

Priest's role unchanging, Pope says

By Patrick Riley

VATICAN CITY (NC)—Pope Paul VI has warned that attempts to revitalize the priesthood by making a priest "a man like any other" could well have the opposite effect of paralyzing the priesthood.

He also asserted that those who clamor for changes in the church's "structures" overlook changes now

under way in the church's legislative framework.

The Pope, addressing Lenten preachers for the Rome diocese February 17, paid tribute to the idealism and zeal behind both ideas. But he criticized them for impracticality and shaky theology.

He drew a stark picture of today's priesthood, a picture which he

seemed to disavow but which serves as the background for current demands that the social status of the priest be altered radically.

"The priest, still at his post," he said, "sees himself abandoned by his traditional community. Around him has grown an emptiness, in many places, while in others the pastoral fold has changed so that it's difficult to approach, difficult to understand,

difficult to interest in religious matters, difficult to rebuild into a harmonious, faithful and prayerful community.

"The priest...feels like a strange social phenomenon—anachronistic, powerless, useless, even ridiculous.

"And then comes the new and dynamic idea. Something must be done. Everything must be dared to get near the people again, to

understand them, to evangelize them.

"The idea in itself is excellent. And we have seen it germinate from the charity of the desolate heart of the priest who feels excluded from the historical, social and human world in which he should have been a central personage, a teacher and a pastor...

"The idea, we say, is excellent

and a sign of a lofty priestly conscience."

But, Pope Paul observed, the picture of the priesthood he had drawn "is not always like that." There are still communities of Catholics who require conventional service from a priest. "Why leave them?" Would that not be an "injury to the fidelity of so many good

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Lunar New Year quiet, peaceful

By Father Burke SSC

SAIGON (NC)—In sharp contrast to the beginning of the Year of the Monkey in 1968, this year's celebration of Tet—the Lunar New Year—in Saigon was quiet and peaceful.

Archbishop Paul Nguyen Van Binh of Saigon concelebrated midnight Mass in Immaculate Conception cathedral with priests of the cathedral parish. Churches scheduled special Masses for the first three days of the Tet festival.

In other parts of South Vietnam, the lunar new year was not so peaceful, despite the seven-day unilateral truce declared by the Communists and the 24-hour truce declared by the South Vietnamese government.

Allied military spokesmen said there were 128 enemy-initiated incidents from 6 pm February 16 to noon on February 17. Of these, 53 were considered "significant," which means there were allied or enemy casualties. As a result of the incidents, eight US soldiers were killed and 71 wounded. Enemy losses were 96 killed.

The Communist unilateral truce began at 1 am on February 15. But between that time and the start of the allied truce period at 6 pm on February 16, there were a total of 42 enemy-initiated incidents, of which 30 were in the First Corps area.

During the first six hours of the allied truce, there were 52 enemy-initiated incidents reported by US, Vietnamese and other Allied forces. Of these, 26 were considered significant.

The 24-hour truce declared by the Vietnamese government was nothing more than a suspension of offensive operations for that period. They did not start any military action against the enemy, but they did react to hostile military action. Commanders were free to protect their positions, and their troops by whatever defensive action they considered necessary. The US seventh Air Force's giant B-52 jet bombers suspended operations during the truce period.

The national police reported there were no terrorist incidents in Saigon during the truce period.

In contrast to last year, the people were able to celebrate the holiday in the traditional manner, except for one thing—this year, by government order, there were no firecrackers.

Lent 'not outdated but indispensable'

VATICAN CITY (NC)—Lent is not an "outdated medieval custom" but rather a time for spiritual reflection and meditation which is "indispensable for our moral renewal," Pope Paul VI told a crowd in St. Peter's Square February 16.

Lent is "a perpetual drama which is part of the history of the world, of the Church and of each of us," he told the crowd.

"It is a time that reminds us of our duty of doing penance," he said. "It obliges us to have a most decisive meeting with Christ."

The Pope ended his talk by giving a special blessing to a group of Czechoslovakian pilgrims. They had not arrived in Rome in time for the 11th centennial celebration of the feast of St. Cyril, patron saint of Slavic peoples.

No exclusive on St. Patrick

Ireland doesn't have exclusive claim to St. Patrick. He is also the patron saint of Puerto Rico.

In 1536 when their island was overrun with ants, the Puerto Ricans prayed to St. Patrick, asking him to rid the island of ants the way he cleaned the snakes out of Ireland. Shortly thereafter, a cloudburst flooded the island, destroying the ants.

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Pope Paul VI accepts a photograph of the moon from Lt. Col. Frank Borman, commander of Apollo 8, during a private audience at the Vatican. Before his talk with the pontiff, the American astronaut addressed a gathering which included cardinals, Vatican prelates, diplomats accredited to the Holy See and others in which he discussed his historic trip to the moon last Christmas. (RNS Photo).

