

Dutch Synod Session Airs Church Disaccord

By Pamela Mendels
RNS Correspondent

Vatican City — In a synod session that a Vatican communique termed "frank," Holland's seven polarized bishops confronted division within their own ranks as a major source of disunity in the Dutch Catholic Church.

"The faithful are aware of the disaccord between the bishops and their faith reflects it; a solution in reciprocal care and faith is necessary because the doubts could be disastrous for the church," a Vatican summary of the Jan. 16 meeting said.

Pope John Paul II has called the unique, twelve-day special synod of Dutch bishops to try and resolve sharp differences of opinion among the bishops on various theological and pastoral issues.

Since their appointments by Pope Paul VI in the early 1970s, Holland's two outspoken conservative bishops, Johannes Gijzen of Roermond and Adrianus Simonis of Rotterdam, have been at loggerheads with four of their counterparts in the influential 5.6 million-member church; Holland's seventh bishop, Cardinal Johannes (Jan) Willebrands, the Archbishop of Utrecht and Primate of the church, is generally considered a moderating influence.

Catholics around the world are viewing the synod's outcome as a test of Pope John Paul's tolerance for change in areas ranging from priestly celibacy to ecumenism

Inquiries Accepted

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate is accepting inquiries from men more than 30 years old. Persons who wish to investigate the vocation have been asked to contact the Office of the Permanent Diaconate, 2260 Lake Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14612, before Feb. 1.

Focus on the Eucharist

Focus on the Eucharist is scheduled for Thursday night, Jan. 31, at St. Cecilia's Church, 2732 Culver Road. Evening prayer at 7:30 will be followed by Mass at 8:15 celebrated by Father Howard Keon, CSB.



Pope John Paul II tries on a sombrero in this photo taken during a general audience last April in St. Peter's Square. Taking note of the photo, the Fashion Foundation of America placed the pontiff on its 40th list of best dressed men. The organization described the pope's sartorial habits as "impeccable" and "striking" and commended him for furthering a light touch of fashion in wearing the sombrero.

to women's status in the church.

Some of the participants in the synod felt that the friction in the Netherlands' Catholic Church was "born above all from the developments that followed certain nominations," according to the Vatican summary. Observers took this to refer to criticism of Pope Paul's controversial decision to appoint Bishop Gijzen and Bishop Simonis, despite strong opposition in Holland.

The Vatican summary of the twice-daily sessions is merely an outline of the general themes discussed. It does not attribute comments directly to any of the synod participants.

A reliable Dutch church source said that all seven bishops, Pope John Paul, and the six Vatican cardinals eligible to take part in the synod, all attended the Jan. 16 evening session. The bishops were "very open" with each other, the source said, adding that they spoke more freely than they do normally at their monthly meetings in Holland.

The pope did not make any comments, but listened attentively to the discussion, according to the source. "He was very interested; took notes and occasionally winked

at some of the participants," the source said.

The Vatican communique prefaced its summary of the discussion by noting "the concern of all" to "reestablish fully and to perfect communion between the brothers of the episcopate."

The communique noted that according to the Holy See — which probably refers to the curial cardinals at the synod — "the problem regards above all the way of conceiving the exercise of authority and arriving at clear accords about the balance between the autonomy of the dioceses and cooperation in the episcopal conference." Episcopal conferences are the national assemblies of bishops set up after the Second Vatican Council.

The communique also noted that "tensions" had been caused by "differing evaluations of the Dutch situation," presumably the opposing views among the seven bishops. "If sometimes differing positions were taken," the communique added, "this was inspired by the desire for clarity, but it was not always possible to deal with these problems serenely within the conference."

Crystal Ball Slated Feb. 2

The Aquinas Crystal Ball, the annual fund-raiser for the Dewey Avenue institution, has been slated for Feb. 2, at Logan's Party House on Scoutsville Road.

The dinner/dance will begin with cocktails at 7 p.m., followed by a buffet dinner at 8. The buffet will include three meat selections along with a variety of vegetables and salads. Len Hawley's Band will provide the music until 1 a.m.

Reservations are being taken at Aquinas Institute

(254-2020), and by Mrs. Kathy Brett (663-4106), and Mrs. Ann Tuttle (254-4950).

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In Afghanistan

Russian troops monitor traffic as they stand on a knoll along side of the main road between Jalalabad and Kabul. Large numbers of Soviet troops are reported on the main highway linking Kabul and Pakistan, causing grave concern among Islamic peoples as well as in the nations of the West. (RNS).

Religious Educators Slated 10th Workshop

Maureen Gallagher, field editor for Paulist Press and author of the Paulist Press Family Education Program, will headline the program of the diocesan Religious Education Workshop slated for Jan. 28, 29 and 30 at Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua.

annual such event, according to Denise Mack, who, with Rosemary Mandery and Liz Maurer, is organizing the program.

Also on the agenda will be a discussion of the National Catechetical Directory by Sister Jean Rodman, of the Office of Pastoral Ministry; Father Charles Mulligan, director of the Office of Social

Ministry; and Father Robert Kennedy, director of the Office of Liturgy.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate Eucharist on Tuesday, Jan. 29 at 5:30 p.m.

The workshop is open to all who are interested in religious education. Further information is available by calling 225-5840.

The workshop is the tenth

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