

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CONGRESS ON THE THEOLOGY OF RENEWAL IN THE CHURCH

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I *Changes in Catholic Theology Today*

For five days, August 20-24, 1967, Toronto was called the "Theological Capital" of the world. To commemorate *Canada's Centennial of Confederation*, the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops brought to Toronto some of the leading theologians of the world—Eastern Orthodox, Protestant and Jewish, as well as Roman Catholic.

The Congress and Institute on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church attracted some 2,000 delegates to the University of Toronto campus for a program arranged by the *Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies (University of Toronto)*. All sessions included bishops, priests, religious orders and laymen and all addresses were followed by a discussion led by a panel which usually included a Protestant or Jewish member.

The Congress was opened by Dr. Norah Michener, the wife of *Canada's Governor General*, who is a graduate of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. In the opening address she said: "To return to the University of Toronto, in which I spent so many years as a graduate student, and of which my husband was a Governor, gives me great personal pleasure. This is especially true, because this International and Centennial Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church, takes place under the aegis of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, to which, and to whose Professors, I owe so much.

"My Canadian listeners will be interested to know that my husband and I have established an Oecumenical Chapel in Government House, where services of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Communions are regularly held. In it hangs a large painting of the Crucifixion, done by a Hindu artist, named Arup Das, whom I came to know in India during our three-years' stay in that country. He is a contemplative, and has a great devotion to Christ. The Crucifixion, along with two other paintings by Arup Das, hung in the Indian Pavilion at Expo until recently, when they were returned to Government House. I had never thought to buy a Crucifixion, but I could not resist this painting, done in vivid yellow, orange, brown and black. It has something new and startling to say, and it shows forth the innate and pervasive spirituality of the East."

Canadian Catholic laymen underwrote the cost of the Congress—\$100,000.

Some priests came from as far away as Australia and some came from behind the Iron Curtain. One noted theologian was excluded—

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Charles Davis of England, who had originally been invited but recently left the Catholic Church. He has written of his reasons for leaving the Catholic Church in his book called *A Question of Conscience*. One other theologian was noted by his absence—Hans Kung of Tubigen, Germany. One man's presence who created an impact was Marshall McLuhan of Toronto who stressed we live in a global primitive village in these days of mass media.

The Congress did not confine itself to discussion of the documents of Vatican II but took a "new and distinctive theme calling for the breaking of new ground."

No Biblical Exegesis

The sessions revealed some increase in Biblical interest but far more interest in existential philosophy. The burning questions focused on expanded responsibilities and freedom for priests and laymen. Many priests and laymen received tremendous applause by simply asking some "live" questions. They generally received very brief and inadequate answers from the bishops and cardinals.

Out of 44 major papers, not one was in the field of Biblical exegesis either from the Old or New Testament. Most were oriented to philosophy, history or tradition.

Scripture and Tradition

The addresses revealed that the place of Scripture in Catholic theology is weaker since it is no longer regarded as inerrant. "Tradition," said Max Thurian, "is no longer regarded as an extra bag of truth." The Congress was encouraged to distinguish both Scripture and tradition from the Word of God and the key to the Scripture was still regarded as the magisterium (the teaching authority of the Church). This teaching authority is still vested, according to Vatican II, in the hierarchy rather than the church as a whole.

The delegates were told by R. A. F. MacKenzie of Rome that there was no barrier left between the expressions on Scripture and tradition by the *Faith and Order Commission at Montreal '63* and the expression by Vatican II. The liberal theologians of the World Council have reached agreement in this area with the Roman Catholic theologians.

The "tradition" of the church has been widened in recent years to encompass the radical and liberal theology of modernists who would have been excommunicated half a century ago.

Liberal Versus Biblical Emphasis

At least two trends—biblical and liberal—were apparent during the Congress. First there was evidence that the Bible had received more attention from their scholars; and the priests and people were reading and studying the Scriptures more. For example, a French Dominican priest from Montreal told me, "We are now having some deep Bible studies in our Dominican Seminary course in Ottawa."

