

More on Golf and Ecumenism

From the Column of J. V. Cruz, "Here and There", Manila Times, March 17, 1968, p. 5-A:

There was a very fetching sports-page picture the other day that showed the highest-ranking Knights of Columbus and Masons in the country playing golf together. Occasion was the first K of C-Free-masons golf tournament ever. This took place, not coincidentally, after the Vatican had announced that it was no longer a sin for Catholics to apply for admission to Masonry Lodges. In the past, any Catholic who became a Mason was automatically excommunicated from the Church. This meant, from the Catholic viewpoint, that he was thereby doomed to eternal hell and damnation. Now it is no longer so. Now Catholics may become Masons and still save their souls.

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This is only one, to be sure of radical and fundamental changes that have overtaken Catholic dogma since Pope John XXIII, that incomparable innovator, "opened windows" and invited the winds of modernization and ecumenism to sweep fresh air into the ancient institution. Not all Catholics have accepted the changes gracefully and uncomplainingly. Some have been affected so traumatically, with their faith shaken to its roots as a result of the reversal of "truths" they had always considered deathless and immutable, that they have left the Church in anger and disgust. Others have taken it upon themselves to try to rein back and curb the pace and extent of change, to fight a holding, rear-guard action against the innovators and iconoclasts. △

NOTA BENE...

This could be more on ecumenism, but to put in my five cents worth: The Golf tournament took place on March 9, 1968, though it had been planned much earlier, and the Vatican announcement took place on March 12, 1968, as picked up by the Associated Press and the United Press International. The story appeared in most metropolitan dailies here in Manila on March 13, 1968.

By 1967 year-end, there are 12,500 Masons in the Grand Lodge of the Philippines. It is estimated that there are 200 more Masons living in the Philippines who are members of other Masonic Grand Lodges, and though they are not in the rolls of the Philippine Grand Lodge, they are Brothers just the same. It might be of interest to know that since 1856, when the first Masonic Lodge was established in the Philippines, membership of Catholics in Philippine Masonry has ranged from 95% to 60% at the present time. This is so because the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, like most other Grand Lodges elsewhere in the world accept any petitioner who believes in God or a Supreme Being. Hence, membership includes Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Israelis, etc.

Since the beginnings of Masonry in the Philippines, Knights of Columbus have joined our Lodges and many Masons have joined Knights of Columbus Councils. Any "secrets" in the obligations of the Knights and Masons concerned remain with them as no Masonic Lodge would ask about them. In the same spirit, no Council would care to ask a Mason joining the Knights about his obligation in a Masonic Lodge. △