

# World & Nation

## Synod

Continued from Page 1

clerical and lay roles. "Little by little one has seen that they have discovered that the mission and the vocation of the laity is in the world," he said.

On October 1, Pope John Paul II opened the synod with a Mass during which he praised the "important contribution" of lay people to preparations for the synod. He said lay observers at the synod would help the voting delegates in the "challenging task" of examining the laity's role.

In an October 2 summary of the synod working document and delegates' reactions to it, Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum of Dakar, Senegal, synod recording secretary, emphasized examination of Church ministries as they relate to baptism, confirmation and ordination. This would help clarify the distinctions between ministries open to the laity and those reserved for the priesthood, he said.

The cardinal called for developing the idea that women have "tasks of equal dignity but sometimes different. Equality does not prevent a recognition of the differences that exist between people," he said.

Judging by presynod reports, most Catholics accept "the modern movement for the liberation and promotion of women," Cardinal Thiandoum said. "We must continue to fight against discrimination which is not objective."

The cardinal noted that the period since the Second Vatican Council has seen a "real blossoming" of lay groups, but that this

"has not always been harmonious." The problem is to find a way for the clergy to give direction to new lay movements without "suffocating" them, he said.

On lay ministries within the Church, he said there has been great progress since Vatican II. He cited the evolution of lay lectors, special ministers of the Eucharist and leaders of liturgical prayers. "This is one area in which it is hoped that the synod will move forward ... in the preparation to be given (and) limits" to be placed, he added.

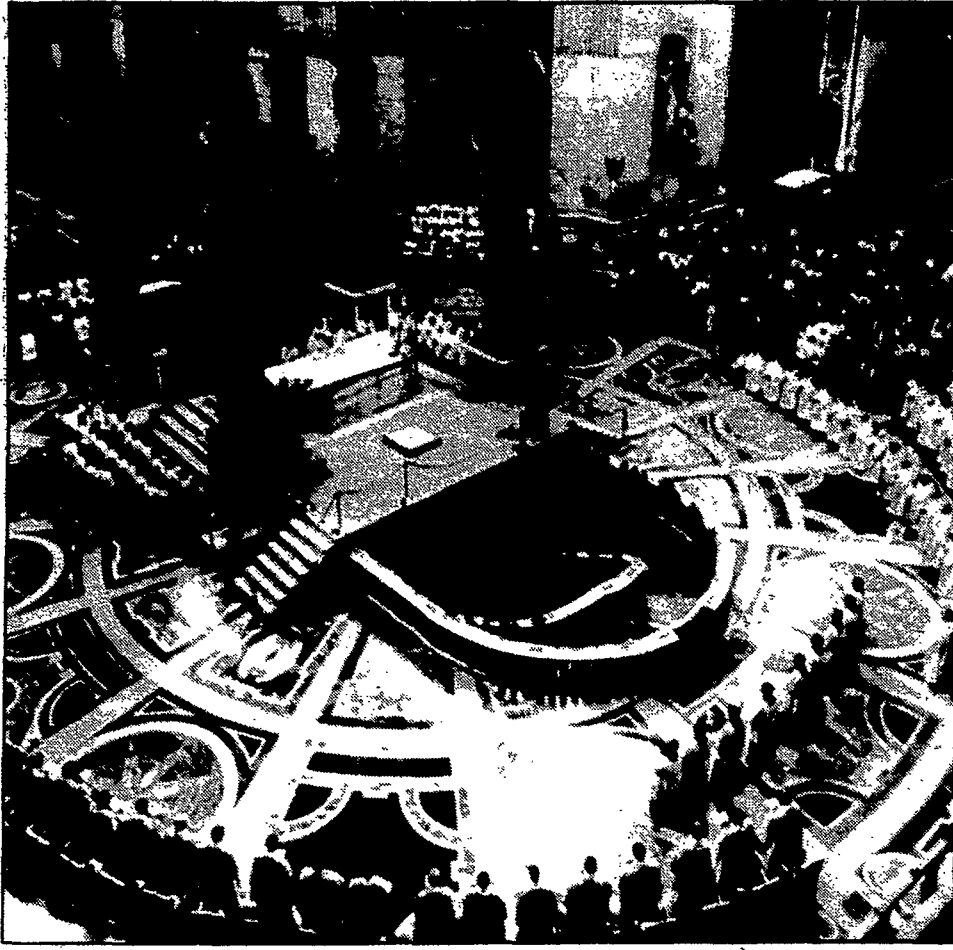
Cardinal Godfried Dancels of Malines-Brussels, Belgium, urged a greater role for women in diocesan administration and praised the "irreplaceable role of women religious in the Church."

According to one synod source, the cardinal also proposed investigating the possibility of ordaining women as permanent deacons. The cardinal also asked "for clarification of the relationship" between the older Catholic lay groups, many of which stress social action, and the post-Vatican II movements that stress spiritual renewal.

Callixta Belomo Essana, an official of the Cameroon National Association for UNESCO, asked the Church for better understanding of the problems women face and better pastoral programs to help women.

Women want to participate more fully in the Church's "mission in our modern world, where women are assuming more and more functions in administration and government and in fields which hitherto have been the exclusive preserve of men," she said.

Other speakers also emphasized the lay role in bringing Christian values to business, biogenetic engineering, science, medicine and the arts.



UPI-Reuters/NC News

The World Synod of Bishops opens October 1 in Rome with Pope John Paul II celebrating Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. Cardinals and bishops surround the main altar of the basilica.

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### When a child dies are there ways to help brothers and sisters?

Brothers and sisters of a child who has died may need special love and attention. While parents are grieving it should be remembered that children also feel sad and afraid. Special care should be given in explaining the circumstances of the death to the children. Often brothers and sisters are afraid that they or others in their family will also die. In addition children should be included in as much of the ceremonies as they wish. They may have special prayers, poems or songs that they wish to contribute. It is not uncommon for grieving parents to compare the behavior of surviving children to the deceased — this is not fair and should be avoided as it can lead to resentment on the part of the child. Sensitive listening, permitting of emotions and support will strengthen family ties during the crisis of bereavement.

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