When asked whether Catholics were reading their Bibles more, Father Matthew Meehan who is televised on a Toronto channel replied, "Definitely yes. My own parents, for instance, have a copy; but after reading for some time they have not kept it up because they have not been used to reading the Bible regularly." Only a small minority are continuing to read the Bibles they have acquired.

Second, the Roman church has embraced a liberal theological position and given a sympathetic hearing to Barth, Bultmann and various existential philosophies. Such philosophies are smothering any increased emphasis on the Bible. The Theology of Renewal is philosophical, empirical and liberal rather than Biblical. Thus, Rome has added all forms of liberalism to its previous mediaeval and extrabiblical dogmas.

Truth Is Relative—A Bridge to Marxists

In this widening secularization of the faith, even Thomistic philosophy is being challenged by other systems of thought. Truth itself was treated as relative rather than absolute and subjected to "mythological" interpretations. With truth viewed as "process," a bridge is built for conversations with Marxists. As one person said, "We don't have any special revelation or truth that the rest of mankind does not possess."

Laymen Desire More Responsibility

Professor Mark MacGuigan, a nephew of Toronto's Cardinal MacGuigan and Dean of the University of Windsor's Law School, expressed the impatient mood of many when he referred to Vatican II reserving the magisterium (teaching authority) to the hierarchy and asked, "How does this square with the co-responsibility of the laity that we hear so much about?" His question was greeted with thunderous applause.

Priests: Not Clergymen

The feelings of many priests were expressed by a Toronto priest, Rev. Thomas Donahue of Centennial College, Toronto, who asked, "Would the priest of tomorrow have to be a clergyman, with queer clothing, bizarre habits and esoteric language? We must get rid of the black cloth barrier between us and our people." The same priest was already releasing a book entitled *Le Chef*, on the dismissal of Archbishop Charbonneau of Montreal under the regime of Premier Duplessis. The priest has since left the priesthood.

Several nuns distributed pamphlets which they jokingly offered me saying, "Would you like some subversive literature?"—entitled *The Vanishing Clergyman*, written in Mexico City on the need for a new role for the priest.

A new acknowledgment of the place of faith in salvation was evident but it is still negated by adherence to a sacramental system. However, I found even this was being questioned by nuns and priests, e.g. one nun with a Ph.D. and teaching at the University of Seattle, Washington,

said, "I think baptism should be left until a time of conscious commitment to Christ."

Luther's Babylonian Captivity

Jaroslave Pelikan, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Yale, read in Luther's own words from the *Babylon Captivity*: "The pope and all his papists, unless they will abolish their laws and ordinances, and restore to Christ's churches their liberty and have it taught among them, they are guilty of all the souls that perish under this miserable captivity, and the papacy is truly the kingdom of Babylon and the very antichrist." His analysis was surprisingly strong. But a Lutheran undercut the impact by suggesting that Luther really didn't speak effectively to the 20th century.

Emphasis Has Shifted from Liturgy to Social Action

While Vatican II began with a concern for liturgy the emphasis has changed now to social action, according to Enda McDonagh of Ireland.

The questions and conversations of priests, the religious and laity revealed a longing for new roles and responsibilities but the replies of the bishops indicated a conservative caution which has not yet shown a willingness to share decision-making power but only "to dialogue" with its lower clergy.

Co-Responsibility—Dominating Idea of the Council

The change wrought by Vatican II was described by Cardinal Suenens, Primate of Belgium, speaking with authority on "Co-Responsibility, Dominating Idea of the Council, and Its Pastoral Consequences." He said, "The Second Vatican Council . . . brought to a close the Constantinian era, the era of 'Christendom' in the mediaeval sense, the era of the Counter-Reformation and the era of Vatican I." "A Council is no parliament," he continued, "where a majority can lay down the law to a minority. To express this concern for unanimity, the Council agreed in advance to require the assent of three-fourths of the Fathers, dependent, of course, upon the ultimate agreement of the Pope. In fact, the important votes were for the most part nearly unanimous."

