

THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

PAPAL VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES

On May 29, Vatican announced the Holy Father's coming trip to Manila and Sydney, Australia.

"As has already been announced, in the second half of November, there will be a meeting in Manila of the Episcopal conference of the Far East to study, in the spirit of collegiality, some important pastoral problems of those nations.

"The episcopate of the Far East has urged the Holy Father to participate in this meeting and His Holiness has accepted the invitation.

"The Holy Father also replied in this way to a similar invitation from the President of the Philippines.

"In the same period of time there will be a meeting in Sydney of the Episcopal Conference of Oceania. At the invitation of that episcopate His Holiness will also go to Sydney to participate in the work of that assembly.

"At Sydney the Holy Father will also take part, at the desire expressed by the Australian Catholic community, with the accord of the civil authorities, in the celebration of bicentennial of discovery of that continent."

CONGREGATION FOR EVANGELIZATION DISCUSSES CATECHISTS

VATICAN CITY — At the annual Plenary Assembly of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the principal speaker on the first morning was Cardinal Kim of Seoul, who read a paper on the problem of catechists as it affected Asia and Oceania.

The theme of the meeting was 'Catechist'.

The problem of catechists, Cardinal Kim said, is part of the general problem of evangelization. Christianity has lost its prestige; faith and religion seem to have become less important. In the eyes of many, the Church represents a set of values which have not much in common with prevailing human values of progress or with the tremendous efforts at mastering the world and all its pro-

blems by sheer human power. As a result evangelization work appears less relevant and less attractive. The lack of interest in the role of catechists is but one aspect of the poor opinion people have for ecclesiastical work.

Another problem is that traditionally the catechist, even when leader of a community, has been looked upon as a sort of second-rate substitute for a priest. And too often his education has been defective, as recruitment depended more upon good-will than upon competence. Thus, in general, the catechist does not enjoy much respect or exert much influence in Asian countries where the level of education is a decisive factor in society; he is not in a position to deal with cultivated people and students, i.e. the people who are actually building the future of the country; and he cannot give a concrete image of his own function so that young talented people would be eager to imitate him by becoming catechists. Furthermore, the fact that catechists, in spite of their valuable work, are in general underpaid makes them appear as failures in society, and thus the function will tend to attract second-rate people, while gifted people look for better paid jobs.

The rehabilitation of the catechist's role should be much more than an attempt to reanimate a traditional pattern. It is a question of recognizing the specific place of lay assistants in the mission of the Church. Evangelization is to be done by the Church as a whole, including the laity. They have to act as co-responsible workers, and should be recognized as such.

Of the various types of catechists, two key types emerge: the leader of a Christian community, and the specialists in religious education.

The 'leader of a Christian community' should develop an authentic spiritual leadership. Normally he should be appointed by the members of the community, and not necessarily for a lifetime. His pastoral responsibility in the community will be carried out through close cooperation with the members, as a common responsibility. Being taken from the community, he is one of them designated for a special service. He is the animator of the community life. If he has a special professional competence useful to the development of the community, his leadership (spiritual and secular) will be particularly appreciated. This is not essential, but it would solve the problems of influence in the community and of maintenance.

The specialist in religious education should work as a 'professional' in the field, not necessarily in his community of origin but wherever he can find employment. He may be specialized in the catechesis of children or young people or adults. He may have special qualities for dialogue with other religions. He may be a specialist for religious education and information through the mass media etc. In the future, the field of possible employment for these specialists is extremely vast. But an adequate, 'professional' training is of capital importance: there is no place for improvisation.

These two types of catechist correspond to a growing need in the Church and should have a successful future, provided the catechists are given real responsibility and are fully integrated into the structures of pastoral work.

A careful selection of candidates is necessary. Above all, the candidates should be men of deep faith. But also their human qualities should play a decisive role in selection. In the case of community leaders, the community should have the right of decision. In the case of specialists in religious education, a "professional" type of recruitment should be the rule. Professional competence (including catechetical competence, educational skill, human qualities of dialogue and leadership) will be decisive for employment and for advancement.

