

Pastoral Council—My Fondest Hope

This begins a series of articles on the **Theological Rationale for a Diocesan Pastoral Council**, a new form of ecclesiastical organization strongly recommended by Vatican II and Pope Paul VI. The establishment of such a Council for the Diocese of Rochester is my fondest hope and expectation. I shall be restless until its structure becomes a living and effective reality — truly representative of the people of the diocese working together to make the Gospel message lived to the fullness of its challenges.



PART I

Vatican II recommends pastoral councils in two texts: the Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office in the Church, no. 27, and the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, no. 30. Paul VI follows up both these recommendations in his *motu proprio* of 1966, *Ecclesiae Sanctae*. In this document the Pope clarifies the goals of a pastoral council, "to investigate everything pertaining to pastoral activities, to weigh them carefully, and to set forth practical conclusions concerning them so as to en-

courage conformity of the life and actions of the People of God with the Gospel" (no. 16). Further, Paul VI specifies that the pastoral council has a merely consultative (as opposed to deliberative) vote; that it is to be convoked by the bishop whenever it seems opportune; and that the members are to be clergy, religious, and laity especially chosen by the bishop. The mode of choice (whether election or appointment or some other procedure) is not specified. There are three theological principles which, in my opinion, underlie the new movement toward pastoral councils: namely, shared responsibility, regional pluralism, and secular involvement. To those who understand and accept these principles, institutions such as pastoral councils seem eminently desirable. To those who do not understand or accept these principles, pastoral councils often seem unnecessary or undesirable.

The three principles I have mentioned are by no means obvious to all Catholics. In the ecclesiology current before Vatican II one finds an overemphasis on the Church's hierarchical structure, on its worldwide unity, and on the exclusively spiritual nature of its mission. Depicting the Church as a hierarchical society, some authors gave the impression that the laity had no function except, as the phrase has it, "to pray, pay, and obey." Secondly, in

the theology of this period, the importance of the local church was generally overlooked. The local church was pictured as simply a place where the general directives from Rome were implemented on the local scene. Thirdly, the Church, according to this preconiliar vision, had no proper mission in the temporal order. Its function, as generally understood, was not to help men to achieve peace and justice upon earth. That role was assigned to the secular state. The Church's role was to help men save their souls and get to heaven.

Since Vatican II there has been a major shift in Catholic ecclesiology. The Church is seen as being, in the first place, a society in which all the members have active responsibilities to help one another. Secondly, it is viewed as a communion of local and regional churches, each with its own unique characteristics and calling. Thirdly, it is a people essentially involved in the pursuit of human brotherhood and justice or, more generally, in the promotion of God's Kingdom in the world. This new vision of the Church has not yet been fully accepted by the Catholic clergy and laity. Nevertheless, it holds the key to the future, for no other vision does justice to the demands of the gospel in our time or to the legitimate expectations of contemporary man.

(to be continued)

The Slot Man

By Carmen Viglucci

Why the Bombing Was Necessary

Pacifists naturally were angrily upset when President Nixon ordered the recent bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong.



That was predictable so the administration had an ace up its sleeve just in case the uproar reached revolutionary fervor.

President Nixon made arrangements with the government of North Vietnam to have Henry Kissinger in Hanoi during the time of the bombing.

What was in it for Hanoi besides the bombs? Well, the leadership felt that it had been quite a while since the U.S. had done anything in the war to

stir up the peace activists at home. So, reasoned the Hanoi bosses, it was worth it all to ensure political upheaval in the States.

Contrary to what you read in the newspapers and see on TV, crewmen in B52s really can see the ground. Kissinger was going to stand atop the tallest building in Hanoi and use a flag to direct the bombers to military targets.

A slight hitch developed over what color the flag should be. Kissinger had promised Jill St. John it would be her favorite color, red. But a very high administration official blew his stack.

"There will be nothing red about this administration, Henry," was this official's remark, according to a Pentagon report leaked to the Village Voice.

Dismay showed on Kissinger's face.

Another voice offered, "How about Old Glory?"

"Who's she?" asked Kissinger.

Eventually green was decided upon and all seemed to be planned perfectly. But one thing went wrong: Kissinger never showed up in Hanoi.

There was too much at stake for both sides for the administration to call back the bombers but a frantic search couldn't turn up Kissinger. For a while it was thought that the Berrigans got him after all. Then it was realized he just was in a snit over the color of the flag.

In the meantime a plausible excuse had to be made to Hanoi.

"I got it," someone in the Pentagon came up with the answer. "Let's tell them he was in Moscow."

Editorial

Happiness Is . . . Being Religious

How about that? A connection between religiosity and personal happiness has been found in a recent survey.

And the survey was not sponsored by some Catholic or other sectarian organization seeking to prove a point. On the contrary it is the work of the public relations firm of Battan, Barton, Durstine & Osborn (BBDO), renowned in its field.

Further, it was conducted for the cold-blooded purpose of determining consumer attitudes toward personal happiness.

Conducted by telephone, the sample, BBDO says, is "projectable to the male/female heads of telephone-listed households in the New England and Middle Atlantic states."

Studying eight different elements connected with happiness, surveyors found religion was the one that correlated most highly. People who claimed

to be "very religious" were 13 times more likely to be "very happy" than "unhappy."

Sure, says the skeptic, any bloke can say he is religious or even claim to be happy. But Madison Avenue is not naive. Techniques were built into the survey to weed out "yeasayers" and "naysayers." Also previous studies support the belief that the best way to check personal happiness is to bluntly ask people are they happy. It has been found, according to BBDO, that responses to this question correlate with much more complex approaches to measuring happiness.

So if you will grant the validity of the survey you may be surprised at some of the results; such as that women are happier than men (36.4 per cent of the women claimed to be "very happy" as against 28.1 per cent of the men). Women libbers may counter that such women

are not really happy, they only think so. But what a pleasant thought!

And how about this — single people are less happy than married people.

Some other popular notions were threatened by the findings. Far from being classified as alienated or rebellious, young adults were found to be the happiest of the age groups — more than 40 per cent being "very happy."

Now comes a conclusion that seems straight out of your Sunday bulletin.

"Now unless Americans find alternative ways to achieve happiness or give up the goal altogether, an unlikely possibility, we might expect to see a reversal of the trend away from religion. For it appears that religion does have a very practical function."

Amen. And smile.