

# Criticism Abounds At Bishops' Meeting

By WILLIAM H. MARSHNER

(Special to The Wanderer)

ARLINGTON, Va. — The general meeting of the American Bishops, the second one they have held this year, convened at 9:30 a.m., November 13th, in the Marriott "Twin Bridges" Motor Inn, located in Virginia, just across the Potomac from Washington, D.C. The choice of site was dictated by the desire to escape the affluent image conveyed by meeting in luxurious downtown hotels, according to Mr. Russell Shaw, the chief information officer for the Bishops. At last Spring's meeting, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton created some notice by staying in the local YMCA for the same motive. This year, Bishop Gumbleton is once again staying elsewhere, perhaps because the Marriott, though surely less grand than the Statler Hilton, is a posh enough place in its own way.

A background press conference was held on the evening of November 12th. Msgr. Colin MacDonald, secretary to the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, Msgr. William Philbin, former secretary to the Permanent Diaconate Committee, Msgr. Olin Murdick, head of the USCC Division of Education, and others were on hand to answer questions. In the course of the evening, three important pieces of information emerged:

1.) In response to rumors that Fr. Frank Bonnike, head of the radical National Federation of Priests' Councils (NFPC), is seeking a job with the Permanent Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry to be formed next year, Msgr. MacDonald stated that he believed Fr. Bonnike "would serve as well as anyone, perhaps better than most, since he knows the needs of priests." Msgr. MacDonald is probably the key man right now in the whole area of priest-bishop relations. He denied however, that he personally would play any role in making hiring recommendations to the Bishops.

2.) The document of **Basic Teachings for Religious**

**Education**, (formerly known as the **Fundamentals of Religious Education**), which has been prepared by Archbishop Whealon's Doctrine Committee to serve as an interim catechetical directory for the United States, will not be voted on by the Bishops at this fall meeting. Rather, it will be voted on by mail over the next few weeks and promulgated as soon as the balloting is finished. Apparently there is no question but that the document will be approved.

3.) No one on the panel was able to answer the question of who actually wrote certain reports

(Continued on page 7)

## Vietnam's Catholics Reject Peace Move

PARIS — The Catholics of South Vietnam are staunchly behind President Nguyen Van Thieu and his refusal to sign the proposed peace treaty allowing the Communists a distinct advantage in the South and paving the way for a future bloodbath, according to a UPI report.

"A treaty concluded now would never produce peace," Msgr. Phung Quant Thanh, a Vietnamese priest, said. "On the very evening after the signing we would see crimes and murders committed by the Communists. We believe that a peace pact can be signed only when the fifteen North Vietnamese divisions will have been withdrawn home."

Msgr. Thanh, attending a Catholic Missions Congress in Lyons, noted that "we Catholics support without reservation President Thieu, especially when he refuses to sign the peace now."

South Vietnam has a total population of 17.5 million people, of whom over one million are Catholic.

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(Continued from Page 1)

contained in the Bishops' agenda documentation. I was particularly interested in the report of the Committee on Priestly Formation, a twelve-page single-spaced document and one of the worst examples of bureaucratese I ever hope to see. The ideas it put forward concerned the "continuing education of priests" and bore a remarkable resemblance to what the NFPC calls "evaluation." One passage was particularly outrageous: "The clergy's attitude may have been reinforced by an approach which stressed theology as a study of changeless and eternal truths. Once learned, these were forever unchangingly applicable. Today theology is conscious of its being conditioned by a moment or period of history, and, consequently, is aware that theological reflection on faith and its pastoral implications, is a work never finished." What is vicious about this passage (apart from bad writing) is that it seems to say that the last sentence is true, whereas the two preceding sentences contain falsehoods. In fact, all three sentences are true! It is exactly correct to say that theology is the study of changeless truths and it is perfectly consistent to add that theology itself is always changing (though not always for the better). So I naturally wished to know who was responsible for this sloppy, and possibly ill-intentioned, bit of drafting. But, of course, no one knew. The report had been a committee project, with

input from nobody knows how many sources, and had been rewritten nobody knows how many times before its final appearance. This is incompetence protected by anonymity.

## CARDINAL KROL'S PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH

Two themes seemed dominant in John Cardinal Krol's televised opening speech to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. One theme was the faith and zeal which he found in the Church in Poland. One sensed that he was holding up the Polish example as a foil for the doubt-ridden Church in America. The other theme was a public defense of the experts and bureaucrats who formed the Bishops' staff and who, the Cardinal said, "are being subjected to reckless and irresponsible broadsides of criticism in some quarters."