He acknowledged that "the criticisms coming from almost everywhere in the world about diocesan structures, about their 'impersonalism' and 'anonymity' are too consistent not to be given attentive study. For while the system could doubtless be in some measure corrected by the efforts of individual men, the fact remains that the system itself has its own internal lacunae that call for remedies."

Cardinal Suenens asserted: "Whether we wish it or not, we are now on the way toward some Vatican III, whose outlines are still vague and indiscernible. This Vatican III must, in its turn, draw out what Vatican II contained only in germ; it must unfold what is now only virtual, and make explicit its riches for the future.

"It follows from all this that the Church is the concern of everyone,

and that each one must fit his personal responsibility into that of all the Faithful. This co-responsibility in the Church is found at several levels:

- Co-responsibility of the bishops with the Pope
- Co-responsibility of bishops among themselves
- Co-responsibility of bishops and priests
- Co-responsibility of clergy and laity
- Co-responsibility of service.”

New Synod Is Only Consultative

Of the New Synod of Bishops he admitted: “This (Synod of Bishops) is no ‘miniature Council’: at a Council, all the bishops of the world attend by right, and with deliberative vote; only certain delegates of the world episcopate will take part in the Synod, and with merely consultative power.”

Little on Laity in Canon Law

Concerning the laity, he said that Vatican II did not bring the co-responsibility of the laity into play on the scale one would have wished, nor with as wide a representation as would have been desirable. In this, too, it bears the mark of the time at which it took place. “We all know how little there is about the laity in the Code of Canon Law,” he said, and continued, “At the moment, this co-responsibility of the laity is still seeking institutional forms. Two of these forms are coming into being in several countries; at the parish level, the parish council; and at the diocesan level, the pastoral council, which was suggested by the Vatican Council itself.”

Concerning the matter of doctrine, he said, “In order to assure a better doctrinal balance between the Centre and the periphery, one important transformation has already been accomplished; the Congregation of the Holy Office has become the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Certain of its earlier procedures have been abolished—to no one’s regret—and the number of its consultants and assessors has been increased. The bishops of the world appreciated the fact that they were consulted about a series of doctrinal propositions; even if this did not allow a confrontation or an exchange of views properly so called, it did at least provide for a very wide enquiry.”

“What if Bishops Do Not Teach the Faith?”

Some of this change was reflected in the frankness of the questions that were asked by priests, nuns and laity. For example, a professor from Oxford, England, inquired, “Vatican II says people must believe what the bishops teach. What if bishops do not teach the faith?” Cardinal Suenens replied evasively, “Bishops, of course, must teach according to the living faith of the church and Scriptures.”

Systematic Catholic Efforts for Reunion

Roger Aubert, a historian from the University of Louvain said, "...during the pontificate of Leo XIII...there was well planned action and systematic efforts aimed to prepare the return to Rome of parts of Churches or even whole Churches like the Oriental Christians and the Anglican Church, who, in their external structure, appeared less remote than others from the Church of Rome."

He quoted Dom Lambert Beauduin as saying, "...if it were desired that our separated brethren feel at home some day in a common Church, this Church would have to be decentralized and open to pluralism that would not only be liturgical, but also canonical and even theological."

Roger Aubert said:

The Orthodoxy then considered was not so much the patriarchates of the Near East as Russian Orthodoxy shaken to its foundations by the fall of the czarist regime. There were hopes that a large number of the bewildered exiles crowding into the Catholic countries of the West would quickly rally to Rome, and preparations were begun for the spiritual reconquest of Russia beginning with the Ukraine by an honest though often rather naive effort to present an authentically Eastern aspect of Roman Catholicism.

