



A SURVEY

The Church Since Vatican II



Chicago [RNS] — A comprehensive study of the effect of Vatican II changes on the U.S. Catholic Church and Catholic education has concluded that "fundamental loyalty to the Church continues, parochial schools are vigorously endorsed and there are no signs of vigorous antipathy to Church leadership or of anti-clericalism."

On the other hand, the study showed a "substantial decline" in the acceptance of the legitimacy of Church authority and the infallibility of the Pope on matters of faith and morals. It also pointed to a continuing decrease in Church Sunday Mass attendance.

Noting that "changes in the Church (since Vatican II) have proved popular," a study completed by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) and described in a report appearing in the January-February issue of *The Critic*, published here, observed that "the notion that the new liturgy has driven people away can safely be described as complete fiction."

In *The Critic's* report of the study, described by its four authors as a "replication" of a survey done 10 years ago (*The Education of American Catholics*), it was noted that "the picture is a mixed one. While there is not yet reason to despair over the future of Catholicism in the U.S., neither is there reason for easy optimism."

The new study, "American Catholics — Ten Years Later," was completed by Father Andrew Greeley, NORC director and principal investigator; Shirley Saldanha, William McCready and Kathleen McCourt. Carried out under a grant from the National Institutes of Education, the study focused on the relationship between Catholic education and the changes which occurred in

the U.S. Catholic Church since Vatican II.

In *The Critic's* report, the study was termed a "natural experiment" that will take many years to analyze fully. The report added that the study indicated "no single descriptive conclusion of the present state of American Catholicism is possible." Yet, the authors said they would "propose to present some descriptive findings of the current conditions of American Catholicism."

In a brief overview, they said more than four fifths of the U.S. Catholics approve the English liturgy; approximately two thirds approve the guitar Mass, lay attire for nuns, progressive religious education, and sex education in the Catholic schools. They added while less than a third would support ordination of women as priests, more than four fifths would vote for a woman as president of the U.S.

The authors also said the study (taken in the Spring of 1974 on a national representative sample of just over 1,000) showed that Catholics today are "still somewhat sympathetic to the priesthood, are much less inclined to accept traditional teachings on sexuality and authority," but are still "strongly loyal to the Church."

With regard to the "new Church," the study found that 67 per cent approve changes after Vatican II, while 19 per cent believe them detrimental. Yet, 54 per cent believe there have been "enough changes" in the Church.

There has been a "steep" decline in most religious devotions, particularly weekly Mass attendance, dropping from 71 per cent ten years ago to 50 per cent currently. Monthly confession declined from 38 per cent to 17 per cent of Catholics in ten years. Weekly visits to church

to pray declined, as did daily private prayer.

While traditional forms of religious activity such as retreats, days of recollection, spiritual reading, missions, and reading Catholic publications have declined, the study showed that "newer forms of religious life... have now attained a surprising popularity." These include the charismatic prayer meeting, informal liturgy at home, marriage encounter and religious discussion groups.

"The most notable positive change is an increase in the proportion (of Catholics) receiving weekly Communion — from 13 to 26 per cent," with the authors noting that proportion of churchgoers receiving the Eucharist has gone from 20 per cent 10 years ago to over 50 per cent currently.

According to the study, the new liturgy has "little bearing" on the decline in Mass attendance and the same reasons given 10 years ago for not attending Mass still hold. They are: old age, illness, lack of energy, working on Sundays and lack of interest.

Concerning Church authority and leadership, the study observed that there has been a "substantial decline" in Catholics accepting the legitimacy of ecclesiastical authority. In 10 years, that acceptance dropped from 70 per cent of Catholics to 42 per cent, and today only 32 per cent of Catholics completely accept papal infallibility.

While 86 per cent of Catholics never think of leaving the Church and 83 per cent have married other Catholics, the proportion of those who believe it important to marry someone within their own religion has dropped 56 per cent, to 27 per cent, in 10 years.

In terms of popularity, the local clergy rates higher than the Pope,

Presidents Kennedy, Roosevelt and Eisenhower, and the Catholic bishops. Yet, the public image of the priesthood, has "slipped badly" with regard to sermons, dealing with people and professional competence. In 1963, 66 per cent of respondents to the survey said they would be pleased to have a son in the priesthood; 10 years later that figure is 50 per cent.

"The religious sisterhoods have suffered a comparable loss of public image," the study said. Support for religious vocations of nuns dropped in 10 years from 60 per cent to 50 per cent.

The study reported a lessening of antagonism toward those who left the ministry and convent, and noted that despite statements by bishops to the contrary 79 per cent of respondents said they favor optional celibacy for priests.

"It seems to us," the authors of the study said, "there is no way to escape the conclusion that the image of the priesthood has slipped dramatically in the last 10 years. Catholics still like their priests, but they don't seem to respect them nearly so much as they did."

On sexuality, the study indicated that artificial contraception is approved by 83 per cent of Catholics and remarriage after divorce is approved by 73 per cent. Pre-marital relations between engaged couples is approved by 43 per cent (as compared to 12 per cent 10 years ago), and only 18 per cent agree that a family should have as many children as "God will provide."

Concerning legal abortions, the study showed that while 70 per cent of the women respondents said it should be possible for a woman to obtain an abortion, 73 per cent said they definitely would not have one. Only 8 per

cent of the women and 6 per cent of the men said they definitely favored abortion to limit the size of the family.

The report said that "one thing that seems unchanged (in the last 10 years) is the support for parochial schools."

