

Dr. Peter Berger, noted Lutheran sociologist, has told Roman Catholic educators meeting in Chicago that the religious and educational community they represent is "an integral, an indispensable part of the wonder that is America. I hope and pray that it will long remain so." The fact that the Church constitutes the largest religious body in the U.S., he said, "has vast sociological implications. It means, devastatingly simply, that the Roman Catholic Church is the largest community of moral authority in the society." They won't let followers of Rev. Sun Myung Moon sell their candies, flowers and bumper stickers in Phoenix, Ariz. The city's solicitation board cited "misrepresentations" made by Moon followers as one of the reasons for turning down their request for a solicitation permit. More than 132,000 pilgrims to the 41st International Eucharistic Congress in August will find accommodations, according to a housing coordinator for the event.

Following the lead of the Roman Catholics in Toronto, the Pentecostals and the Presbyterians have also pulled out of the United Way 1977 fund-raising drive because Planned Parenthood has been admitted as a participating member. . . . Archbishop Luigi Poggi, head of the Vatican's delegation for what is called "a permanent working contact" with the government of Poland, has arrived in Warsaw for a continuation of talks with government and church officials. . . . Pope Paul, at a special audience for some 40 U.S. Congressmen, voiced prayerful hope that America "may go forward to a new era, humbly expressing gratitude for the immense blessings received from the Creator, with openness and concern for the needs of the world."

Cardinal Count:

U.S. Second Only to Italy

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Depending on how you count them, there are either an even dozen or a baker's dozen of U.S. cardinals.

With the appointment of Archbishop William W. Baum of Washington to the Sacred College of Cardinals by Pope Paul VI, the figure used most often is 12. That dozen, however, excludes Cardinal Luis Aponte Martinez of San Juan, Puerto Rico, who is a U.S. citizen. But he is a member of the Latin American Episcopal Conference and is considered Latin American by the Vatican.

But no matter how you count them, the U.S. block of cardinals ranks second only to the Italians, who number 36 among the 138 worldwide.

Three of the U.S. cardinals are retired. Since cardinals at 80 are no longer eligible to participate in the election of a new Pope, one of the three — Los Angeles' James Francis McIntyre, 89 — is now ineligible.

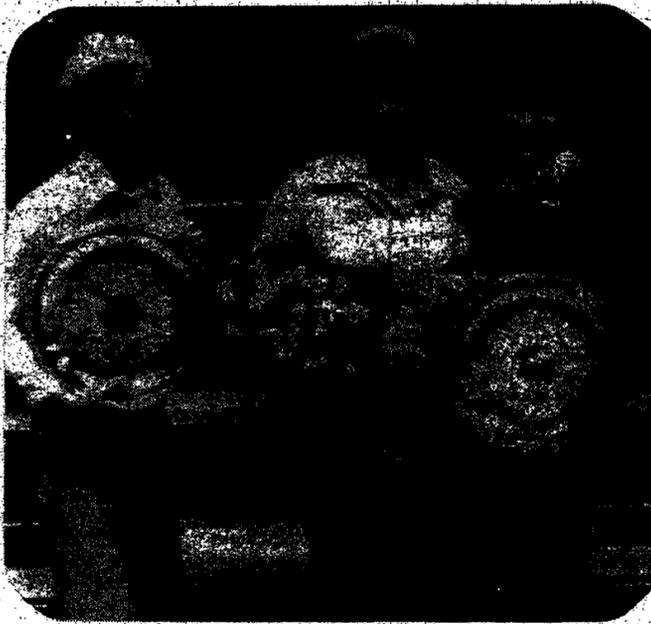
Another soon will be ineligible. Cardinal-elect Baum's predecessor, Patrick A. O'Boyle, will be 80 on July 18.

The third retired cardinal, Baltimore's Lawrence J. Shehan, is 77.

