

A Father's Loving Concern

Those who claim to be 'in the know' inform us that religious communities throughout the world had been awaiting for some time harsh words from Rome about their efforts for renewal as encouraged by the II Vatican Council. (Cf. America — July 24, 1971) The scrapped drafts of a proposed letter from the Sacred Congregation for Religious were judged by some Roman observers as verbose, prescriptive and pessimistic and mistrustful.



I am in no position to pass judgment on what took place behind closed doors. I can only comment on the document which did appear on June 29. It is a warm and reverent apostolic message — unmistakably a personal letter from Pope Paul VI expressing a father's loving concern for his sons and daughters who have voluntarily embraced religious life as the better life for them.

The letter is an Apostolic Exhortation to renewal. It confirms the sign value of religious life as a witness of the primacy of the love of God and as a free response to the call of the Holy Spirit. It is only a more total surrender to the Holy Spirit that will effect constantly needed renewal. If at any time all does not go well with religious it is because the spirit of the world becomes intermingled with the action of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Father expresses a personal awareness that external elements, structures and forms of religious life which may have fostered a vitality of community life at one point of history can become outmoded encumbrances to spiritual growth at a later date. He warns against the temptation to inflexibility that besets every human institution. Formalism is fatal when we begin to become set in our ways and allow externals to carry us along — just going through motions as spiritless automatons.

The document reaffirms the witness value of the vows of poverty, obedience and chastity.

The vow of poverty is given, I believe, a special and sensitive consideration, undoubtedly because of the overwhelming injustices of our society. Pope Paul challenges religious: "How will the cry of the poor find an echo in your lives? . . . It obliges you to awaken consciences to the drama of misery and to the demands of social justice made by the Gospel and the Church . . . It is necessary that in your daily lives you should give proof, even externally, of authentic poverty."

It is my hope that each member of our religious communities within the diocese will meditate on this truly pastoral letter of Pope Paul. I am well aware of the valiant and constant efforts our religious are making to achieve a renewed spirit. It is possible, as the Holy Father suggests, that these best human efforts may overlook some values so basic to renewal, such as the primacy of prayer as the sole source of stability and the primacy of charity whose genuineness is reflected in joyful service.

Guest Columnist

'Zelus Domus Tuae Comedit Me'

By Father John D. Malley

"The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." These words from Psalm 68 have been running through my mind ever since I heard



that Father Charles McCarthy was stricken with his fatal illness. It was 40 years ago that I joined his class of students at St. Andrew's Seminary. For eight years we were classmates at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminaries. In 1931 Father McCarthy was not in the highest five of his class but he applied himself so zealously that by the time we reached ordination

he was one of the finest and best scholars of the ordination class of 1939.

During those years of seminar life he became very interested in church music and for years sang these words of Psalm 68 at the beautiful ceremony of Tenebrae in both St. Patrick and Sacred Heart Cathedrals, first as a student singer and then as professor of music at St. Bernard's Seminary. His passing away brought to my mind the passing away of such beautiful services that used to be sung

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in Latin. (The Holy Father said that we should retain Latin even though the vernacular is so widely used today.)

When I think of a Tenebrae service I am reminded of a couple who decided to go into the Cathedral to hear the Tenebrae service one Holy Week many years ago. The husband was not given to rather long church services but was finally convinced by his wife that he should go in to make a visit and hear the music of the seminarians. He agreed to stay for a few minutes.

After they were inside the husband sat practically motionless for about two hours enthralled by the magnificent music of the Psalms chanted, and the responses sung in the manner of the great master of church music, Palestrina. The Psalms were sung on one note, rising a note for each successive Psalm. The husband said it sounded as if the prayers actually were rising gradually up to Heaven. I know the story is true because the couple were my father and mother. Father

McCarthy had no small part in these beautiful renditions.

Not too long after ordination he was brought back to the seminary to conduct not only Tenebrae but the entire music program. As it was brought out in the papers he gained national fame for his conducting and his choir's work at great events which were held in the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

Father McCarthy, together with his predecessor, Father Benedict A. Ehmann, gave the diocese a golden age of church music. He was a tireless worker (which brought about his death) fulfilling the words of the Psalmist — "I have loved O Lord the beauty of thy house and the place where they glory dwell-eth." Because he worked so hard for that Glory of God, he can now say "the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." He fulfilled also the words of Christ — "He who loses his life shall find it." Father McCarthy lost his life by working so hard all during his priestly career. I am sure that he has found his real life and that the mansion prepared for him by Christ will be filled with heavenly music for all eternity.

Editorial

Rocky Says: "Give The Poor a Bus Ticket"

Last month our state adopted a one-year residency requirement for all welfare applicants. Henceforth all poor people requesting public assistance would be denied any relief except bus fare to another state unless they could prove they had lived in New York for a year. The Governor pushed the law through as part of an attack on welfare costs. He claimed that spending money on needy newcomers would mean skimping on other underfunded programs like the social and health services for our own poor.

In the first two weeks of the law about 300 recently-arrived indigent applicants were turned down across the state. Then Federal Judge John T. Curtin in Buffalo stepped in, charged the state with unconstitutional conduct and ordered welfare agencies to stop enforcing the new law until a test trial could be held. He said the Supreme Court in 1969 had invalidated residency laws set up against the poor in Pennsylvania and Connecticut and that this one was just as bad.

Several questions hang—Why did the Governor and his advisors propose this law? How did they rationalize this rejection of the poor?

The Supreme Court stated in 1969 that residency requirements placed against the poor were an unjustified discrimination. Such a law set certain groups of the needy in a class apart from other groups and used the calendar of how long they had been in a state to decide their worthiness for public aid. Further, the Court ruled, such laws deprived the poor of a constitutional right to move freely through the country, because, in fear of being put down as newcomers, they were, in effect, being forced to stay wherever grinding poverty or misfortune had hit them. And finally, the Court questioned that budget planning or economy was such a "compelling state interest" that fundamental human rights could be violated for reasons of money.

Mr. Rockefeller's office must have known about this Supreme Court ruling on welfare and residency. And he surely could

have discovered from his own Department of Social Services that the number of people denied welfare by his law would be comparatively few and the alleged savings very small. (In 1970, the average monthly number of people on welfare who had lived in this state less than a year was 11,000, or one percent of the total. The total cost of aiding these newcomers was about \$12 million of which the state paid only \$4 million with the Federal government and the localities paying the rest.)

In the face of legal precedent against his law the Governor might be charged with impulsive desperation to put something over on the courts for the sake of a few million dollars. But in view of the universal demand for economy in the state budget he was more likely fishing for approval of uninformed taxpayers who bewail the whole cost of welfare services and would cheer him for what they incorrectly expect would be master savings stroke. Whether the Governor's intentions were cynical and political, or thrifty and just, his chances of beating the Supreme Court are slim.