to church-affiliated colleges through the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 . . . the Tilton Case. This permits four religious affiliated colleges in

Connecticut to continue use of buildings partially funded with federal monies.

"It is clear through all the opinions," Mr. Tobin said, "that the Court has reached a consensus, that the best way to avoid impermissible 'entanglement of Church and state' is to aid the student or his parents directly." They did not entirely rule out all other ways; but they did make it clear that this is certainly an approved way, which has the sanction of previous Court decisions:

In Allen, the Court approved textbook aid to nonpublic school students; in Everson, it was bus transportation that was authorized. In both cases it was a benefit to the pupil and his parents . . . with only incidental benefit to the institution.

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COURIER-JOURNAL

Volume 84 No. 41 July 14, 1971

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 15¢; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$6.00; Canada and South America, \$8.50; other foreign countries, \$9.50. Offices, 35 Seio St., Rochester, N.Y., 14604. (716) 454-7050. Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

Courier-Journal

Wednesday, July 14, 1971

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