

# The Time of Renewal.

## Part IX: Three Catholic Profiles

### Survey Report

For the past eight weeks, the Time of Renewal newspaper series has explored what Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester are thinking and feeling about their faith.

Using the results of an independent Diocesan survey, the Time of Renewal series has described Catholic attitudes toward religious observances, such as Mass and Confession, and toward some of today's moral and social concerns, such as war, abortion, racism and divorce.

The newspaper articles have also reported on Catholic responses to new developments in the Church, such as increased lay involvement in the parish structure and reduced emphases on the details of religious observances.

The picture that has emerged from this unique analysis is one of great diversity in opinions, attitudes and beliefs among Catholics. The Time of Renewal survey shows that there is no one "typical Catholic" in the Diocese of Rochester. Instead, there are multiple images of Catholics at many stages of awareness, with many differing points of view.

From among these multiple images, however, three general groups have been established. Each group contains people who responded with similar answers to many of the questions in the survey. A descriptive profile can be drawn that presents the major responses shared by Catholics in each

These three groups have been named the Nostalgic Catholic, the Belonging Catholic and the Searching Catholic.



Faith—bond of unity for all Catholics

### The Nostalgic Catholic

Comprising 15-20% of the Catholic population, the nostalgic Catholic is often older in age and is highly conscious of his Catholic identity. He frequently attends Mass and Confession more often than other Catholics and speaks out more often against changes. While some changes in services are seen as acceptable, on the whole, the nostalgic Catholic feels that the role of the parish should not change.

The nostalgic Catholic is confident that he can almost always apply the principles of Catholic faith in his daily life. He seeks direct guidelines from the church but not in reference to moral and social concerns. And, he shows no greater tendency to act in accordance with Church directives on

### The Belonging Catholic

A strong majority (60-70%) of Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester come under this heading. Representing a wide range of age and educational levels, the belonging Catholic has perceived and, in general, favors the changes which have taken place in his Church.

The belonging Catholic tends to view his faith as one way of being a Christian, but not necessarily the only way. He is tolerant of many moral and social attitudes that the Church has traditionally opposed. And, tolerant too of church leaders, even when he feels their guidance is irrelevant to the times or to his own ideas about religion.

At the same time, however, the belonging Catholic is aware that the process of renewal is far from complete. He seeks guidance and leadership that can be related to his daily life. He desires more responsibility for the layman and wants his parish involved in the community.



Changing role for the layman

### The Searching Catholic

Representing another 15-20% of the Catholic population, the searching Catholic represents a wide range of ages and other characteristics, although he tends to have a slightly higher level of education than other Catholics.

The searching Catholic desires variety in worship services, is somewhat less inclined to participate in formal Church observances and is definitely going less to Confession.



Pope Paul VI

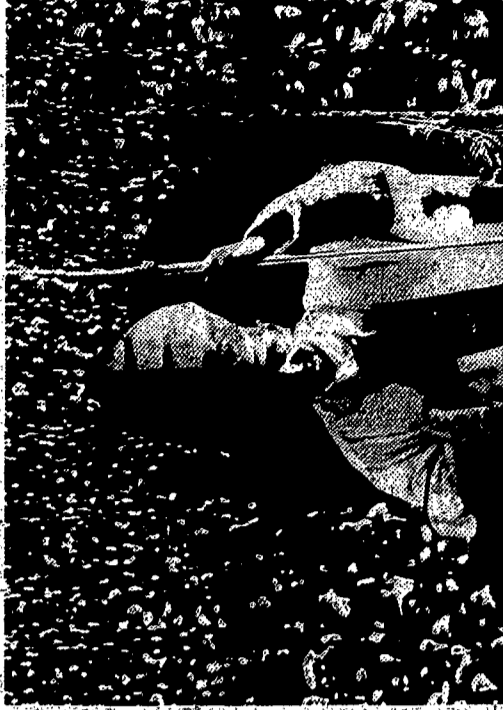
This Catholic is less certain than others that his faith is generally applicable in daily life. He is more liberal than tolerant in regard to moral and social issues and relies upon his own conscience and interpretation when faced with moral issues.

The searching Catholic is least likely to feel that the parish is adequately meeting his needs. He seeks a parish commitment to the community and social issues of broad concern and feels that Church leaders should play an activist role in these areas.

### Church Commentary

None of these profiles is exclusive. There is a little "nostalgic", a little "searching", and more than a little "belonging" in most Catholic people in the Diocese. No profile is the ideal profile. The diversity is enriching for the whole Church.

All of the Catholics pictured here, whatever their differences, share a common faith, hope and love. This mysterious, intangible bond will continue to be the source of unity for



Catholic people. Under the visible leadership of the Pope, it is a unity which encourages the diversity in style and program which are clearly wanted and needed in the Rochester Diocese.

This survey and newspaper series mark the beginning, not the end, of open conversation between leaders and laity. In the coming months, discussions will continue and laymen and women will be invited to increase their participation in parish and diocesan projects. The true significance of renewal will be better understood by all.

In addition, the complete survey, answers, and findings will be published in a booklet, "Dialogue for Renewal", available to the public this Fall.