

# Synod

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"isolated" from Brazilian culture, he said, and that is one reason why vocations are up.

Throughout the week, several talks by Third World bishops seemed to reflect an undercurrent of apprehension that the synod might lead to an imposition of uniformity in formation programs. Indonesia's Bishop Anton Pain Ratu of Atambua made a strong appeal for local flexibility.

"Imposing a foreign system or method in priestly formation which is bound to a certain culture means putting Christ into the prison of that culture, and that is indeed

a crime," he said.

The relatio said most synod participants agreed on the value of the classic seminary experience. But the document left the door open for alternative formation houses "in exceptional instances."

South African Bishop Michael Coleman of Port Elizabeth said seminarians must be prepared to "motivate and train people to take up necessary, non-violent action" to achieve social justice. Ugandan Bishop Paul Kalanda of Moroto said seminarians need to be formed to fight poverty, ignorance, disease, human rights violations and forms of social exploitation.

Few went as far as Malawi Bishop Felix Mkhori of Chikwawa, who said local communities should help select and screen candidates for the seminary.

This line of argument drew strong opposition, however, from other bishops. Archbishop Pio Laghi, who heads the Vati-

can's education congregation, said some people today misunderstand the priesthood as being not only for the people but "deriving from" the people.

The relatio reflected the synod's lack of consensus on this point. It said, however, that a priest's spiritual service comes ahead of worldly activities, which should be kept to a "minimum." In poor countries, it said, there is a danger that the priest can turn into a social worker.

The church's requirement of priestly celibacy was strongly defended by several bishops, including Archbishop Gilberto

Agustoni, secretary of the Congregation for Clergy.

He said it was "pernicious" to suggest ordaining married men of proven virtue. The issue was laid to rest during the 1971 synod on the ministerial priesthood, he said, and "we should not bring it up again."

Some Africans continued to point out practical problems with celibacy. Bishop Armand Toasy of Miarinarivo, Madagascar, for example, said celibacy poses an image problem for his priests because the culture values male fertility.

# St. Helen's

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after buying a home in Gates. Christopher, the Sichaks' first and only child, was one month old when they brought him to the church to be baptized.

Currently, Christopher is following in his father's footsteps and lecturing at weekend Masses.

"Well, my father had been a lector all along, and once I got confirmed, I got the idea I wanted to be a lector," Christopher said of his decision to participate formally in the Mass on a regular basis.

The Aquinas student also served as an altar boy, another indication of his interest in liturgical participation.

"When I'm sitting, sometimes the Mass gets boring, but when I participate, it gets

better because I'm able to understand it better and participate in it," he said.

Christopher's parents share his enthusiasm for involvement in parish life. George serves on the parish finance committee, and Margaret is a past president of the school board and a former representative to the Northwest Quadrant Board of the Monroe County Catholic Schools system.

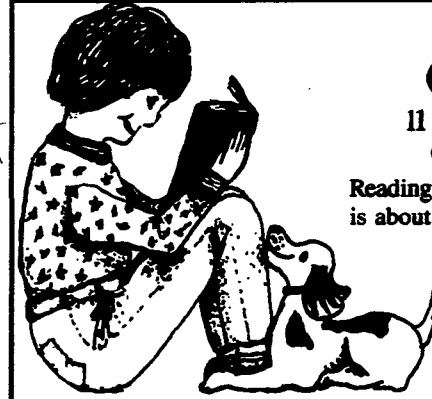
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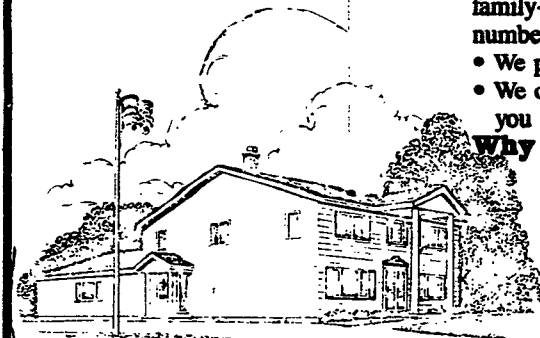
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