

# Pope Paul Issues New Peace Appeal

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI has issued another plea for world peace.

Referring to the slogan for the 1972 "World Day of Peace" on Jan. 1 — "If you want peace, work for justice" — the Pope said, "The foundation for a fair and brotherly world is founded on respect for the weak and the small in building close ties at all levels among the nations of the world."

The pontiff's latest appeal was made in an address to delegates to a joint conference in Rome of European World War II veterans' organizations and major associations of victims of Nazi persecution.

The groups were received in a special papal audience. The conference, first of its kind, drew 1,000 delegates from 18 different countries, including Norway, Italy, Britain, France, as well as Romania, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and both East and West Germany.

In his speech, the Pope noted that the conference had brought together men who had formerly been enemies. He cited the conference as a "symbol of forces"

which "had much to contribute to the building of a new world today."

Praising the conference's work for peace, the Pope exclaimed, "Peace! Who does not sincerely desire it? Who, today, would not dare to plead eloquently for it?"

"But," he warned, "what thoughtlessness is at the basis of certain acts which would pass for 'pacifism' — what lies and what power games lie behind certain peace overtures!"

He then enumerated what he termed "the conditions necessary for world peace and security, 'the right of peoples and nations to have their dignity respected, their right to sovereignty and the elimination of offensive repressive measures, the renunciation of the murderous arms race' and the disappearance of hate and 'every kind of discrimination'."

Pope Paul asked delegates to develop dialogue with young people, "so that today's youth will be placed on the right — and realistic — road which leads to peace and justice, to friendship and security among the peoples of the world."

## Vatican-Poland Talks to Resume

Rome (RNS) — The third round of high-level talks between Vatican and Polish government officials is expected to take place here in January.

As in the two previous meetings, Vatican sources said, the Polish mission will be headed by Undersecretary of State Alexander Skarszynski, head of the Office for Religious Affairs. The Vatican Delegation, as before, will be headed by Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, secretary of the Council for Public Affairs of the Church.

On his return from recent talks in Warsaw, Archbishop Casaroli told newsmen he was optimistic about the possibility of "normalizing Vatican-Polish relations." He added that both sides had shown interest in the "speediest and most comprehensive solution possible," and that the Warsaw talks "had brought positions closer on some fundamental points."

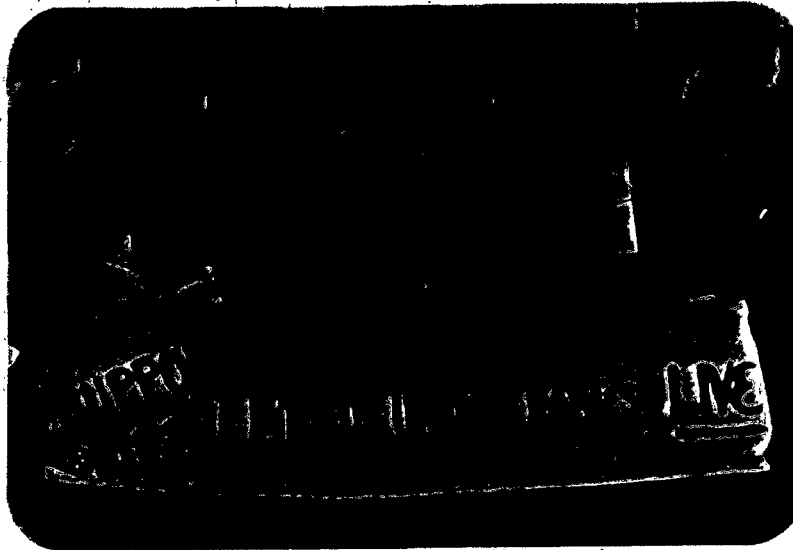
The first series of talks was held in Rome, last April.

### Got Some News?

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### BISHOP WALSH HONORED

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Bishop James E. Walsh, the Maryknoll missionary released from prison in Red China last year after being confined there for 10 years, has received the 1971 Cardinal Gibbons medal from Catholic University. . . .