The other U.S. cardinals are: John J. Carberry, 71, St. Louis; John P. Cody, 68, Chicago;

Terence J. Cooke, 55, New York; John F. Dearden, 68, Detroit; John J. Krol, 65, Philadelphia; Timothy Manning, 66, Los Angeles; Humberto Medeiros, 60, Boston; and John J. Wright, 66, former Bishop of Pittsburgh, and an official of the Holy See since 1969.

At 49, Cardinal-designate Baum will be the youngest U.S. cardinal and among the youngest in the world. The youngest is a new appointee, the 47-year-old Archbishop of Manila, Jaime L. Sin.



Volunteers Honored

Pat D'Ambrosia, Helen Smith, CYO cheerleading director, and Lillian Streb (left to right) recently were honored by the CYO for their volunteer efforts in running the CYO cheerleading tournaments, a successful enterprise for 20 years.

The Crisis in American Catholicism

By FATHER ANDREW M. GREELEY

In 1974, the American Catholic Church suffered a loss of \$1.7 billion in annual income. If Catholics had contributed the same share of their personal incomes in 1974 that they did in 1963, their contribution would have been more than \$5.5 billion. In fact, however, their contribution was \$3.8 billion.

Information on Catholic finances is difficult to come by because there is no central accounting system. Obscurity is not maintained by a hierarchy reluctant to report its annual accounts; rather the decentralized financial control of the Church has created a situation in which even the hierarchy has at best only a guess as to what the collective contributions of American Catholics are.

The NORC estimates are based on questions asked of Catholic families in 1963 and 1974 on their annual contribution to the Church multiplied by one quarter of the families and unrelated individuals in the country (since virtually all data indicates that Catholics are 25 per cent of the American population). In 1963, the average Catholic family gave \$164 to the Church. This produced an estimated Church income of \$2.9 billion. By 1974, the average contribution had increased to \$180 a year. Taking into account the increased size of the Catholic population in the last 10 years, this contribution resulted in an estimated church income of \$3.8 billion — an apparent increase of \$1.2 billion.

However, as every American knows, the dollar is not worth now what it was in 1963. Inflation has substantially reduced the purchasing power of the dollar. What looks like an increase actually becomes a decrease when one takes inflation into account. To have kept pace with inflation, Catholics would have had to increase their annual contributions to \$262 a year, which would have produced approximately \$4.2 billion a year in income. Hence the failure to keep pace with inflation has in fact produced not an increase of \$1.2 billion but a decrease of about \$400 million in income — a decline of about 10 per cent in income in inflation-free dollars.

But the real picture may be even worse. In 1963, Catholics gave about 2.25 per cent of their family income to the Church. Despite inflation, the real income of Catholics (in inflation-free dollars) — like that of all Americans — increased substantially since 1963. Catholic contributions not only failed to keep pace with inflation, they also failed to keep pace with the rising Catholic standard of living.

Hence in 1974, Catholics were giving only a little bit more than 1.5 per cent of their family income to the Church — a decline of 31 per cent.

If Catholics were contributing at their 1963 rate in 1974, the annual income of the Church would have been more than \$5.5 billion. Hence, despite the apparent gains, the Catholic Church has in fact suffered a decline of almost one third in its annual income during the last decade.

What are the reasons for the deterioration of contributions? Some conservative Catholics claim that it represents a revolt against the innovations brought into the

EDITOR'S NOTE: A special series, *The Crisis in American Catholicism*, continues this week. Written by Father Andrew Greeley, director of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), the series is based on survey findings used for the recently published and controversial book, *Catholic Schools in a Declining Church*. The book has been criticized by Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, president of the U.S. Catholic Conference, who has warned that "Catholic truth is not determined by sociological data or analyses." The series will be the center of much discussion and the *Courier-Journal* offers it to keep our readers aware of current issues within the Church.

Church by the Vatican Council. But NORC's computer models show that only about 6 per cent of the decline seems to be the result of a conservative backlash. Nor does the decline in Mass attendance seem to be the principal explanation; only 7 per cent of the decrease in income is accounted for by the lower proportion of Catholics who go to church every Sunday.

