

47 P.C. of State Legislature Is Catholic

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Roman Catholics will enjoy a disproportionate representation in the State Legislature when it convenes today (Wednesday).

Forty-seven per cent of the legislators will be Catholic: 25 in the Senate and 74 in the Assembly. In the state as a whole about 35 per cent of the population is Catholic.

Among the Catholic legislators, 43 are Republicans and 37 are Democrats. The largest number (43) were elected with Republican-Conservative support. The next largest number (25) had Democratic support. Fifteen Catholic winners ran on Democrat-Liberal tickets; 12 ran on Republican tickets; and five ran on Democrat-Conservative

tickets. One Catholic legislator won as a Democrat-Republican and another as a Democrat-Republican-Conservative.

In the Assembly most Catholics are Democrats while in the Senate most are Republicans.

In past years, most support for "Catholic" issues has come from Republican members. Republicans lost 19 seats in the Assembly and three in the Senate in the November election, losses that may hurt the chances of legislation supported by New York's Catholic bishops. However the number of Catholics serving in the legislature is up from past sessions, and this increase may offset the loss of traditional supporters.

Several Catholics will be in key

leadership roles: in the Senate, the deputy majority leader, the finance chairman, the transportation chairman, the elections chairman, the mental hygiene and addiction control chairman, the insurance chairman, the cities chairman, the education chairman, the health chairman, the crime and corrections chairman, the banks chairman and the local governments chairman. With the shift of power from Republicans to Democrats in the Assembly, most leadership positions there are still undecided, but among the names suggested for various positions are those of Catholics.

More than half of all the Catholics in the legislature will be from the New York City-Long Island area. Among upstaters, many Catholics come from Erie

and Monroe counties and from the Eastern Mohawk Valley region.

The Jewish population also is overrepresented, accounting for 24 per cent of the legislators, compared to 13 per cent of the state's population. With few exceptions the Jewish representatives are Democrats or Democrat-Liberals.

Thirteen blacks were elected to the legislature for 1975-76. Nine are in the Assembly and four in the Senate. Legislators of Puerto Rican or Spanish descent account for four assemblymen and two senators. The number of blacks and Puerto Ricans are up from last year, but are still not proportionate to their numbers in the state.

Also underrepresented are

women who account for nine members, six in the Assembly and three in the Senate. Of the nine, four are Catholics, two Jews and two Episcopalians.

Other statistics: Attorneys account for the largest occupational group with 36 per cent of the membership. Many legislators' sole occupation is their state elective office. Some are also businessmen, social workers, educators, insurance brokers, engineers, journalists, farmers, advertising managers and real estate brokers. A librarian, nurse, stock broker, funeral director, dentist, jeweler, administrator and clergyman also are members.

Most members are married, most have two or more children. The average age is the mid-forties.

Vatican Document

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must strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism and learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience.

"To tell the truth," the document asserts, "such relations as there have been between Jew and Christian have scarcely ever risen above the level of monologue. From now on real dialogue must be established."

The document says that the Church "must preach Jesus Christ to the world," if it is to be true to her divine mission and her very nature, but it observes that "lest the witness of Catholics to Jesus Christ should give offense to

Jews, they (Catholics) must take care to live and spread their Christian faith while maintaining the strictest respect for religious freedom ..."

Acknowledging that a "widespread air of suspicion, inspired by an unfortunate past, is still dominant" in the area of religious freedom, the document urges Christians to meet and study with Jews "the many problems deriving from the fundamental convictions of Judaism and Christianity."

It calls for "tact, great openness of spirit and diffidence with respect to one's own prejudice." It also encourages "common meeting in the presence of God, in prayer and silent meditation" to discover the

humility and openness necessary for knowledge of self and others.

In particular, the document suggests, common prayer should be undertaken "in connection with great causes such as the struggle for peace and justice."

With regard to liturgy, the document calls for recognition of the "common elements" of the liturgical life in which the Bible has an essential role. It urges greater efforts toward the understanding that the Old Testament "retains its own perpetual value" and has not been "canceled out" by the New Testament. "Rather, the New Testament brings out the full meaning of the Old, while both Old and New illumine and explain each other."

"This is all the more important since (Catholic) liturgical reform is now bringing the text of the Old Testament even more frequently to the attention of Christians," the document adds.

It goes on to call for an emphasis on "continuity of our faith with that of the earlier Covenant." While expressing belief that the promises of the Old Testament were fulfilled with the first coming of Christ, the document says "it is nonetheless true that we still await their perfect fulfillment in His glorious return at the end of time."

The document asks that care be taken to make sure that liturgical readings and homilies based on them do not distort meanings, particularly when passages seem to show the Jewish people "in an unfavorable light." It urges efforts to instruct Catholics on the true interpretation of all texts and their meaning for today.

As an example, the document cites the use of the term "the Jews" in St. John's Gospel, and says it should be explained that the term means "the leaders of the Jews" or "the adversaries of Jesus" and not the Jewish people.

The document, in a section on teaching and education, says much work is still to be done by Catholics in achieving a "better understanding" of Judaism and its relationship to Christianity. It asserts, however, that because of Church teaching, the study and research by scholars and the beginnings of dialogue, progress has been made.

