

# 'Religious Life Diversity Needed'

## Archbishop Quinn, Head of Papal Study, Sees It Aiding Church

By Jerry Filteau

Washington (NC) -- Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco defended diversity June 1 before a national organization of Religious, many of whose members question whether there is not too much departure from essentials in religious life.

Archbishop Quinn, who last year was named by Pope John Paul II to head a papal commission to study Religious in the United States, spoke at the opening session of the national meeting of the Institute on Religious Life.

The institute, which counts about 22,000 members, met June 1-3 at The Catholic University of America.

More than 250 Religious, mostly nuns clad in traditional habits and veils, attended.

Throughout his address, Archbishop Quinn stressed the need for diversity in religious life. He said that church norms call on religious orders to adapt their rules and lifestyles to changing demands of their apostolates, to different physical and psychological characteristics of their members, and to the specific social and cultural situations that they face.

These factors, as well as the distinct original charism or gift of each religious order, result in many diverse ways in which Religious can follow the same general norms of the church for religious life, he said.

While some later speakers questioned whether many American Religious today are still living the essential elements of religious life, Archbishop Quinn vigorously rejected that view in response to questions following his talk.

Dominican Mother Assumpta Long from Nashville, Tenn., who was to be a featured speaker two days later, opened the question-answer session by referring to a document addressed to U.S. Religious, "Essential Elements of Religious Life." It

was issued by the Vatican last year when the Quinn commission was appointed.

She suggested to the archbishop that "the majority of (U.S.) Religious do not consider 'Essential Elements' to be essential."

"I don't have the same impression," Archbishop Quinn responded.

"The Holy Father in his letter (establishing the commission) said that the essential elements are lived in different ways in different institutes (religious orders)," he said. The pope also said that they are lived in different ways "in different cultures," he added.

"The difficulty is not whether they are essential," said Archbishop Quinn, "but how to live them in different ways and still be within" what the church wants from Religious.

Jesuit Father John Hardon, another featured speaker later in the meeting, asked Archbishop Quinn whether "one of the main reasons" behind the papally mandated study "is that so many institutes have 'de facto' departed from 'Essential Elements.'"

The archbishop answered that he did not view his role as "an accusatory one," but rather one of helping the U.S. bishops carry out a work "of service to the great body of Religious who are in fact faithful to the church."

Another audience member, who did not identify herself, pressed the question, saying it was her "feeling that many Religious do not intend to do what the Holy Father has asked us to do," and a fourth asked whether the "very serious situation in the United States" was not a bigger "problem than we think."

Archbishop Quinn granted that "there are some, yes," who are opposing church norms, "but that is not the great, large body." The vast majority of some 150,000 U.S. Religious is "very devoted to the

church" and doing "what the church wants us to do," he said.

"I do not ever want to skirt problems," he said, but he did not feel that the primary purpose of the papally mandated study was to root out deviations and suppress them. "I don't think the Holy Father wants us to go that way; it's not the way I want to live."

He cited the Gospel parable of the farmer telling his workers to let the weeds grow along with the wheat because weeding would destroy the wheat as well.

One of the fundamental convictions of his faith, he said, is that what is good will triumph in the end.

While he acknowledged that there were problems among U.S. Religious, Archbishop Quinn's approach stood in sharp contrast to that taken June 3 by Mother Long, who declared that "for almost a fourth of a century we have been in a cycle of decline -- the sap has run dry.... The entire Western world is aware of the phenomenon of disintegration of religious houses: cloisters abandoned or transformed into secular domiciles in secular cities, confrontations, contestations and dissent."

She said that women Religious "must be included as an important portion" of what Pope Paul VI once referred to sorrowfully as the "critics in the ranks" of the church.

Referring to recent decades of experimentation and confusion as "the worst of times," Mother Long said that now "the ambiguities are gone. The question that Religious must answer today is, 'To be or not to be.'"

In a speech June 2, Archbishop Rosalio Castillo Lara, head of the Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law, outlined what the new Code of Canon Law says regarding the public, ecclesial nature of consecrated life in religious orders.

He said that while "religious life is not on the same level as the church's hierarchical structure, it is nonetheless essential" to the life of the church.

Archbishop Castillo Lara cited language in the new code to show that the church respects each religious institute's "charismatic originality" and autonomy. At the same time, he said, the "true autonomy" of religious orders is not

"absolute independence," because religious consecration is a "public witness" in the name of and within the church.