A delegation from Notre Dame College in Baltimore holds a banner on the Capital steps in Washington, D.C. The demonstration, sponsored by Washington area Right of Life

groups, was organized to counter pro-abortion rally being held on the Capitol's other side at the same time. Several hundred attended the anti-abortion rally. (RNS)

## 'Goodness Not Weakness'

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, affirming his conviction of the ultimate triumph of good in the world, called on believers to see in the practice of goodness "not weakness" but "the imitating of Jesus Christ."

Directing his remarks to a group of Italian youngsters who had won prizes in a national composition for "being good at school," the Pope denied claims that goodness is "an old-fashioned thing that belongs to former times," or that it is "something done by sheep-like people" or "by the weak, the timid, and the stupid."

"Goodness is not weakness," he emphasized. "It is not something that stems from a fear of punishment or from a fear of

the disapproval of others. It is not inertia. . . . It is not hypocrisy. It does not mean being quiet and not troubling anybody."

"Rather," he went on, "goodness is doing good, wishing to do good, carrying out good actions willingly and quickly, obeying with energy, with self-discipline and out of a sense of duty."

"It is fulfilling some act which costs sacrifice for the good of someone else who is in need of help or who needs to be wanted. It is being good for the good of others without expecting praise or reward."

"It is imitating Jesus Christ, the supreme example of the greatest goodness."

# CATECHETICS: A PROCESS

By FATHER ALBERT J. SHAMON  
Diocesan Vicar for Education

In the Old Testament the Exodus was to the People of God what the Incarnation is to Christianity. Some people have always viewed this event as though it were a spectacular extravaganza — a Cecil B. DeMille production. They assume that the Hebrews saw all along that God was intervening in their escape from slavery, that the event was obviously miraculous to them. The reality was not at all like that.

At the time of the Exodus, something unusual did happen. The people had been slaves. A clever leader, Moses, comes to their rescue. With him they gain their freedom, and they escape into the desert. The Hebrews were happy just to get free. For them, the event was hardly a religious one at all. God had spoken only to Moses. Naturally, Moses confided in his own flesh and blood, his brother and sister — Aaron, and Miriam.

Thus when the Hebrews had escaped through the Sea of Reeds, it was Miriam who put two and two together and discovered the hand of God behind the event. She began singing, "God has freed us . . ." But the people had to be taught by God at Mount Sinai the significance of this event — that He was behind it. That was why He repeated so often, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. . . ."

In this event we see the catechetical process. The "new" catechetics begins with a life experience. In this particular instance, it was degrading slavery and the escape from it. The message was the revelation through Moses to the Hebrews that this was the work of God. In learning that the Exodus was the work of God, the Hebrews began to discover who God is. They saw that God is involved in life — in their lives in particular. They learned that God wanted them to be free. That God is a God of love, One who cares. They learned this from experience, from something that happened to them. Their response was to accept the pact that God wished to make with them — to become His people. To reinforce this commitment, they talked about what God had done in the Exodus, sang about it, celebrated it, until gradually their lives were changed. This is the basic process of religious education.

Too often we box ourselves in by situating all scriptural events in the frame of reference of the miraculous. We do not live in the miraculous; hence, if we over emphasize the miraculous in salvation history, we automatically exclude ourselves. That is why God never worked a miracle so obviously miraculous that it left no room for faith. Christ was a sign of contradiction, for many of His deeds could be challenged. In our times, Schweitzer claimed to have proved that none of Christ's miracles were miraculous. The real miracle is that God is involved in the ordinary experience of every day living.

So the catechetical process for the Chosen People

began with a human experience: slavery and liberation from it. Next, Moses proclaimed the message revealed to him that God was the one who had freed them: "I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt."

All catechesis nowadays employs these four steps: human experience, revealed message, discovery, response. That is why the new catechetics is called a process. It is more than giving the revealed message as in the old catechisms. It is more complex.