Roger Aubert continued:

I have just mentioned the name of Father Yves Congar (the theologian of Vatican II). Few men, in the course of those difficult years have done as much as he to establish the theological bases providing a status for ecumenism in the Catholic milieu. His book *Chrétiens desunis. Principes d'un d'un oecuménisme catholique* (*Divided Christendom. A Catholic study of the Problem of Reunion*, 1939) published in July, 1937, just before the two great conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh, is an important milestone in the doctrinal order, just as was the foundation of Amay, twelve years before, in the order of action. At the same time as he revealed to a large public the positive Christian values found in the great Christian confessions and sometimes cultivated to a degree unequalled in the Roman milieu, he established along the lines of an authentically Thomist tradition, the theological possibility for a Catholic to go beyond the earlier point of view, which believed that it must limit itself to bringing about the conversion and the "return," pure and simple, of separated brethren to the Roman Church and of resolutely welcoming the ecumenical perspective which envisages the reunion of scattered portions of the Church of Christ in a manner that is above and beyond anything in previous experience. Today this book is outmoded on several points; it suffices to glance at Father Congar's recent volume, *Chrétiens en dialogue* (1964) to see the progress of a quarter of a century.

But *Chretiens desunis* enlightened a whole generation of theologians and was especially helpful in aiding them to place their studies in view of Christianity unity against the background of a renewed ecclesiology or, more exactly, reattached to its sources, nourished on a biblical and traditional food that surpasses the legalism of the treatises on the Church born of the Counter-Reform. Its work was to be continued by the collection *Unam Sanctam*, founded by Father Congar just before the war, which has done so much to help Catholics discard the narrow perspectives of post-tridentine ecclesiology without falling into a pseudo-mysticism forgetful of authentic institutional elements: It is likewise in this collection that Father Congar published a large volume, *Vraie et fausse reforme dans l'Eglise*, in 1950. Here, once again, he employed the double light of theology and of history to guide the groping quest of the Catholic movement of reform in the post-war years, from which was to grow the great movement of *aggiornamento* in the Church, so important to the existential and psychological reconciliation between the Roman Church and the Ecumenical Movement.

Like Dom Lambert Beauduin, Father Congar was also to know the bitterness of being suspected by ecclesiastical authorities and, during the period of integrism which marked the latter part of Pius XII's reign, *he was silenced and even exiled*. With the same supernatural heroism he was willing to let 'the time of patience' run its course, while in those same years it was possible to carry on the doctrinal support of ecumenism in Catholic circles successfully, not only in Germany, as will be seen later, but even in French-speaking countries thanks to men like his colleague, Father Christopher Dumont.

The Vatican may not be concerned to reunite all who are baptized in the name of the Trinity or all men of good will. Rome is not so concerned with Presbyterians, Reformed Baptists or other evangelicals.

Union with Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran (episcopal) and United Churches would give them overwhelming religious domination in the world.

Gregory Baum on Birth Control and Obedience

Rev. Gregory Baum of Toronto, commenting on the birth control controversy, said that there are circumstances in which it is permissible for a loyal Catholic to disagree with non-infallible statements of the church. This led Canadian Catholic bishops to allow Catholics to follow their own consciences.

Gabriel Cardinal Garrone of Italy told the delegates that celibacy of priests will be needed more than ever in the future but the mood of many of the priests favored a definite change. "Vows should be a matter of personal devotion not canonical law."

Rev. Yves Congar, a Dominican priest noted for his leftist views, warned 'the reformers' not to repeat the mistakes of the 16th century "when there was many an important matter where the proverbial baby was thrown out with the bath water."

A Plea for More Freedom by an Oriental Archbishop

In his address to the Congress, Most Reverend George Hakim, the Greek-Melkite Catholic Archbishop of St. John of Acre, Nazareth and of all Galilee said, "There has been a tendency towards uniformity from certain regions, especially Rome, while the Fathers of the Church in Asia have maintained the principles of liberty, based upon respect for an Apostolic tradition." He made a strong plea for more diversity and freedom for those who are not Roman and Latin in background.

