

Jesuit Leader Plans Resignation

New York (RNS)—Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ, a leading and sometimes controversial figure among postconciliar Roman Catholics, has taken action to resign as superior general of the Society of Jesus, the Church's largest male religious order.



FATHER ARRUPE

A communique issued at the Jesuit headquarters in Rome announced that the 72-year-old former missionary priest "took the first steps toward resigning his office as superior general for reasons of advancing age and its consequences," but was asked by Pope John Paul II "to suspend for the time being... the execution of the process."

Father Vincent M. Cooke, provincial of the New York Jesuits, explained here that Father Arrupe issued the communique now because members of the society throughout the world were awaiting word on whether to

schedule for next year the series of preparatory meetings that lead up to the general congregation in Rome at which a superior general may formally resign.

Father Cooke said the provincials were informed by Father Arrupe last spring of his desire to retire.

Insights in Liturgy

Holy Days Of Obligation

By Father Robert J. Kennedy

Celebrating this week the Solemnity of the Assumption, we have the opportunity of considering holy days of obligation in the life of the Church and in the cycle of the liturgical year. It has already been reported in this paper and elsewhere that the bishops of the United States have the holy day schedule under consideration. Where did holy days come from and where are they going?

The holy day of obligation to be considered above all others is Sunday. This is the "original feast day" because it dates from the earliest days of the Church. On this first day of the week, Christians celebrated the paschal mystery with the breaking of bread, the Eucharist. For this was the Lord's Day, the day of the resurrection, the day that was the foundation and center — of the faith.

Without going into the development of all the dimensions of the liturgical year it is sufficient to say that other seasons and feasts were celebrated that have such importance in the faith and Catholic tradition that they came to have an obligation attached. Easter and Christmas are two obvious examples. But since Easter is already obligated because it is a Sunday, only Christmas is on the list of holy days of obligation. Other feasts, too, are important enough to be considered holy days in different countries: Epiphany, Ascension and Corpus Christi. In fact, the revised Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar insist that these feasts be included in the Sunday cycle if they are not holy days of obligation. In the U.S., since only Ascension is a holy day, the others are celebrated on Sundays after Christmas and Pentecost.

Another is the devotion of the people. This is true of holy days in honor of Mary and the saints. Different countries and cultures have seen Mary honored under different titles or mysteries connected with her life and

these celebrations have reflected the lively devotion of the particular people. In the U.S., we have tended toward the more doctrinal mysteries related to Mary: Mother of God (Jan. 1), Assumption (Aug. 15), Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8). This might be in contrast with the Mexicans and other Hispanics of the Americas who honor Mary as Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12) or the Poles who celebrate Our Lady of Czestochowa.

All of which raises the question of what makes a holy day of obligation?

Is obligation simply a question of law? We have seen that this is not the case: any obligation of Church law simply confirms the more important interior obligation imposed by the nature of the feast itself (Sunday, Easter, Christmas) and the powerful organs in the hearts of the people (feasts of Mary). Thus, obligation is a question of faith-meaning, and not law. And when the U.S. Bishops determine the schedule of holy days for our country (and they are the ones who have the power to do it), they will face this important question: Is All Saints Day, for example, more meaningful to the American Catholic than Thanksgiving Day? Is the Immaculate Conception more meaningful to the Catholic population in our country than Our Lady of Guadalupe?

This is only one issue the bishops will have to consider regarding holy days. What about holy day obligation falling together with Sunday obligation on a Saturday-Sunday or Sunday-Monday arrangement? What about obligation and the work schedules of people? And, perhaps most important, how is Sunday to be restored as the most important feast day in the life of the Church?

No matter how the bishops decide, the future of holy days looks quite bright. For as we continue the renewal of the spiritual and liturgical life of the Church, the mysteries of faith will be more deeply appreciated and more fully celebrated, and the authentic devotion of the people of the Church will be nourished.

Gets Degree

Sister Mary Faith Francione, RSM, has received an MA in Religious Studies from

Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, MI. The degree was conferred in ceremonies July 31 at the school.

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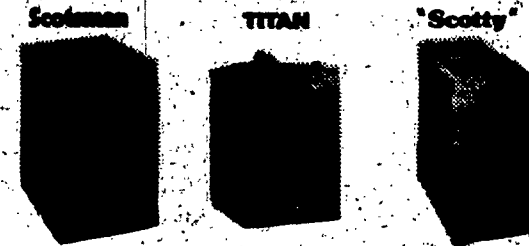
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