

Synod Paper Shows Sympathy

Washington (RNS) — While standing firm on traditional Roman Catholic norms of morality, the working document for the upcoming Synod of Bishops in Rome shows strong awareness of the problems of families caught by various ambiguities of modern life.

The document, released by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for the Vatican meeting on the family which opens next Monday, shows sympathetic concern for Catholics in such irregular situations as trial marriages, invalid second marriages and the practice of birth control.

In several places the text repeats the theme that such persons should not be cut off from the body of the faithful — as might have been done in former years — but rather should be led by love and patience to a fuller living of the Christian faith.

At the same time, the Vatican position paper reiterates the traditional Catholic condemnation of abortion, divorce, contraception and various forms of hedonistic living. It also acknowledges the changing role of women in modern society; the contributions — and hindrances — to the well-being of the family stemming from scientific progress and the problems created by the expanded world population.

The draft repeats the declarations of Vatican Council II and the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, that Catholics are not allowed to use methods of contraception outlawed in church teaching and asserts that "this doctrine is becoming ever more clear and, the better it is investigated, the more it wins over minds."

Nevertheless, the document adds that "The Synod of Bishops is aware of the quite difficult and tormenting situation of many Christian couples, who, notwithstanding their sincere willingness to follow the moral norms taught by the Church, are weakened in their ability to obey them by their infirmity and by the difficulties they face."

The couples are urged to recognize their own fragility, commit themselves to the mercy of God and to receive "often and with great faith" the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, proceeding along "the arduous path that leads towards complete fidelity to the commandments of God, while the whole Church stays by them and helps them sympathetically."

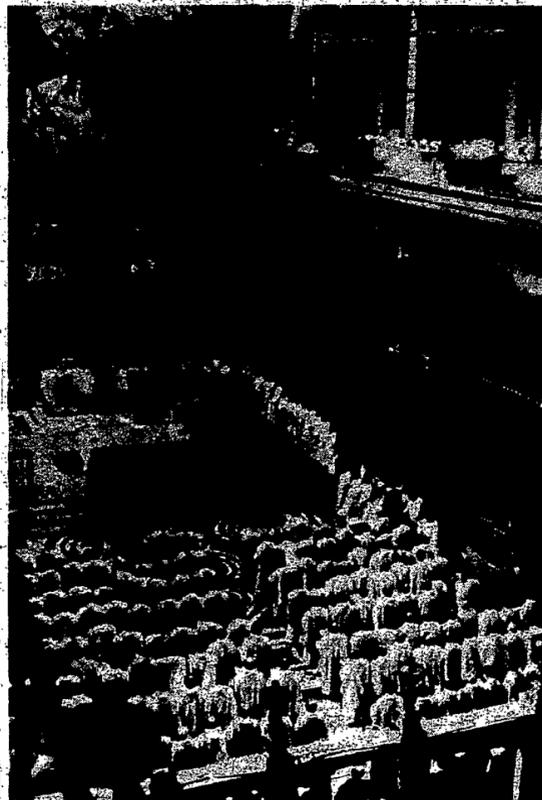
The text adds that "with utmost esteem for the sincere search for truth within the conscience of each one, the (bishops) yet consider it opportune to exhort all couples to purify their consciences earnestly and draw ever closer to a fuller compliance with the truth."

Concerning second

Chester Paluch Dies

Park Ridge, Ill. — Chester J. Paluch, president and owner of the J.S. Paluch Company, a Chicago-based liturgical and church music publishing house, died here Sept. 14, 1980 of an apparent heart attack.

He headed the company since 1955. In 1965 he introduced the misalette



marriage after divorce, the document states that the Church has the responsibility to "make inquiry in order to learn the true state of the faithful, who following divorce, enter into new marriages so that these pastors may better provide for the good of their consciences, avoiding, however, any danger of scandal."

Noting that immaturity in the marriage partners is often a cause of divorce, the text adds: "The Church believes that the grace of God is present and is operating in the very hearts of those whose lack of preparation, human weakness, or the influence of the 'permissive society' had led to the destruction of a marriage contracted in Christ. It does not exclude them from its pastoral solicitude and sincere love in Christ."

