

Church Lives for Christ

The following is an excerpt from an address given by Pope John Paul II to a national meeting of Italian Catholic Action.

Man, especially in our age is at the center of many declarations, programs and manifestos, as well as of many sciences and philosophies. The points of view about him, about his origin and destiny, are, however, very varied and often very contradictory. The Second Vatican Council quickly set them forth in the introductory part of the pastoral Constitution, "Gaudium et Spes."



Looking through those pages, I am certain that you too, will have had the clear impression that modern man is threatened by serious dangers. These dangers are connected with the unquestioned primacy of the economic order and of the so-called "consumer society," finding himself consequently involved in a process of increasing instrumentalization. And the risk is not just that of being evaluated by others solely as an instrument of production and consumption; there is the more subtle and a far more insidious risk that he himself may begin, more or less consciously, to consider himself an instrument, that is, a passive element of the various processes, subjected to the most diverse manipulations (carried out, among other ways, with the help of the mass media) renouncing in this way the responsibility and the difficulty of his own autonomous choices, and having recourse, also for the solution of the most personal and deep human problems, to the convenient aid of some technical device.

The consumer mentality, moreover, is closely linked with a hedonistic concept of life, which cannot but give rise to that type of society which is usually indicated today with the adjective "permissive." The hedonistic attitude, in fact, raises an interpretation of

freedom which carries its application towards abuse; and conversely the abuse of freedom is expressed socially in the tendency to guarantee hedonistic attitudes as much as possible.

Is there not in all this the modern version of that "unspiritual man" of whom St. Paul says that "he is not able to understand the gifts of the Spirit of God?"

To this reductive concept of man you reply by proposing an integral view of the truth about man, as it was confirmed in the teaching of the Council.

You remind modern man, who is questioning himself about his destiny, that "it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear," because "Christ, the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his highest calling. You stress, in particular, that "it is through Christ and in Christ that light is thrown on the enigma of suffering and death which, apart from his Gospel, overwhelms us."

Obedient to her Teacher and Lord, the Church lives in Christ and for Christ, she does not cease to listen to his words, reconstructs with the utmost devotion every detail of his existence, she celebrates with passionate participation his death and resurrection; her only ambition is to manifest his mystery to mankind; to the peoples; to the nations, to the generations that follow one another, to every man in particular, as if she always repeated, according to the example of the Apostle: "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified."

You must bring your questions therefore to the Church, you must heed her words, trying to penetrate her thought with filial perception and to carry out her desires with prompt and loyal docility. She takes you by the hand on your way towards Christ; she is beside you in your commitment for man. There is no possibility of doubt: in her Bridegroom, in fact, who is the Word of God Incarnate, the Church clasps in one embrace both God, who came down in the humility of the flesh for love of man, and man, brought back by means of Christ's cross to the dignity of divine sonship.

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THE STATT'S

50th Anniversary

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Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier Journal is noon on Thursday preceding the following Wednesday's publication.

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