

# The Pope and the Jesuits

"Do you wish, sons of Ignatius, militants of the Society of Jesus, to be today and tomorrow and always that which you have been from your foundation until this day for the Holy Catholic Church and for this Apostolic See? This question of ours would not be justified if there had not reached our ears news and rumors regarding your Society for which we cannot hide our surprise and, for some of them, our sorrow."

With the quotation of these words from the speech of the Pope to the Jesuits upon the closing of the 31st General Congregation on 16th November, this year. *TIME* Magazine (25th November) purported to reveal the Pope's mind concerning the Jesuits. And to evaluate, in its own way, that situation and the mind of the Pontiff, *TIME* wrote: "To outsiders, the renewal effort (of the Jesuits' 31st Congregation) has seemed dryly procedural and

strikingly inconclusive; Paul's surprising purpose was to denounce sternly the 'strange and sinister suggestions' that he detected in the discussions."

In similar fashion the words of the Pope have been reproduced in other publications and in our local press. No wonder, then, that the image of the Society should have appeared dubious before the eyes of the public and the simple faithful and that the good Sisters should have come to ask what was happening with the Jesuits and why had the Pope rebuked them thus.

We call attention to this event in order to point out how the press of certain leanings, this Magazine in particular, as well as the local press pursue sensationalism and distort facts. They suppress and interpret as they please. The result is not honest reporting, but confusionism. We have seen this all through the Council days and

recently in reporting the speech of the Pope to the Italian Society of Gynecologists. Now, it is the Jesuits' turn.

In fact, what did the Pope tell the religious of the Society of Jesus? What is the attitude of the Holy Father towards them?

We feel that the faithful and the good Sisters need not lose a night's sleep.

Never, to our mind, has the Society of Jesus received such praises as those from Paul VI upon the closing of their General Congregation. The pontifical document, wholly reproduced in *L'Osservatore Romano* on 17th November, 1966, and reprinted in many publications, must needs be read. It would fully substantiate our statement.

Then, again, certain circumstances clearly point to the mind of the Pope and his deep esteem for the worthy Society:

1. The closing of this Congregation of the Society uniquely took place at the Sistine Chapel and the Pope underscored the grandeur of the place and significance of the site of the Papal elections;

2. The Supreme Pontiff con-celebrated the Holy Mass with the General Prepositus and five Jesuit priests;

3. In his speech the Pope praised the efforts of *renewal* of the Congregation, together with the *conservative* spirit that has always inspired the Jesuit apostolate. In particular, the Pope mentioned "the arduous and intense practice of prayer, the humble and ardent discipline of the interior life, the examination of conscience, the intimate dialogue with Christ. . . . this wealth of spiritual modulations," which is "not only proper to the monk", but also "an indispensable armor-suit of the soldier of Christ." The Pope took note of the close link between renovation and conservative tradition in the conscientious participants to the 31st General Congregation and averred that he approved them with all his authority. In the most expressive terms he revealed his confidence in the Society today as in past years and felt sure that they would remain loyal to their history. In regard to the new dimensions of their future apostolate the Pope singularly underscored the conquest of atheism, all the forms of present day ecumenism and "the education of the youth in the secondary schools and in the universities—ecclesiastical and civil—, which has given you always great glory and abundant merits", and, in token of success,

the Holy Father pointed to "the devotion you promote to the Sacred Heart". And the Pope ended his speech thus: "Yes, this is the time, dearly beloved sons; march on trusting and full of ardour; Christ chooses you, the Church sends you, the Pope blesses you."

That in these days of renovation and confusion there should have been self-examinations and even legitimate doubts as to the efficacy of the Ignatian structure would not bring concern to whomever knows history. Neither is it the first time in the history of the Society of Jesus that this should have happened. The old solution was: "Sint ut sunt aut non sint". In the closing of the 31st Congregation we find a genuine renewal *ab initio*, a most conscientious leader who, knowing his limitations, would find a superior and perma-

nent solution in the Rock of Truth.