It went on to outline several "facts" which deserve emphasis. These include facts that the "same God" speaks in both the old and new Covenants; that the Old and New Testaments must not be "set against" each other; that Jesus was a Jew and his teaching was grounded in the Old Testament; and that Jewish history did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem "but rather went on to develop a religious tradition rich in religious values."

Also included in this section was a reaffirmation of the

Vatican II declaration's teaching regarding the trial and death of Jesus. It said that the "Council recalled that what happened in His passion cannot be blamed on all the Jews then living, without distinction, or upon the Jews of today."

The document said, information concerning these questions should be disseminated at all levels of Christian instruction and education.

"Research into the problems bearing on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations will be encouraged among specialists, particularly in the fields of exegesis, theology, history, and sociology," the document states. Calling for institutions of learning and research to contribute to the solutions of such problems, the document adds:

"Wherever possible, chairs of Jewish studies will be created and collaborations with Jewish scholars encouraged."

In the area of joint social action, the document declares that "Jewish and Christian tradition, formed on the Word of God, is aware of the value of the human person, the image of God. Love of the same God must show itself in effective action for the good of mankind."

"In the spirit of the prophets, Jews and Christians will work willingly together, seeking social justice and peace at each and every level — local, national and international. At the same time, such collaboration can do much to foster mutual understanding and esteem."

The document, in its final section, says Vatican II pointed out the path to follow "in promoting deep fellowship" among Christians and Jews, but admits "there is still a long road ahead."

"The problem of Jewish-Christian relations concerns the Church as such, since it is when, 'pondering her own mystery,' that she encounters the mystery of Israel. Therefore, even in areas where no Jewish communities exist, this remains an important problem."

Constructive

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these formulations imply a religious 'second class' status in the family of faith communities."

Among these negative features are what he called a "conversionary approach to the Jewish people," and the underlying assumptions that Judaism is not an adequate source of truth and value to the Jewish people and that the covenant of Israel is ended.

The "positive" features he noted included the "reiteration of the explicit condemnation" by the Catholic Church of anti-Semitism "which assumes heightened importance today in light of current international

conditions in which this ancient hatred is being exploited systematically by the enemies of the Jewish people."

He also noted that "any definition of contemporary Jewish religious experience which does not provide for due comprehension and acceptance of the inextricable bonds of God, People, Torah, and Promised Land risks distortion of the essential nature of Judaism and the Jewish people, and would constitute a regression in Jewish-Christian understanding."

He called the Vatican guidelines' intention to implement new understandings in scholarship through teaching and

education "a valuable and needed reinforcement" in these areas. "The systematic incorporation of these new insights of contemporary scholarship which have come to fresh discovery of Judaism as a living reality into all areas of Catholic education, liturgy and mass media would constitute nothing less than a revolution in esteem between Catholics and Jews everywhere," he said.

Rabbi Tanenbaum also welcomed a call to "joint social action" at a time when "such pressing national and international problems involving so much human suffering require maximum cooperation."

Father Ritz Dies at 75

A pontifical Mass of Christian Burial for Father Earl C. Ritz was celebrated by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan Dec. 31, 1974, in Our Lady of Mercy Church. Father Charles Latus, co-pastor of the parish and grandnephew of Father Ritz, gave the homily.

Father Ritz died Dec. 29 after a long illness. He was 75 years old and had been retired since 1940.

He was born May 4, 1899, the son of George and Mary Meng Ritz. He attended St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries and was ordained June 12, 1926. For the next 13 years he served successively as assistant pastor of St. Patrick's, Corning; St. Mary's, Canandaigua; St. Aloysius, Auburn; St. John's, Elmira; St. Margaret-Mary and Sacred Heart, Rochester. In 1939, he became chaplain at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse.

Surviving are two sisters, Elsie J. Isaac of Rochester and Edna M. Fouquet of Syracuse; a brother-in-law, Edward Lockner of Pennsylvania; and several nieces and nephews.

Mafia

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and egoism. Love is the art of peace. Love overcomes dissensions, jealousies, dislikes, age-old oppositions, and those newly emerging."

"But," asked the Pope, "does this peace exist? There arises a question, a doubt tinged with skepticism, an accusation that our enthusiasm for peace is nothing but Utopianism, an illusion of fantasy."

"Is not the barometer of peace today pointing to bad weather?" he went on. "Is not the world returning to its pre-war position of dialectics and polemics that is a challenge of principle against the method and the reign of peace?"

Pope Paul then spoke of "a danger that makes everyone tremble," a threat to "our civilized way of life." "We refer," he said, "to a fearful increase of organized crime threatening innocent lives," especially in

Italy, where more than 40 kidnappings were reported in 1974, with ransoms totalling at least \$20 million.

"Will love succeed in purifying certain ingrained collective attitudes, certain underworlds where the Mafia and other secret organizations living off crime have their secret and pitiless laws?"

"Will love be able to overturn certain systems of vendetta, whether personal or commercial, clan rivalry, and obsessive false duties which breed their own irresistible obligations?"

"Will it succeed in placating certain feelings of nationalism or racial pride which are transmitted inexorably from one generation to the next?"

The pontiff said that most of the world's troubles could be "eased" through "reconciliation," which, he pointed out, was a key theme of the 1975 Holy Year, which began on Christmas Eve.

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