When religious superiors receive the vows of a member, they do so not simply in their own name or the name of the order, but in the name of the church, he said.

The church's approval of a religious institute gives it a specific public and ecclesial character, and this differentiates Religious from the laity, said Archbishop Castillo Lara.

Even though every apostolate of laypersons is carried out under the authority of the diocesan bishop, it "is private and remains such," he said.

"On the other hand," he said, "the apostolate of Religious is invested, as it were, with an official character, because it is carried out 'nomine ecclesiae,' in the name of the church.... In one word: The apostolate of Religious, if it is to remain faithful to its nature, cannot be that of free-lancers, but must enter into the mainstream of the mission proper to the institute and the mandate received from the church."

Father James O'Connor, theology professor at the New York archdiocesan seminary in Dunwoodie, N.Y., called for a return to a more traditional theology of the church in a speech following Archbishop Castillo Lara's address.

He said that a single book, Jesuit Father Avery Dulles' "Models of the Church," has shaped the way American Catholics think about the church today. This in turn has shaped thinking about religious life because religious life is so fundamentally an ecclesial reality, he said.

While not directly criticizing Father Dulles' theology, Father O'Connor said that in fact people have used the various models for "polemics and slogans" to attack other people's understandings of the church.

"An ecclesiology is needed which will supersede the dichotomizing way of thinking in which the 'models approach' to ecclesiology has dead-ended," he said.

As an alternative he suggested "a return to an older, more traditional ecclesiology" that focuses on the four notes or marks of the church, "one, holy, catholic and apostolic."



### Students Present Play

Junior high students at St. Thomas More School presented the play "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," for one performance on Wednesday, May 30. Members of the cast included, kneeling, from left, Charlene Nichols, Lisa Morency, Joe Sibol, Jenni Turri and Amiee Drons. Back row, from left, Scott Rhatigan, David Nichols, Katie Glavin, Mike Diodato, Eric Koomen and Ann Marie Stemmer.

### FCC Restricts Dial-a-Porn

Washington (NC) -- The Federal Communications Commission June 5 restricted practices of so-called "dial-a-porn" telephone services, which provide messages with strong sexual content.

The commission said that, effective July 12, taped dial-a-porn messages can only be offered between the hours of 9 p.m. and 8 a.m. and that calls to both taped and live dial-a-porn services

must be paid for by credit cards.

Dial-a-porn messages, found in cities across the country, typically offer a caller live or recorded messages of someone simulating sex acts or using sexually explicit language.

The limitations are designed to deny children ready access to the sexual messages, the FCC said.

Limiting tape-recorded

dial-a-porn operations to evening and nighttime means the calls can only be made during the hours parents are most likely to be home with their children, the communications agency said.

It also said that requiring payment for both live or taped dial-a-porn calls by credit cards will further limit children's access to the messages because parents usually control use of family credit cards.

### Imprimatur Info Sought

Rockville Centre (NC) -- The Catholic Press Association has asked Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francisco, head of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Doctrine, to seek an explanation from the Vatican for the recent withdrawal of church approval from two books in the United States.

In a letter to Archbishop Quinn, which was made public June 11, CPA president Father Owen Campion said CPA members were concerned about injustice to authors and publishers, lack of due process, and confusion because of the Vatican-initiated actions.

In separate actions in April

the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith asked two U.S. bishops to withdraw their respective imprimaturs from the books "Christ Among Us" and "Sexual Morality."

The imprimatur, Latin for "let it be printed," is the official approval by a bishop for a book to be published. It certifies that a book does not contradict Catholic teachings.

CPA members at their annual convention in May passed a resolution questioning the way the doctrinal congregation handled the withdrawal of the imprimaturs, saying that the congregation did not appear

to have given the authors or publishers due process or to have consulted with the U.S. bishops on the matter.

The CPA request was the second by a national Catholic organization to a committee of U.S. bishops seeking clarification of the Vatican policy on imprimaturs.

In May the National Conference of Diocesan Directors of Religious Education urged the Committee on Education of the U.S. Catholic Conference to initiate a U.S.-Vatican dialogue on the process and criteria for granting imprimaturs. "Christ Among Us," which has sold some 1.6 million copies, was widely used as a text for adult catechetical programs.



### Student Leaders

The student body of Cardinal Mooney High School recently elected Student Council officers for 1984-85: (left to right) Julie Sikorski, vice president; Kevin Crego, president; Tracey Redlin, secretary and Maria DeBlasis, treasurer.