The proper training of catechists is of the highest importance, and pastoral institutes and training centres should have thoroughly qualified staffs.

On the question of whether catechists should be ordained to the diaconate, His Eminence said: "In my humble opinion, such a move, taken without sufficient preparation, would almost certainly have no other result than to clericalize the function of the catechists. Instead of promoting the catechist's function we would be creating a second-rate clergy."

TWELVE NEW MEMBERS OF PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

VATICAN CITY -- The Pope has nominated twelve new members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

The new nominations bring the membership in the academy to 62, out of a possible 70.

The academy, which has its headquarters within a summer villa built during the Renaissance in the Vatican gardens, was originally founded in 1603, although in its present form it dates only from 1936, when it was revived by Pope Pius XI. Among its members, from 30 countries, there are 15 Nobel prize winners.

Members are named by the Pope and are chosen from scientists of the highest distinction. They need not be Catholics.

The announcement of the new members was made as the academy was holding a special week-long study session of astrophysicists on galaxies. Among those attending the study sessions were two Soviet professors, Viktor Ambart-

sumian, president of the Academy of Sciences in the Armenian Republic, and Igor Novikos of Moscow University.

The new members of the academy are:

Georges Chaudron, professor of applied chemistry, University of Paris;

Christian de Duve, professor of biochemistry, University of Louvain and Rockefeller University, New York;

Fritz Feigl, director of the research laboratory of Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, Rio de Janeiro;

Peter C. C. Garnham, professor of medical protozoology, University of London;

Wolfgang Gentner, director of the Max Planck Institute of Nuclear Physics, Heidelberg, Germany;

George Joakimoglou, president of the Permanent Central Committee for Narcotics, Geneva;

Rudolf L. Moessbauer, director of the physics department, University of Bavaria, Nobel prize winner in physics for 1961;

Mauro Picone, professor emeritus of analytical mathematics, University of Rome;

Marcel Roche, president of the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research, Caracas, Venezuela;

Robert Stoneley, professor of geophysics, University of Pittsburgh;

Albert Szent-Gyorgi, director of medical research at Woods Hole, Mass., Nobel prize winner in medicine in 1937;

Hans Tuppy, professor of biochemistry, University of Vienna.

U.S.A. BISHOPS MEET

SAN FRANCISCO — Cardinal John Dearden of Detroit, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, opened the American Catholic bishops' spring meeting here on April 21 with a strong appeal for a national pastoral council that would share responsibility with everyone in the Church in a wide new way never before known.

He asked the 270 bishops to "welcome the broad, rich experience — Christian in its motivation — that will come to us from others."

'The Total Church'

"The total Church" would be drawn into the process, he said, with the clear result that all its members would look upon differences of role in the Church less as a matter of rank than as a call to specific service, "however varied each person's role and function."

Addressing a gathering that included many bishops whose authority has been challenged on sensitive issues by some of their own people, the cardinal said: "Our decisions reached through open participation will be more readily accepted."

"Inevitably, what results will breathe something of the spirit of that communal Church to which reference is made so often in the Acts of the Apostles."

The authority and responsibilities of a bishop would not be reduced, he said, but, in making decisions, "a bishop would have profound, enriched sharing by so many others that the burdens of his responsibility would be lightened."

"We stand to profit pastorally from such sharing."

'Shared Responsibility'

Cardinal Dearden noted that "shared responsibility" is sometimes stated as "co-responsibility," but said that "for many reasons" he prefers the expression "shared responsibility."

"This thought has guided the activities that are taking place in many of our dioceses. The formation of parish councils and the founding of parish councils and the founding of diocesan pastoral councils is an expression of this concern. These are instruments through which in a positive way members of the Church can unite to exercise in proper fashion their shared responsibility for the Church."

Feasibility Study

It was, he said, these convictions that prompted the USCC feasibility study on a National Pastoral Council, a body which could "greatly enrich by insights" the bishops exercise of their own responsibility.