As for virtually every other serious decline in Catholic activity during the last ten years, the explanation seems to be a strongly negative reaction to the encyclical letter on birth control, "Humanae Vitae." Seventy-three per cent of the decline in contributions can be accounted for by changing attitudes toward papal authority and sexual morality.

If the next 15 years are as bad as the last 10, American Catholicism will be hardly recognizable as the same church it was at the end of the Vatican Council.

Only one third of its members will be going to Mass every week. A mere 29 per cent will find themselves very pleased at the prospect of their son being a priest, and only 12 per cent will be giving more than \$180 a year (in inflation-free dollars) to the Church. A tiny 1 per cent will be active in Church affairs.

The institutional Church will be gravely ill, indeed almost moribund. But still half the Catholics in the country will continue to pray every day. Religion as private devotion will continue to be vigorous, but religion as church activity will be approaching the vanishing point.

Such estimates of the future are not guesswork or idle speculation. They are based on computer simulations in which trends of the past 10 years are projected into the future, taking into account the demographic changes in the population as a new generation of young people become adults. But projections are not predictions; they are rather "scenarios" of what will happen if certain trends continue. The researcher working with simulator models normally develops a number of "scenarios" within which the future is likely to occur unless some outside force intervenes — a general religious revival in the country, for example, another ecumenical council, the repeal of the birth control encyclical, or a startling new papal administration.

Scenarios, then, are trend lines into the future which may become self-defeating prophecies if those who have the power to change the trends take their possibility seriously.

The "worst case" scenario assumes that the decline in acceptance of sexual teachings and papal authority which

seem to have resulted from the birth control encyclical continues at the same pace for the next 15 years as it has for the last 10, and that the new generation of young people who will become adults in the next 15 years (those who are now from 2 to 17 years old) will be as much less religious than its parents as they were less religious than theirs. The "worst case" is by no means an improbable outcome.

Under such circumstances, weekly church attendance will fall 40 percentage points between 1963 and 1989, support for a priestly vocation for one's son will drop 33 percentage points, daily prayer will fall 21 percentage points, and contributions over \$180 will decline 38 percentage points. The quarter-century between 1963 and 1989 will record one of the worst church disasters in human history — almost entirely because of opposition to the birth control encyclical.

A less gloomy scenario cuts the rate of decline in acceptance of papal authority and birth control teaching in half, and sees no difference in religious behavior between today's younger generation and tomorrow's.

But even then, weekly church attendance will decline to 40 per cent (from 72 in 1963), support for son becoming a priest to 38 per cent (from 62), daily prayer to 53 per cent (from 72), Catholic activism to 13 per cent (from 50), and contributions of \$180 or more to 16 per cent (from 50).

Are there no optimistic scenarios? There were two forces at work during the past decade within American Catholicism — a negative force associated with the birth control encyclical, measured by declining support for papal authority and the official sexual morality, and a positive force associated with the Vatican Council, measured by increasing reception of Holy Communion every week. What if the negative force bottoms out and the positive force continues to grow while half of the youthful drift away from the Church is turned around?

Under those very optimistic circumstances, the revival in American Catholicism would not be spectacular. Mass attendance would rise from its present 50 per cent to 56, daily prayer from 60 per cent to 67, activists from 28 to 34 per cent, and contributors of more than \$180 from 38 to 40 per cent. Thus, even in the most hopeful set of circumstances it seems reasonable to imagine (and this would include an extraordinary increase in the reception of Holy Communion) the Church would only be able to reclaim a very modest amount of the losses it suffered between 1963 and 1974 (most of them occurring in the shorter span between 1968 and 1974).

Something rather like our more pessimistic scenario will occur in American Catholicism during the next 15 years unless some outside force intervenes to break up the dynamics in our models — dynamics which merely reflect what has happened during the last 10 years. It is possible that forces external not only to the model but external to the Church will intervene. There might be one of the periodic great religious revivals which seem to sweep across American society when they are least expected. Surely Catholicism would not be immune to such a revival.

End of Series.