

EDITORIAL

Synod 1977 and Us

Gone are the days when we could think of our Faith as something that can be compressed in a "Summa" or "Enchiridion" or "Manual" which can be further digested into a "Catechism" in question and answer form. Gone too are the days when the task of the catechist was to help children memorize lessons. Almost gone are the catechists whose qualification for teaching catechism consists in being students in a Catholic school and having spare time for children in public schools.

And so the Church has to give serious attention to setting up guidelines on WHAT is to be taught in catechetical instruction, HOW it is to be taught, WHO should be catechists and what is their ROLE in the christian community.

These are not "incandescent" issues and it is understandable that the Synod which will meet in Rome in September to discuss them has not aroused much interest. Yet, without good catechesis the Church might just as well forget about growing.

Comparing evangelization and catechesis, Rev. Donald W. Wuerl describes evangelization as "the announcing of the good news of Jesus Christ to others," while catechesis "is the instruction of others in the full meaning of the good news that Jesus is the Lord". Hence, comparing the 1974 Synod of Bishops to that of 1977, he says that

the question has moved from "how more effectively to announce the word?" to "how more efficiently to teach the fuller implications of the word?"

In a way, catechesis is more difficult than evangelization. It is the art of helping Christians grow in their faith. How do you help another person grow? "I planted the seed", said St. Paul, "Appollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow" (I Corinthians 1:6). Growth in faith is primarily the work of God, the work of the Spirit.

Nevertheless we know that God wants us to cooperate with him in catechetical work. It is but right for us to hope that this cooperation will be achieved more smoothly if we have the proper orientation. This is to be achieved principally by clarifying just what the **CONTENT** of catechesis should be.

It can be expected that the coming Synod will focus its attention on the **CONTENT** of catechetical instruction, just as the previous synod, and especially the Pope, gave prime importance to the content of evangelization, emphasizing that "the content of the faith is either Catholic or it is not... (it is a) single message presented in a diversity of languages".

HOW the message is to be adapted to different cultures would be more profitably discussed in local meetings. Very general guidelines on this from the Synod would suffice.

On the **CATECHIST**, however, it would be timely and very useful for the Church if the Synod would give wise, concrete guidelines. The Catechist, perhaps more than the Evangelist or Preacher, must work closely with God in fomenting the growth of Christian life in the faithful. Our catechetical effort stands or falls with the quality of our Catechists. The Synod should draw up guidelines on the prudent choice of Catechists, their proper preparation for their work, their adequate remuneration, and the opportunities the Church should offer them so that their charism will truly prosper in the christian community.

We, who will be staying at home during the Synod should pray for its success. We can also give thought to the importance of catechesis in our days, so that when the decisions of the Synod will be published we will be ready to do our part to put them into practice. Each in his own way, we must help one another grow in faith through instruction and witness — and this is what

we call catechesis. The Bishops' Synod of 1977 will, hopefully, help us do our job well.

In This Issue

We all enjoy the TV commercial that makes us laugh, but in fact **ADVERTISING** is no joke. It involves serious ethical and religious problems. These are discussed in Pope Paul VI's message for the World Day of Social Communications in the document from the Pontifical Commission for the Media of Social Communications, "**Cummunicio et Progressio**", and in the article of Fr. Paul McLachlan.

The problems connected with Advertising illustrate the need for vigorous leadership in our laity. We are therefore happy to note that Catholic Action of the Philippines has been reorganized into the **National Council of the Laity** which held its first national convention on May 13-15 in Manila. In his address to the convention Bishop Jose T. Sanchez of Lucena identified the building of Basic Christian Communities as one of the thrusts of the Council of the Laity. We are confident that our laity will find solid guidelines for this endeavor in Fr. LeFrois' biblical study on **Community Building**. On social questions they will find much food for thought in the article of Fr. Henri de Riedmatten, O.P., on **Populorum Progressio**, and in the report on **Third World Theology**.

Priests are not forgotten in this issue. We publish the fatherly exhortation of Cardinal Jaime L. Sin on the **Authority of Christ in a Priest**, and also the Manila Archdiocesan **Norms and Guidelines on the Ministry of Guest Priests**. Furthermore, Fr. Florencio Testera, O.P., writes on **The Church's Financial Support through Tithing**.

What do contemporary protestants think about Mary? The article of Cardinal John Wright on **Some Recent Mariological Publications** shows us that there are dark as well as bright spots in Protestant Mariology today.