Though the bishops have been counselled for many years by priests, Religious and laymen in "moving towards solutions to problems that have arisen," he went on, "until now we have not formed a body that can unite with us" in sharing concerns and providing what he said were the special insights of non-bishops.

"A shared responsibility is a responsibility more maturely exercised. A shared responsibility in the Church brings a new vision of Christ in the midst of his people.

Father Frank Bonnike of De Kalb, Ill. president of the National Federation of Priest Councils (NFPC), suggested in a statement of the NCCB that the entire American Church be involved in part of the next meeting for the sake of the collegiality to which, he said, the bishops were committing themselves.

Two Years of Consideration

On the eve of the NCCB meeting, Cardinal Dearden told a news conference late Monday (April 20) that the idea of a National Pastoral Council had been "under consideration by the bishops for better than two years." He feels they now had enough knowledge to warrant the study.

Charles G. Tildon, associate director of a Baltimore, Md., hospital and vice chairman of the USCC advisory council which will be doing the study, told reporters at the news conference:

"We expect to propose and recommend to the bishops a plan to do several things: How we can exercise shared responsibility, how such a council would function, how membership would be determined."

Miguel Donoso, an organizer in California's Santa Clara County for the Confederacion De La Raza Unidad (United Confederation for our people), a militant Mexican-American group, demanded to know why no Mexican-Americans were represented in the feasibility study.

"Their Voices are Heard"

Mr. Tildon said in reply that a number of persons of Latin-American origin and background in Colorado, Texas, and other states were included—and remarked that "their voices are heard loudly." Mr. Tildon, himself a Negro pointed out that that was by no means the study group an all-white group.

R.I.P. — BAGUIO HONORS A FALLEN SOLDIER

The Rev. Hubert Dupont was a true soldier of Christ. After a busy day, he sat for a while before a TV set outside of his own room on Wednesday evening on April 29. Then he went to his room for a much needed rest, only

to meet there violence from cruel hands we shall perhaps never know. As he did not show up for mass the next morning, a boy sent to fetch him found him prostrate on the floor, already cold in death! He lay in state at the S.L.U. Chapel until May 4 when, at 10:30 o'clock a.m., he was carried to the Baguio Cathedral for the funeral services in his honor.

The Cathedral was filled with his friends and admirers. Presiding over the services were Their Excellencies, the Bishop of Bayombong and the Ambassador of Belgium. In addition to the hundreds of priests and Sisters of nearly all congregations and orders and nations, more than fifty were at the sanctuary for a concelebration. The Rev. Rafael Desmedt, assisted by his curate, acted as Master of Ceremonies. After the gospel, V. R. Fr. Renato Verlinden, Superior of the Belgian Fathers in the Philippines and main celebrant, gave a short but inspiring eulogy. Among other things, he asked all present to forgive and pray for the assassins who, in the words of Christ on the cross, did "not know what they were doing." After the mass, the Most Rev. Alberto Van Overbeke, Bishop of Bayombong, took over. With the commendation of his deceased confrere to God, he invited all priests to sing with him the "In Paradisum," a Church song of joy to ask the angels and saints of heaven to welcome our dead into their lucky number. It was already high noon when the funeral procession left the Cathedral for the cemetery.

The Rev. Dupont was born in Roeselare, Belgium, on Feb. 14, 1921. On Jan. 27, 1946, he was ordained priest of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On Dec. 13, 1947, he went to China, and on July 5, 1948, he came to the Philippines. In May, 1949, he was in Don Bosco High School in Lagawe, Ifugao. In May, 1953, he was Principal of St. Louis High School, Baguio; in May, 1958, he was in Solano, N. V. In May, 1963, he moved to the Guadalupe Minor Seminary in Makati, Rizal: but in May, 1968, he came back to his former post in St. Louis University. Without, perhaps knowing it, Fr. Dupont was just following a pattern for many priests: "Repentina mors, sacerdotis sors," i.e., a sudden death is the lot for priests. May he rest in peace.