

Cardinal Suenens Prays for 'Second Pentecost'

Collegeville, Minn. [RNS] — When someone suggested to Cardinal Leo Josef Suenens that world Christianity perhaps needed a Vatican Council III, he replied that he dreamed rather about a "Jerusalem II."

By that, the Roman Catholic primate of Belgium and a ranking leader in the charismatic renewal and ecumenical movements, explained, he is praying for "a second Pentecost."

The Christian church was born in Jerusalem around the Eucharist on the day of Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit present with Christ's disciples then can bring Christian renewal and unity today, the cardinal said.

Cardinal Suenens, speaking at St. John's University which honored him with its Pax Christi Award, said he believes there is a "Springtime of the spirit of God" which is moving across denominational lines.

"Renewal in the Spirit is giving us a new depth and love and charity," he declared.

As an example of this, he cited his presence along with that of two other Roman Catholic cardinals at the recent en-

thronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury in England.

Cardinal Suenens said that when he became a bishop in 1945 he found "tension" between the institutional and the charismatic sides of the Church, so he decided to dedicate himself to being a bridge between them.

He said the new openness to the Spirit in the Catholic Church will be dramatically evident when some 10,000 Catholic charismatics "come together" around Pope Paul in Rome during Pentecost in May. He referred to the 1975 International Congress on Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church.

The participants he said, will celebrate "the reality of the Spirit of God in action today."

Although he called for openness to the Spirit, the cardinal said there are times when bishops in discerning the "charisms," may have to put up "red lights."

The cardinal emphasized that spiritual renewal was more important than the so-called "gifts" of the Holy Spirit. While he did not identify the latter, they

include speaking in tongues and healing.

Cardinal Suenens said he had been "surprised" to see conservative and progressive people praying together at charismatic gatherings.

"They don't change their minds but they love each other," he said.

The cardinal said he agreed with the evaluation of an Anglican bishop that the reason Christians are so divided today is that "we didn't speak to each other for centuries."

But ecumenical dialogue can only be successful if each tradition remains faithful to itself, he said.

He lauded St. John's Institute on Cultural and Ecumenical

Research for promoting such a dialogue.

Father Kilian McDonnell, OSB, a Benedictine priest who is president of the institute, said in introducing Cardinal Suenens that the prelate's openness had made it possible for him to influence friends on both the right and the left.

As two examples of this he cited two Suenens friends, Pope Paul and Archbishop Helder Camara of Brazil. The latter is a prelate noted for his work with the poor and is a critic of the Brazilian government.

The Pope, in a public audience last October during the Synod of Bishops, Father McDonnell said, recommended to people in the large audience that they read Cardinal Suenens' newest book, A New Pentecost?

This was most unusual, Father McDonnell said, because "Popes prefer to recommend books of dead authors."

The Pax Christi award was conferred by Father Michael Blecker, OSB, president of St. John's. A citation he read cited Cardinal Suenens' "unique pastoral leadership" and the breadth of his theological vision and "the enduring impact his ministry has had on the Church."

The cardinal also was given a small statue of St. Benedict, founder of the Benedictine order.

After his address, the cardinal was given a prolonged standing ovation by the hundreds in the audience that filled St. John's Abbey Church. Before the program began, the audience broke out in the spontaneous singing of "Alleluia!"

State Catholic Conference Lists Bills Supported

Albany — The State Catholic Conference has endorsed a wide variety of "helping" proposals now before the legislature. Acting through their Catholic Committee which advised them in the field of public affairs, the conference supports legislation which includes help for the general public prospective mothers, handicapped adults, pre-school children, bereaved families, the sick needing home care, and every school student.

"Such proposals," said Catholic Conference secretary, Charles J. Tobin, "are typical of many which we support that will aid the sick, the handicapped, the young, the aged, the needy."

Among proposals supported:

* Public Information Bill (S. 175-A). The bill provides for public notice at least 30 days in advance of changes in rules and regulations for state agencies and departments. It also includes 15-day public notice of public hearings by state bodies. At present, people are often caught short because they didn't know a rule was changed or didn't realize they could appear to make their views known.

* Alternatives to abortion bill S. 149-A. This bill provides that all organizations involved in abortion counselling and using state and/or federal funds also provide alternatives to abortion information as well. This bill would guarantee that women would know about the choice of an alternative to abortion information. It would include information about adoptions, social service assistance information on free health clinics, etc.