Archbishop Hakim now the Patriarch of Antioch continued, "The allusion which I have just made to the Jewish world should also be completed by another reference to non-Christian religions, for whom a special secretariat was created as a part of the postconciliar era. It is certainly not through secularization that an approach will be made here. A few months ago the newspapers have spoken a lot about an interdenominational meeting that took place at Mont St. Michel, France, and where not only Christians of different Churches met to pray together, but where there were also Jews and Moslems present. The invocation of the great Mufti was sensational and so to speak carried off the prize, because the prayer which he addressed to Allah struck the listeners so deeply by its religious character and the surprise of hearing a man in this century so believing in God and His Angels.

"Without doubt the post-Conciliar era has created a secretariat for non-believers. But I doubt that its action will be truly efficacious as long as we are divided and as long as the two parts of our Christianity, East and West, will not be able to each bring its complementary vision, the East bring into bold relief the aspects which I have just spoken about."

Doctrinal Schisms Glossed Over

Concerning the early schisms he later said, "We know that the historians of Dogma in our own times have pondered over this question very carefully and have been able to study it dispassionately. They have arrived at the fact that disagreements over terminology, fired by the politics of the day, were at the root of it all."

Patrick Kerans of Halifax asked Karl Rahner, reputedly Rome's leading theologian, "What are the essentials of the unity of the faith?" "Why am I not allowed to concelebrate mass or observe communion with someone who doesn't accept the 'Assumption of Mary'?" Rahner, an Austrian Jesuit, replied only that, "Until Pope Pius XII there was a monolithic nature of the church but this is no longer possible." He did not indicate what the future might hold in intercommunion.

Edward Schillebeeckx of Holland, leading writer of the liberal Dutch

Catechism that denies the virginity of Mary, transubstantiation and the substitutionary death of Christ, at a press interview was asked, "To what extent are creeds and early statements binding on us today?" He replied, "We are bound by the intention of the formulations, not the formulations themselves. But one is bound to reinterpret into your own cultural milieu."

When asked, "Why don't theologians write more freely?" R. A. F. Mackenzie of Rome replied, "Theologians don't use all their present freedom because of remembering the Holy Office and its harsh discipline in the past." This illustrates the acute tensions between the theologians and their bishops who alone have the magisterium or teaching authority.

II PERSPECTIVES FROM GREGORY BAUM

The Real Presence of the Pope

The "spiritual presence" of the Pope was said to be present at the Congress in the person of Michael Cardinal Browne as the Pope's personal Envoy. But some delegates who resented this Presence said the Pope was trying to put a check on the open discussions by sending such an arch-conservative representative. One U.S. university professor said such a progressive and liberal Congress could not yet be held in the U.S. where most of the Cardinals are too traditionally conservative.

Gregory Baum, a former Jewish agnostic and only Canadian on the Secretariat on Christian unity, reported that:

While Freud is still largely ignored in the Catholic Church, Marx has been taken seriously by theologians in recent years. Several papers at Toronto dealt with problems raised by Marx. Father Arthur Gibson presented a paper in which he joined the dialogue going on between Marxists and Catholics at this time.

According to Gregory Baum:

Dialogue with Marxist thought inspired the lecture of Father Metz on the relation of Church and World. In order to recover the full social and political implications of the Gospel, Metz proposed a corrective for Christian theology which he called 'political theology'. In his paper he tried to show how the Christian past has usually interpreted the Gospel as a message for the individual. Even the contemporary renewal of theology with its existentialist emphasis on the subject has reinforced the age-old tradition which Metz calls 'the privatization of the Gospel'. It is the task of political theology to 'de-privatize' the understanding of Christian revelation. According to Metz the entire eschatological kerygma of the apostolic Church has an immediate meaning for the social and political life of men.