It pointed out that 34 per cent of Catholic parents have children in parochial schools — a 4 per cent decline in the last 10 years attributed mainly to non-availability of schools and high costs. "But the idea of parochial schools is overwhelming. Eighty-nine per cent reject the idea that the Catholic school system is no longer needed in modern-day life."

The study said 76 per cent support public aid for parochial schools and 66 per cent reject the idea that lay teachers are not as competent as nuns and priests, and 82 per cent said they are willing to donate more funds to parishes in support of schools.

Citing the offer of increased contributions, the study's authors said "this suggests that there are literally hundreds of millions of dollars of untapped resources should the leadership choose to utilize them."

Turning to social and political attitudes, the report said 80 per cent of the U.S. Catholics would vote for a qualified Jew, qualified black or qualified woman for President. Catholic support of integrated schools diminishes with the number of black children in the school, from 94 per cent where there are a few black children to 49 per cent where more than half the children are black.

A supplemental study on apostasy drawn from the NORC's General Social Survey said that Catholics under 30 years of age were twice as likely to leave the Church as those over 50; and that those who attended college were even more apt to fall away.

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 3:13-17. (R1) Is. 42:1-4, 6-7. (R2) Acts 10:34-38.

By now you know, I am sure, that back in 1969 Pope Paul VI approved the revision of the Liturgical Year.

The Liturgical Year is simply the worship-life of the Church built on the mysteries of Christ's life. Christ is the sun, around whom the Church's worship-life revolves. Of the many changes initiated by the revision, major ones were made in Christmastide.

Christmastide begins December 25 and ends on the Sunday after the Feast of the Epiphany. Within this time-span falls a galaxy of feasts. The octave day of Christmas is the Feast of the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. (This used to be

the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord.)

The remaining feasts are easy to follow if we think only of Sundays. The Sunday after Christmas is the Feast of the Holy Family. The following Sunday is the Feast of Epiphany. (Epiphany used to be celebrated always on January 6. But to give it the solemnity it deserves, it has been shifted to a Sunday.) The Sunday after Epiphany is the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. This Sunday both ends the Christmas cycle and begins the Sundays of the Year.

The old nomenclature — "Sundays after Epiphany" and "Sundays after Pentecost" — has been abandoned, because it tied the Sundays in too closely with the Feasts of Epiphany and Pentecost. Each Sunday stands on its own, for the Sunday celebrates the resurrection of Our Lord, not His epiphany, nor the coming of the Spirit. So in the revision the designation "Sundays of the Year" has superseded the expressions "Sundays after Epiphany" and "Sundays after Pentecost."

As our Lord's public life began with His baptism, the Sunday of the Baptism of Our Lord is the First Sunday of the Year. The Sunday following (Jan. 19) will be the Second Sunday of the Year, and so on till Lent. After Pentecost the sequence, broken by Lent and Eastertide, will be

resumed as the Eleventh, Sunday of the Year. The last Sunday of the Liturgical Year is fittingly crowned with the Feast of Christ the King.

At the baptism of Jesus, John and Jesus met for the first and only time; the Voice and the Lord; the one who baptized with water for repentance and the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire.

In Chapters one and two, Matthew is comparing the life of Jesus with the life of Moses; and he is introducing the major theme of his Gospel, namely, that the Jews (represented by Herod and the citizens of Jerusalem) rejected the offer of salvation, but the Gentiles (represented by the wise men) have accepted it.

The Jews looked back to the Exodus from Egypt as the beginning of their history, and they looked forward to a new Exodus under a new Moses as the beginning of the end-time. Christians said that Jesus was that new Moses. Matthew set out to prove this in the Infancy Narratives. He continues the parallel with the baptism of Jesus. As all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:2), so Jesus is baptized in the Jordan. As after the Red Sea passage Israel was led into the desert and tempted, so Jesus was driven after His baptism by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted.

CARE Thanks Bishop For Special Gift

At Christmas time, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan customarily sends a card to each of his priests, Sisters and Brothers, thanking all for their help during the past year. The cost runs to \$200.

This season, instead, he published his greetings in the *Courier-Journal* (Dec. 18) and cast his bread upon the waters of CARE, where every dollar increases many times over in terms of food for the world's hungry.

A thank-you letter received this week from CARE assures the Bishop that the agency's programs are possible "because people like yourself care."

The tri-state regional director, Tyna Ellenbogen, wrote:

"I am certain that the Religious personnel of the Rochester Diocese will be gratified to learn of your concern as expressed by your donation and likewise will feel a part of the sharing and commitment."

CARE's current goal, the letter said, is to feed, every day, 22 million people, mostly children, in addition to supplying food to disaster victims.

The letter which Bishop Hogan sent with his check will be quoted, with his permission, in CARE advertising.

Fr. Kelly Named Citizen of Year

Father Leonard Kelly of the Church of the Assumption has been chosen "Citizen of the Year" by the Fairport-Perinton Chamber of Commerce. At a dinner Jan. 18 at Island Valley Country Club, he will be cited for the community service he has accomplished through his catechetical centers. The public is invited. Reservations must be made by Jan. 13, with Roger Cabic, 377-1170.

MAPLEWOOD PARTY

More than 70 people, including Santa Claus, attended a party given by the Northwest Area Youth Ministry Dec. 14 for residents of Maplewood Sanitarium. The Rochester Baptist Church Youth Group and Holy Rosary School pupils provided ornaments to decorate the Christmas tree. Miss Pat Carey from St. Thomas The Apostle Folk Group played guitar and led Christmas Carols.