Such staff workers are not above criticism, the Philadelphia Archbishop continued, but "when criticism becomes exaggerated and unfair, when it is pursued with a viciousness and a vengeance which suggests that the divine law of bearing false witness — of slander and calumny — have been abrogated, then it is incumbent on those responsible for policy within an organization to speak on behalf of the staff. Some of the exaggerated criticism of the staff shows a crass indifference to the common good of the Church and to the efforts of the Conference of

Bishops to promote the Kingdom of God."

The Cardinal did not mention any names of attackers or victims. It was widely speculated that he may do so at his closing press conference on Friday, November 17th, after the adjournment of the general meeting.

Some have thought that Cardinal Krol's emphasis on "public" defense of the bureaucracy may have been a hint that he wishes to ward off any public scandal but privately entertains doubts which he will, equally privately, resolve.

## BISHOP HURLEY SIGNALS ANTI-LIFE DANGERS

Bishop Mark Hurley of Santa Rosa, California, is on the Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, where he serves as moderator for something called the "Secretariat for Human Values." Despite its unattractive name, this Secretariat has been holding some extremely important conversations of late, on topics of vital concern for all American Catholics — so, at least, the Bishop told his spellbound audience on the first day of the conference.

It turns out that Bishop Hurley has been going around the Country, talking to scientists, Catholic and non-Catholic, about the moral implications of recent scientific and technological research. The experience is evidently sobering. These scientists are serious men; and, according to Bishop Hurley, they are literally begging for clear moral guidance, as they stand on the brink of a new world of frightening possibilities.

Bishop Hurley called attention to eight areas as demanding urgent moral and theological attention. They were as follows:

- 1.) atomic, biological, and chemical weapons of warfare;
- 2.) environmental and "psychological" pollution;
- 3.) proposals for population control, such as placing contraceptives in the water supply;
- 4.) psychological and moral damage arising from sensitivity training and encounter sessions (this point raised a storm at the Monday noon press conference. In defense of his charges against sensitivity techniques, Bishop Hurley cited research published recently at Yale by a Professor Gottschalk and a book published this year by Coulson entitled *Groups, Gimmicks and Gurus*.);
- 5.) placing electrodes in the brain centers to control human behavior;
- 6.) immoral use of human beings in hospitals as guinea pigs;
- 7.) amniocentesis, cloning, test-tube babies, sperm banks, and the technique of deep freezing people alive (the Bishop emphasized that in his conversations with geneticists, he found that the experts had no doubt that the fetus is human from conception);
- 8.) the threat of electronic spying and the compiling of information about everybody in giant data banks.

Bishop Hurley said that his Secretariat would try to serve as a meeting place for scientists, theologians and Church authorities. In speaking of the need for moral decisions in these areas, the Bishop quoted St. Gregory Nazianzen (*De Ord. Theol.*, 22): "To form conclusions too quickly is unscientific; to avoid conclusions is atheistic."

In a peroration which received a great applause, Bishop Hurley rejected both Modernism and Integralism. He said: "We reject Modernism as a heresy of surrender which 'has seen the human face of the Church but has misconceived her divine nature' (Suhard). At the same time we reject Integralism, a heresy which makes the Church, because of its transcendence, an out-of-this-world or other-worldly community, divorced from God's own creation, divorced from history, divorced from the Incarnation."

Several interesting points were brought out by the Bishops in their discussion of Bishop Hurley's address. Bishop Andrew Grutka of Gary, Ind., was especially to the point in wondering why the Bishops were not doing more for the Human Life Foundation, which is directed by Edward B. Hanify, a speaker at the last Wanderer Forum.

## MEMBERSHIP IN THE NCC?

Bishop Charles Helmsting of Kansas City, Mo., gave a brief report for the Ecumenical Affairs Committee, mentioning that studies on the feasibility of Roman Catholic membership in the National Council of Churches (NCC) were under study. At a subsequent press conference, a reporter from the *New Haven Register* brought up an interesting point. He informed Bishop Helmsting that many Protestants are eager to have Roman Catholics involved in ecumenical organizations because only the presence of large numbers of Catholics will overcome the in-

fluence of extreme radicals among the Protestants! Bishop Helmsting was noncommittal in response.

## MANNING WONDERERS ABOUT DEACONS

Shortly after Archbishop Daniel Sheehan of Omaha, Nebr., had finished his report of the woes and hopes of the permanent diaconate, Archbishop Timothy Manning of Los Angeles, rose to ask him a question. What, he wondered, does receiving the Order of Deacon contribute to the activities already being performed by these men? What is this diaconate for? His Excellency of Omaha believed that the matter required further study.