The Problem Raised by Secularization

The discussion of the Church in a secularized world also raised the problem of the relevancy of the Gospel. Are people of the present age losing the sense of the supernatural? Is the

Church's message about the divine creator of heaven and earth still meaningful in a world that has become totally secular? Is it perhaps the task of the Church to reread the scriptures and to formulate the message of salvation in terms taken from the experience of modern man? The questions that were asked in this connection are the same as those which occupy the Protestant Churches. In the Catholic Church we may not find the extreme positions represented by the death-of-God theologian on the one hand and by the evangelical revivalist on the other. Nonetheless, within the context of Catholic doctrine the identical questions are being asked.

Influence of Teilhard de Chardin

On the one hand there were voices at Toronto that warned of the influence the secular mind is having in the Church. Some speakers were greatly disturbed by what they believed to be happening in the Catholic Church. The most ominous voice was that of Father de Lubac who warned of the seeds of unbelief in the Church affecting even theological circles. He fears a loss of a sense of the supernatural. The reality of God, of Christ and of the Church is beginning to be questioned even within the Catholic Church. It was a little curious that the Catholic thinker to whom de Lubac turned for inspiration in his lecture, and in whom the modern approach has not weakened the sense of the supernatural, is Teilhard de Chardin, the very one who is often accused of having initiated a new love of the world and undersold the heavenly realities. De Lubac tried to show that, in the interior life of Teilhard, God, Christ and the Church remained central realities which were not in danger of fading away before a growing consciousness that God had involved himself in the evolution of the cosmos.*

Teilhard de Chardin was also silenced by the Vatican for many years.

On Schillebeeckx and Secularization

Gregory Baum said:

Among the voices warning of the growing secularization of Christianity was the Anglican scholar Mascall. Professor Mascall is a declared adversary of the contemporary efforts to formulate the secular meaning of the Gospel, not only when this is done by such men as Bishop Robinson. Mascall's paper on 'Secularism and Theology' was important because, thanks to its precision, it revealed the presuppositions of the conservative stand against the general trend of contemporary theology. Mascall's paper

*From *The Ecumenist*, Vol. 5, No. 6. Sept.-Oct., 1967, published by the Paulist Press, centre for Ecumenical Studies, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto. Gregory Baum, Editor.

brought to light the radical difference between his position and—to quote authors in the Catholic tradition—that of Rahner or Schillebeeckx. . .”

Yet, in speaking of the so-called radical theologians who declare that God is dead or who call themselves christological atheists, Schillebeeckx suggested that what they have done was to identify, radically and completely, the love of God and Christian fellowship. For these authors man's relationship to God is reduced, totally and without qualifications, to his relationship to other people. In such an understanding of Christianity there is no room for a human response to a God summoning man, no room for prayer and worship.

In his lecture Schillebeeckx tried to show that it is possible to affirm that the Gospel is meaningful for the secular world, and at the same time that it is possible to speak *about* and *to* God. Schillebeeckx agrees with the radical theologians that the meaning of the Gospel is revealed in human life—in other words, that the Gospel has a secular meaning; what he objects to as an emptying out of the Christian message is the supposition that the secular meaning of the Gospel makes it impossible to speak about God and to relate oneself to him in worship and gratitude.

III REVELATIONS OF A NUN

No Emphasis on Marian Theology at Congress

While Pope Paul has presented a strong personal emphasis on the place of Mary by his visits to Fatima in Portugal and Ephesus in Turkey, there was scarcely any mention of Marian theology during the entire Congress.

One nun with a Ph.D. from the west coast of the U.S. said, “We just don't think in terms of Mary anymore. Besides, who is going to recite the rosary 50 times in a row for devotions these days?”

“Sure, I want to be a Catholic but I am not a ROMAN Catholic.”