To be sure, we believe, it all has a symbolic value. Those "news and rumors", that sinisterly reached the ears of the Pope, were not exclusive of the Jesuits. They also concerned "other religious families, for which we cannot hide surprise, and for some of them, the sorrow it has caused us." This is a deplorable omission and distortion of TIME and the secular press.

Indeed, the profound analysis that the Pope makes of the Ignatian institution and faithfulness to itself is an essential exigency of all the religious families and, in general, of all ecclesiastical institutions so that they may be genuine manifestations of the divine truth and legitimate testimonies of the only and eternal apostolate of the Church.

## Spain's Bishops Ready to Give Up Privileges

At the end of the Plenum of the Episcopate Conference, a spokesman declared that the Spanish hierarchy has informed the

Holy See that it is perfectly ready to give up all the rights and privileges that His Holiness may think fit, as and when the Pope

himself decides.

The privileges enjoyed by the Catholic Church in Spain, and which are not quoted in the spokesman's declarations, are as follows:

Tax exemptions for Church institutions and individuals.

Exemptions from military service for priests and religious.

Special legal charter for clergy.

Spanish State payroll for bishops and priests.

Certain financial advantages on public transport and services, such as rail fare reduction for clergy.

The presence of Bishops and priests in State and legislative organizations.

The agreement between Spain and the Holy See on Church Universities.

The network of secondary schools belonging to Church or

the religious orders.

The Church radio network.

Church circles here point out that all these privileges are enjoyed in Spain by Clergy and the Catholic Church in general thanks to an agreement between the Holy See and Spain; the Concordat of 1953. Any changes in this Concordat are the business of the signatories, not the Spanish hierarchy.

With this offer to renounce privileges, the Spanish hierarchy—these circles point out—makes clear that Spain's prelates place no obstacles in the way of any alteration to the Concordat in accordance with the Spirit of Vatican II, a task which falls upon the Holy See and the Spanish government, not upon the Spanish hierarchy.

## International Congress of Catholic Doctors

The International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations assembled in Manila from November 2 to 5, 1966 for its XI International Congress, having discussed the medical and ethical as-

pects of the general theme, "The Catholic Doctor and the Population Problem," with the end in view of greater and better service to humanity and to the Church in the spirit of II Vatican Ecu-

menical Council did adopt the following resolutions:

1. The greatness and sanctity of human life, as a gift of God is to be treated with highest respect.

2. It is the duty of Catholic physicians to protect life in all its periods, born and unborn; the procreative activity of husband and wife, intimately associated or combined as it is, within the psychosomatic context of human life, should be guided, controlled, and even sublimated, without doing undue harm to the physical and psychological being of the human organism.

3. Direct abortion is condemned as a direct attack on human life. There is increasing evidence of medical and social harmful effects of direct abortion, and the Catholic doctors are concerned about present trends to liberalize abortion laws as dangerous measures for a society.

4. Catholic physicians are obliged to promote the concept and practice of responsible parenthood.

5. In the promotion of this concept, the physician is not merely a pure scientist, but he must also be in the service of humanity, consider all its aspects—social, economic, spiritual, and medical—and be guided always by the mind of the Church.

6. To avoid doctrinal confusion and disturbances of conscience in the absence of Church pronouncements\* (founded on further study or research in the doctrinal, social and biological sciences), physicians should continue not to advocate the use of progesterone and other similar agents as contraceptive measures.

7. The solution of the problems arising from population is not primarily medical, but fundamentally in education and in the application of social justice, and to an equitable distribution of wealth in all spheres, aided by other efforts in the medical, social, religious, cultural and other fields.

8. Catholic institutions of learning should orient themselves to prepare their students to meet with the problems that arise from population difficulties so that their students may be provided with practical guidelines for action in modern society.

\*We have to take exception to the 6th resolution with regards to the statement "in absence of Church pronouncements". In fact the Pope, in his Address to the Italian Gynecologists, Oct., 29, 1966, had denied that the Church is in State of any practical doubt, and had insisted again on the compliance of Church's directives.

- Editor's note.