## PASTORAL LETTER

Debate on the Bishops' pastoral letter, *To Teach As Jesus Did*, and the substantial revising of this now much-face-lifted text are reported elsewhere in this issue. But it is appropriate to make a note here of the doubts circulating as to the precise authority of this text. According to Bishop William McManus, the pastoral is not a collegial document. Cardinal Krol last spring emphasized that very few acts of the National Conference have real juridical authority or collegial character. But since the issuing of a pastoral letter is said to be the most solemn form of communication the American Bishops can make, I made inquiries into its status as a collegial act. The reasons, of course, that it has no such status is the absence of concurrence by the Holy See. In order to be collegial any act must involve a joint action of the Pope and the Bishop(s) in question.

Catechetics authority, Fr. Milan Mikulich of Portland, Ore., has

pointed out that the content of this pastoral letter is really what one would expect to find in the programmata on catechetics called for by the *General Catechetical Directory*. But according to the same *Directory*, such programmata must be submitted for approval to the Holy See, whereas, of course, a pastoral letter need not be. It seems, therefore, that an ambiguous situation has almost deliberately been created: a document of lesser authority requiring no papal approval, is advancing plans which belong properly to a document of higher authority and requiring papal approval. The net result, according to one well-informed view, is that the new pastoral letter, *To Teach As Jesus Did*, has less authority than the statement of an individual Bishop in his own Diocese.

Readers of the *Wanderer* will be pleased to know that Farley Clinton, an expert in the history of Janensism, deserves a share of the credit for convincing the Bishops to remove a paragraph from the new pastoral. The paragraph contained a reference to man's creation as "implying" a supernatural fulfillment, an idea which Clinton attacked in a written memorandum to several Bishops as reviving the errors of Michael Baius.

## BISHOPS QUESTION NEW DIRECTION OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Bishop Raymond Gallagher of Lafayette, Ind., who is retiring this year from the Social Development and World Peace Committee of the USCC, noted in the course of his report that the National Conference of Catholic Charities had reorganized itself so as to provide a representative voice, an assembly which would make statements in defense of the poor and in response to various issues of the day.

## Bishop Admits Truth Of Charges Against CHD

(Continued from page 1) the Apostolic Delegate and to the Holy See. He also showed selected evidence to Cardinal Krol and to Bishop Mugavero. On the other hand, the statement that "the results of this investigation were communicated to the Holy See, which indicated its approval, Mr. Norton was also made aware of these findings." In fact, Norton was never informed of the accuracy of his charges in the two cases now admitted by Bishop Mugavero. Prior to this press

conference of November 14th, 1972, CHD has never admitted that any funds were given to organizations even "peripherally" or "incidentally" involved in birth control or abortion.

The last section of Bishop Mugavero's statement is a repudiation of those moral arguments which seek to show CHD to be in the wrong in having funded the two projects in question. The complete text of the Mugavero statement will appear in next week's *Wanderer*.

## Pope Reminds All Of Life To Come

(Continued from Page 1) fall into the abyss of doubt and nothingness. They comfort us rather; they speak to us about the City of God beyond death. They instruct us on the communion of the saints, on future society which is characterized by a singular personal fullness of perfection and

happiness which is greater than any dream, and by the enjoyment of our union with Christ. We shall be with God in a blessed and total universality which now transcends all our experiences. It will be the existence of the new and eternal life.

There speak to us also the voices of our dead, who are not really dead but mysteriously resting in the sleep of peace, marked with the sign of the faith which henceforth allows us some communication with them. It is difficult to say, but it is certain that our messages for them, that in our prayers, are not lost, while our dead, perhaps, in communion with Christ remember us and assist us.

Our souls are filled with emotion which makes us good and courageous to continue with hope in our hearts that pilgrimage of life in time. And at the end there is the resurrection.

## Pope Warns Of Satan's Increasing Power Today

(Continued from Page 1) in human history. He is the evil and crafty deceiver who knows how to creep into us."

Pope Paul also expressed regret that modern scholars show little interest in studying Satan's action "on single individuals as well as on communities and entire societies, and on events."

Many would rather seek a supplement for this in "psychoanalytic and psychiatric studies or in spiritualistic experiences, unhappily so widespread in some countries nowadays."

The Devil has always been active in the world, the Pontiff noted, but he warned against excesses in identifying diabolical influences in certain cases.

"A great, great deal of caution is required even if the signs of the Devil seem sometimes to be evident."

Observers have speculated that the talk reflects the Pontiff's growing concern over the spread of Satanic cults and Devil worship in several countries, including the United States.

Recently, investigators discovered evidence of a Black Mass and vandalism at the altar of Turin's Cathedral in which the Holy Shroud is conserved. The Holy Shroud is revered by the Church as the burial cloth of Jesus Christ.