Commenting on the role of the popes, a Roman Catholic editor told me, “We have had 400 years of rigid, monolithic government. I hope we're getting beyond that now.”

Any changes in discipline that have occurred have not altered Rome's dogmas although the changes are amazing for a church that has changed so little in 400 years. The form of Christian Unity envisaged by Roman theologians is within the traditional framework of an Episcopal and Catholic Church holding to its traditions, dogmas, sacramental system and with the primacy of the pope assured. To this is being added the influence of liberal theology, universalism and secularism.

At the time of the Congress I had a significant conversation with a nun—a young nurse, from the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati and who was being sent to take up new work in the Detroit area.

Baptism at an Age of Conscious Commitment

"Are you concerned," I asked, "for some of the more liberal statements being expressed by Dutch theologians who deny the Virgin Birth?" "Oh no!" she said, "I don't think that's so important." Then I told her about a nun at a Roman Catholic Congress in Toronto who thought "baptism should be at an age of conscious commitment." To this she replied, "Don't let this shock you, but I believe that too! My teacher agreed when I took my vows but my fellow postulants nearly fell over. They were all surprised."

Sensing that she did not understand that salvation was by faith alone I asked, "How is sin atoned for if not by the sacrifice of Christ alone?" To this she had no answer.

Sacraments Still Vital to Catholics

"Is the place of the sacraments changing?" I asked. "Yes," she said. I referred to Schillebeeckx of Holland and his disbelief in the Virgin Birth. She replied, "This is not as important as the Sacraments. They are my means of Grace." I then asked how this could be, if Christ was not sinless. "What grace would there be and from Whom would it come if Christ was not the sinless Son of God?"

She then said, "At conferences we have been taught we can have a joyous Eucharistic celebration in talking with the Christ in all others." I was amazed to find this evidence of universalism in a nun and asked, "Then why do you as Catholics send missionaries out, like Xavier, to convert the people if Christ is already in everyone?" Her reply to this was, "You've got me, I don't know." Then she said, "Christ is in everyone, all will be saved as long as they live according to their own culture." I asked, "What about the Hindus whom Xavier converted? Are they condemned because they became Christians and left their own culture?" She answered, "Oh no, I guess I didn't think of that."

The nun felt she was first accepted for herself when she was in her nurse's uniform, and told how a Bishop in Colorado told them that in a few years they would not have to wear a veil. "We all clapped . . . Will I ever be glad," she said with a note of longing in her voice.

Statues Removed in Some Places

She said, "One church removed all the statues in Pueblo, Colorado because they distracted from the emphasis on Christ in the mass, but the priest put them back shortly after."

"Does The Pope Need Such Absolute Power As He Claims?" I Asked.

"Yes, the Pope is Christ's Vicar; so he needs the power" said the nun. I then explained the Petrine passage and the keys of the kingdom and showed how many Christians had not accepted the Roman Catholic interpretation of Papal primacy—Eastern Orthodox, Celtic Christians, Waldensians and all Evangelicals. "We are bound and loosed through the power of the gospel" I said.

Celibacy Vows Can Be Abrogated

"What do you think of celibacy," I further questioned the nun. "We can already get our vows dispensed by the Vatican," was her reply, "and I think more liberty will come."

The Rosary Came from Eastern Religions

In discussing the Rosary and its origin she said that it came from 150 pebbles used by Dominic and I was able to point out that it also was derived from the Hindu and Moslem religions where the Muslims use a similar string of beads to indicate the 100 names they have for God.

Veneration of Saints

Our discussion turned to the Veneration of Saints and the young woman said that Roman Catholics pray to Mary as a Mother full of compassion. I tried to show her how Christ was perfect in compassion (Matt. 9) and died for us. He said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Surely no one could be more compassionate than the Son of God. Since He has said "Come unto me" why should we not come directly to Him, and not through another.

As I left, I urged her to read the Gospel of John which was written "that ye might believe. . . and that believing ye might have life through His name."

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