

English Have a 'Bourgeois Church'

By BARBARA MOYNEHAN

After spending a month in a London, England, parish similar to his own, Monsignor George Cocuzzi, pastor of Holy Family Church, described the English Catholic Church as a "very bourgeois Church," and said the English clergy describe the American Church as "daring and innovative."

From June 31 to Aug. 1, Msgr. Cocuzzi lived at St. Peter and Paul's Parish in Ealing, a district of greater London. He described it as a middle class parish, with a majority of the parishioners working people, some professionals, and East Indians and Pakistanis.

Over coffee recently Msgr. Cocuzzi shared some of his impressions of the Roman Catholic Church in England.

"My overall impression is that the English Church is at the same place the American Church is right now, but the bourgeois nature of the Church is stronger there," he said.

There are no Berrigan brothers there, or Commonweal. The big London Catholic magazine, London Tablet, is very middle-of-the-road. Latin Masses are said daily at Westminster Cathedral and nuns still wear traditional habits.

"The Church is more stodgy there," Msgr. Cocuzzi said. Father Charles Lowe, pastor of St.



MSGR. COCUZZI

Peter and Paul's, told him the English feel the American Church is daring and tries things and that the English imitate the American Church.

Church attendance has fallen off there as it has here.

Father Lowe gave two reasons for this.

First, many of the English were originally Irish or Polish, of traditionally very strong Catholic background, and now, two or

three generations later, the people are away from the social pressure of the cultural Catholicism their ancestors came from. And second, the people lead very difficult, hard-working lives, so many of the Church's activities have no meaning for them.

"The end result being, the English society is generally apathetic to the Church," Father Cocuzzi said.

Lay participation in the Church's activities in England is spotty, he continued. The Archdiocese of Westminster is pushing parish councils, but it is going very slowly.

One parish, St. Margaret's in Twickenham-on-Thames, has a new multi-purpose church building (similar to St. Christopher's in North Chili) and the parishioners participated in every step of the planning for the new building.

St. Margaret is also involved in ecumenical work. It joined with the other churches in Twickenham to bring children out of Northern Ireland and into English homes, Catholic and Protestant indiscriminately.

Catholic schools are in a much better situation there than here, explained Msgr. Cocuzzi. The government helps with teachers' salaries and pays for all instruc-

tional materials, and the schools are not parish schools but community schools, which decentralizes the financial burden.

After all the similarities and differences were discussed, we asked Msgr. Cocuzzi if it didn't seem that "universality" had

gone out of Catholicism and he replied, "No."

"The differences are superficial," he said, "differences being the speed with which changes are being made and the enthusiasm with which possible changes are being pursued."

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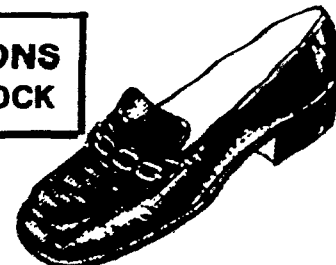
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Director of Suburban Action Institute in White Plains, Paul Davidoff, will give the keynote address preceding talks by Rochester's Urban Development Corporation director, Richard Pine; Councilman Christopher Lindley, former city codes enforcer James Porcari and former Housing Council chairman, John Stainton.

Sessions will be held every Tuesday night for the following eight months at the Central Presbyterian Church for discussion of Rochester's housing crisis and study of skills in social and political analysis.

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