A human experience is generally used to launch a lesson in the new catechetics. God takes us as we are. So does new catechetics. In the fourth grade "Come to the Father," for instance, the subject is the life of Christ. Because children tend to imitate their elders at this level, Christ's life is presented through the eyes of ten adult witnesses. One of these who saw Christ was Matthew.

This lesson on the witness of Matthew begins with an exploration of the human experience of being welcomed and not being welcomed. A teacher may ask questions like this. "When kids were choosing sides for a game, were you ever left out?" "How did you feel?" "Were you ever punished by being sent to bed?" "Do you know of some people who have never been welcomed?" "What makes a person feel welcome?" "What makes him feel unwelcome?"

This is what is meant by saying the new catechetics is experiential: it takes a human experience and probes it. It is precisely in this area of the process that there is room for discussion, analysis, stimulation, listening, interaction, learner involvement. It is especially here that teaching is dialectic, inductive, inquisitive. "Teaching is a sharing process . . . It is intercommunication. It includes the collision, the creative interaction of minds."

I think confusion arises about the new catechetical method when people conclude that probing a human experience is the entire teaching process. They must realize that this is only the first step. Students want teachers who will make them think. Step one of the process does just that.

The second step is the message. The Christian message is first of all brief. To Moses it was, "I am the Lord, your God, who led you out of the land of Egypt." For the Christian it can be summarized in the two commandments: the love of God and the love of neighbor. Even when this Christian message is elaborated, it can be capsuled in a catechism. The entire Christian faith need not be packed into a child's head before the eighth grade.

In this phase teaching can be didactic and deductive. But here again, the proclamation of the good news must not be nagged into the child.

Ram it in, jam it in;  
Students' heads are hollow.  
Ram it in, jam it in;  
There's plenty more to follow.

Rather the message should be suggested gently,

quietly. All the teacher is doing is setting the stage for the Holy Spirit to go to work.

The third step is the discovery. Israel spent her whole history discovering who her redeeming God really and truly was. Each generation discovered a bit more about Him. To Abraham, God was an all powerful Being. To Moses, He was a Person with a name. Then each of the prophets unfolded one aspect of His personality: His holiness, His love, His mercy, His justice, His forgiveness etc. In our fourth grade lesson, the Holy Spirit will help the child discover a bit more about Jesus. Nobody welcomed Levi, but Jesus did! Discovering this will implant in the child's heart trust in Jesus. A truth about Jesus will become a value — something very personal and subjective to the discoverer.

This phase of the catechetical process demands that teachers be men and women of faith, that the community be one of faith, that the Eucharist be frequently celebrated, that prayers be prayed. Commenting on the words of Samuel — "Speak, Lord, your servant hears," Thomas a Kempis remarked:

"Let not Moses nor any of the prophets speak to me, but speak Thou rather, O Lord, God. . . . for Thou alone can perfectly instruct men, but they without Thee avail me nothing.

"They may indeed sound fourth words but they give not the spirit. They speak well, but if Thou be silent they do not set the heart on fire.

"They deliver the letter, but Thou discloseth the sense, They publish mysteries, but Thou explainest the meaning of the thing signified.

"They declare the commandments, but Thou enablest us to keep them. They show the way, but Thou givest strength to walk in it. They cry out with words, but Thou givest understanding to hearing.

"Let not then, Moses speak to me, but Thou . . ." (Imit 3:2)

The final phase of the catechetical process is the response. For Israel it was accepting a covenant with God. For the fourth grade class it could be a party, like Levi's to celebrate his call. To this class party everyone would be welcomed — no one unwelcomed.

The response is generally a community exteriorization of the interior discovery — a "liturgy." The response can be a song, a silent prayer, a celebration, an activity. When done in community, these responses have even greater force.

The new catechetical process, therefore, situates religious education where it belongs — in the present! So often we tend to relegate God and His will to the past or to the future. If to the past He becomes irrelevant. If to the future, we become apathetic. The new catechetics probes an every day experience to produce a now response.