* Help for handicapped adults (S. 1212). This bill would authorize school districts to provide transportation to handicapped adults so they can take advantage of available educational opportunities.

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* Adding mumps immunizations to the list of pre-requisites for school (S. 753; A. 719). This bill would add immunization for mumps to those other immunizations presently required by law prior to entrance to any school in the state. The conference endorsement notes that the bill includes provisions against economic hardship on the part of the child or his family.

* Aid for bereaved families with burial expenses (S. 493; A. 563). This would increase from \$250 to \$600 the amount of state reimbursement to social services districts, cities and towns for

expenditures for burial of those unable to cover such costs.

* Requiring Home Care Insurance (S. 657; A. 3378). This bill will free hospital and nursing facilities beds by requiring health insurance carriers to provide coverage for home care as well as hospital care. With the only coverage that in hospitals, many are encouraged to enter hospitals who could get adequate coverage and relief from expense at home.

* Increase in Textbook Aid to School Districts (S. 3112). This bill increases from \$10 to \$15 the amount of aid which a school district could obtain in providing textbooks on loan to both public and nonpublic schools.

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 20:19-31. (R1) Acts 2:42-47. (R2) 1 Pt. 1:3-9.

The theme of Sunday's readings is faith.

A man fell off a cliff, but managed to grab a tree limb on the way down. The following conversation ensued:

"Help! Is anyone up there?"

"I'm here," said a voice. "I'm the Lord. Do you believe in me?"

"Oh yes, Lord, I do believe. I really believe! But hurry, help, I can't hang on much longer."

"That's all right. If you really believe, you have nothing to worry about. I'll save you. Just let go of the branch."

A moment of pause, then, "Is anyone else up there?"

Faith is believing without seeing.

In Sunday's readings we have three classes of believers: one who believed only after he saw (R3); those who saw and believed (R1); and those who have not seen and have believed (R2).

Thomas was a man who believed only after he saw. He doubted the witness of the other apostles, because after Good Friday he had cut himself off from the Church. He seems to have gone off by himself. After Christ had appeared to the Church, the others kept telling Thomas about the resurrection of Jesus. He demanded proof.

There was this about Thomas; however: he wanted to believe, but he had his doubts. Yet he showed his sincerity by repining the Church. And surely enough, it was with the Church community that he found faith again.

How he must have been struck when our Lord spoke the exact same words that Thomas himself had used. Our Lord mentioned

nothing about the nailprints in His feet, because Thomas had said nothing about His feet. This evidence that Christ had been with Thomas though Thomas had not been with Him was enough to drive out all doubt.

Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Those possessive pronouns, the two "my's," like two hands, took hold of the Lord as God. Faith is as personal as the possessive pronoun "my." The testimony of others is not enough to give faith. It is a gift of God, coming from contact with Christ Himself.

The first reading during Eastertide is always taken from the Acts of the Apostles. This reading shows what happened to those who saw Jesus and believed. They formed a community of faith. Faith in Jesus revolutionized their lives. Thus the faithful of the Early Church devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles, they shared all things in common, they broke bread together and prayed. Signs and wonders resulted, which led to the conversion of many.

Their communal life has set the pattern for every community of faith in the Church since then. Each such community should have four characteristics: it should know its Faith (by listening to the teachings of the Church); it should live its Faith by charity (by sharing with others); it should celebrate its Faith by Mass (the breaking of the bread); and it should nourish its Faith by prayer.

St. Peter in the second reading speaks of those who have not seen and have yet believed. He calls them, blessed, as Jesus did — the ninth beatitude.

When Peter wrote his letter to the Christians of Asia Minor, the fires of persecution had already been lit. Peter actually tells them to rejoice in their sufferings. He urges them to give thanks to the Lord for He is good (Response). Why give thanks? Faith must be fire-tried before being glorified. Suffering is only for a time; joy is for eternity.

Once the devil appeared to an old saint and said, "I am Christ." The saint retorted, "Where are the nailprints?"

Persecution is the fifth mark of the Church. The mark of the true Christian is suffering. When we stand before God, He will ask to see the nailprints — the sufferings we bore with faith and for the Faith. By these He shall know us.

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