In treating of couples who live together although not married, the Vatican document acknowledges the cultural and also the legal problems involved. In some parts of the world, it notes, marriages take place "only after cohabitation and the birth of the first child in order to make the union permanent. This tradition is so deeply ingrained in the consciousness that even Christians are not easily discouraged from it. This poses a difficult pastoral problem for the Church."

Another problem for would-be spouses occurs because in certain countries, "a public marriage deprives them of certain economic conveniences (as in the case of widows who may be in jeopardy of losing government pensions if they enter into a second marriage)."

concept to Catholic worship with the publication of "Monthly Misalette." The publication represented a breakthrough in liturgical publishing and congregational participation.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret, nine children, six grand children, and four sisters and a brother.

Many young couples are attempting "trial marriages," the draft observes, because, "they do not wish to contract a permanent union until they have first established their 'compatibility.' Such unions, however, exclude the production of offspring for a time and in very many cases soon enough switch to separation or to actual matrimony."

After reaffirming that the sacramental form of marriage firmly established by the Church remains for Catholics "the only complete legitimate marriage," the text advises that couples living under other conditions "should be instructed and assisted gradually and compassionately to fully comply with the laws of the Lord and the Church. They should not be separated from communion with the Church and fraternal solidarity with the Christian faithful."

About a third of the 115-page document is given to the spirituality of the family; and the text also includes sections repeating the traditional teaching on family education with emphasis on the children.

The draft appears to break new ground, however, in giving primary emphasis to programs for engaged and newly married couples. It states:

"Let it be a fundamental policy that pastoral ministry, while not failing to be concerned with families in general, give priority to helping those about to marry or who have recently begun their marriage, so that they may gradually become a true community of persons. Should this care not be given to them, the strength and continuity of their union will be imperiled."

The Vatican document is also forthright in its analysis of the role of women and of their dignity as equal to that of men. It notes:

"The nuptial alliance is based on the equality of each of the contracting parties; without this equality there can be no covenant. Often the problem and indeed the rupture of the stability and unity of marriage and the

family stems from ignorance of this equality."

The text continues that a woman's "place in the family is sometimes made secondary as far as her dignity is concerned by her being put under the man either by authoritarianism or by paternalism. These and similar impediments need to be removed."

The Vatican made clear that the document was not meant to foreclose discussion on any matter.

A preface to the 20,000-word, unsigned document said that it was "not like a schema or something to be completed in order to become the final document of the synod." It is rather, the preface notes, "a means for reflection and discussion in the synod." Questions, it said, "are not always resolved but left open."

It was prepared for the sixth meeting of the international Synod of Bishops first instituted by Pope Paul VI in 1967 as a consultative body to advise him on significant topics. Previous meetings, always held in the autumn for a month to six weeks, have dealt with such topics as priestly life and ministry; social justice, evangelization and religious education.

The participants in the synod will include representatives of the national episcopal conferences — the U.S. had four delegates — plus the head of the Vatican congregations, leaders of the Eastern rites and a number of superiors of religious orders. Pope John Paul II will preside.



Mary-Eunice Spagnola as Kateri Tekakwitha.

Kateri Mass Set At Cathedral

Sacred Heart Cathedral will be the scene of an unusual celebration when, at 2:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 5, songs of praise and thanksgiving will ring out in Mohawk and English to celebrate the recent beatification of Kateri Tekakwitha.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will concelebrate the Mass with diocesan and visiting priests.

Sister Kateri Mitchell and the choir of the St. Regis Reservation will lead the singing, assisted by Rochester and Syracuse native Americans.

A former Rochesterian, Mary-Eunice Spagnola, will

return Oct. 1 to join the celebration and perform locally. Mrs. Spagnola, playwright, actress, teacher, wife and mother, is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Edward Sayraher. She was graduated from Monroe High School, studied acting under Gertrude Hughes Furlong and belonged to the Rochester Blackfriars Guild.

She is particularly known for her original monologues and has introduced thousands to the lives of the saints, often the subjects of her plays.

She and her husband Joseph have worked years to make Kateri Tekakwitha better known and to further her cause for sainthood.

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