Several Bishops expressed grave doubts.

Bishop Guilfoyle, Camden, N.J., raised the possibility that this new representative body of NCCC might take a stand opposed to that of the Church. His fear is grounded, as the reader may recall, in the recent proclamations of the NCCC concerning its future social and political role. The tendency of the NCCC within the past year has been to move away from a Catholic understanding of charity in favor of a Teilhardian view of social development. The theoretical justification of this position was given at the latest NCCC convention by a Fr. Komonchak, an advocate of the so-called theology of liberation. Komonchak's talk was denounced on the spot by Bishop Gallagher himself.

Joining in the attack, Bishop McNicholas, auxiliary to Cardinal Carberry of St. Louis, emphasized that the traditional charitable activities are as necessary as ever, implying that the NCCC might profitably stick to its business. Whereupon Bishop Szoka, Gaylord, Michigan, revealed that strong opposition to the new (i.e., Teilhardian) directions of NCCC had been voiced in his Diocese, and he questioned whether the leadership of that organization can be as "representative" as it claims to be.

## NEW COMMITTEE HEADS

In a series of elections, whose results can at best be called "mixed" the following Bishops have been elected to head committees for the next three years:

- Bishop William W. Baum, new head of the Committee of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, replacing the very liberal Bishop Charles Helmsting;
- Bishop Warren L. Boudreaux, Liaison Committee, replacing Archbishop McDonough of Louisville;
- Bishop Walter W. Curtis, Liturgy Committee, replacing Bishop Malone of Youngstown;
- Bishop William D. Borders, Education Committee, replacing Auxiliary Bishop William McManus of Chicago.

The two most crucial of these elections were those of Bishops Curtis and Borders. If anyone in the Church in America is more radical on the liturgy question than was the all-permissive Bishop of Youngstown, it is Bishop Curtis of Bridgeport. If anyone in the American hierarchy could be counted on to continue exactly the line taken by Bishop McManus, it is Borders of Orlando. As a well-known Croatian catechetics expert said, "the soup which Bishop McManus has made is the soup which Bishop Borders will stir."

## Pro Ecclesia Holds Scholarship Dinner

Launching its scholarship-educational fund, *Pro Ecclesia*, Inc., sponsored its first annual dinner at the New York Hilton (Avenue of the Americas at 53rd Street, Manhattan) on Wednesday evening, October 11th.

The principal speaker was Mr. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, internationally known author, lecturer, and columnist. Magr. Eugene Clark gave the invocation and Fr. Ryder's a capella choir sang the blessing before the meal. The master of ceremonies was the renowned Rev. Robert Gannon, S.J.

A wide range of awards, in memory of Frank S. Meyer included gifts to students, scholars,

and selected schools. The total amount of these gifts was expected to exceed \$3,000.

*Pro Ecclesia* is presently engaged in — or considering — a Catholic anti-defamation league, a national essay contest, a pilgrimage of reparation to St. Augustine, Fla., the promotion of classical Catholic books, the establishment of reading rooms and libraries, and its monthly newsletter which recently exposed the vicious cartoon series in *National Lampoon*, the deplorable sex-education text, *Life Education* — A New Series of Correlated Lessons, and the implicit danger to Catholic hospitals posed by the Rockefeller report on population

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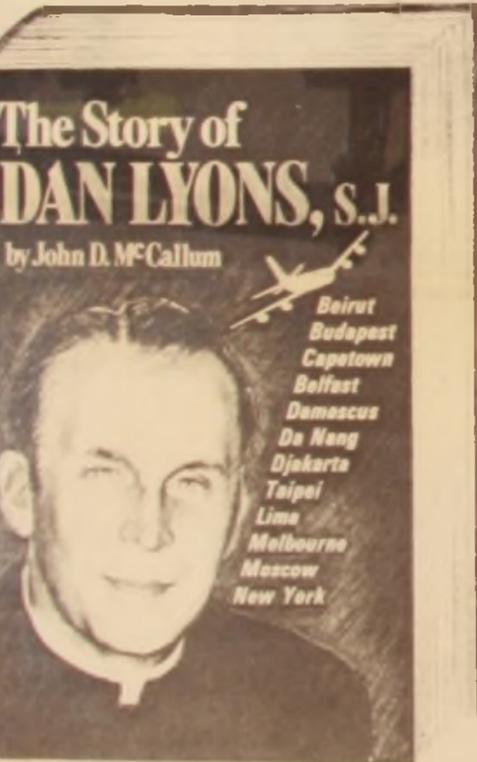
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