Astronaut Borman calls visit with Pope Paul VI 'wonderful'

By Louis Panarale

VATICAN CITY (NC)—American astronaut Frank Borman, coming out of his meeting with Pope Paul VI here, turned to a newsman and said, obviously deeply moved, "I don't know how you can explain it. It was really a wonderful day!"

One of the three Americans who flew around the moon last December, Colonel Borman had just finished a 17-minute audience with Pope Paul.

Colonel Borman's visit to the Vatican highlighted a four-day visit to Italy which was part of his goodwill tour of Europe explaining the US space program.

The astronaut spent the first seven minutes of his papal audience accompanied only by Msgr. William Carew, a Vatican official from St. Johns, Newfoundland, who acted as the interpreter. Mrs. Borman and the couple's two sons, Frederick, 18, and Edwin, 15, waited in the adjoining throne room.

When all of Borman's family was present, they seated themselves

around the Pope's desk as he read a brief speech to them in English.

The Pope praised the 40-year-old space pioneer for his flight around the moon, calling it an event which has "added to man's knowledge of God's work, thereby increasing his appreciation of the glory of God."

"Today, man's admiration of God's handiwork speaks with a new voice," the Pope said. "Man is reaching out to unravel the mysteries of the universe, thus revealing more and more the wonders of God's work."

'That old devil moon'

VATICAN CITY (NC)—American Astronaut Frank Borman did not answer the question, but they liked his answer anyway.

During his appearance before a group of cardinals, scientists and diplomats at the Vatican, Col. Borman was answering questions from the floor.

Someone asked in French about the lunar surface: "Is it livable?"

Then the Pope quoted from the Book of Psalms:

"O Lord, O Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth. When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast established."

During the audience the Pope and Colonel Borman exchanged gifts. Colonel Borman gave the Pope a large color photograph of the moon. He also gave back to the Pope a medal with the figure of Pope John

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Progress subscription drive adds new names

With the tally completed for the third week of Catholic Press Month, figures show that the Catholic Northwest PROGRESS will continue its lead as the largest weekly newspaper in the state of Washington, based on paid circulation figures.

Priest-speakers who covered 27 parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle last Sunday, presenting the story of the PROGRESS and its goals, have turned in cards with many requests for addition to the subscriber list. Sunday's compilation shows that Holy Family, Kirkland, leads in the list of new subscribers with 134 cards received.

Others in the top bracket include: St. Francis of Assisi, Seahurst, 98; St. Anthony, Renton, 92; St. Brendan, Bothell, 80; Holy Rosary, Seattle, 72; St. Edward, Seattle, 70; St. Thomas, Riverton, 65; and St. Pius X, Mountlake Terrace, 54; St. Stephen's, Renton, 55.

After checking the comments on

cards received from last Sunday's sermons, Father James H. Gandrau, PROGRESS editor, said, "It is especially encouraging to note that even though they could not subscribe, so many young people took time out to fill out the cards and give us their views of the PROGRESS. It shows that these teens and sub-teens are keenly interested in Catholic reading and in keeping abreast of news of the Church."

One young man wrote, "I am a 17 year old boy and wish that you might comment on the reduction of the voting age."

A parent commented, "Our family enjoys the PROGRESS including our 11 and 13 year old daughters who search the paper every Friday."

Many of those who filled out the "Comments" section on the subscription card praised the PROGRESS editorials and columnists. A comment from a

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Swedish law hasn't criminal abortions

By Paul J. Clark

The one big claim advanced by the proponents of the proposed amendment to the Washington State abortion law is that it will dramatically reduce criminal abortions and eliminate the serious infections and painful deaths that frequently follow these exercises in kitchen table surgery.

One of the proponents' ploys is to point to "free, uninhibited Sweden" whose population has had the benefit of legally sanctioned abortion for the past three decades.

Sweden, the abortion clinic advocates imply, is the Big Rock Candy Mountain: no dirty old men in butcher aprons to gut the womb of a mother-to-be with a ball-point pen and oyster-opener; no socially-active young wife inconvenienced; no children born into a family and expecting love and care and compassion. Yes sir, legal abortion was the answer in Sweden and, by gosh, it can be for Washington, too.

But, their argument is as sterile as they say the Swedish clinics are. Sweden—and several other countries, too—is taking a long, hard look at its legal abortion law: after 30 years, it is wondering.

Dr. Lars Hultdt, of Sweden's Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, has asserted: "Apparently the abortion law in its present form has not sufficed to subdue criminal abortions" (The Lancet—British Medical Journal, 1:467, 1968).

Dr. Hultdt's paper, titled "Outcome of Pregnancy When Legal Abortion is Readily Available," has been abstracted and reprinted in Current Medical Digest (Baltimore, Md.), May, 1968, with accompanying comment by Dr. D. Frank Kaltreider, chief obstetrician and gynecologist, Baltimore, Md. City Hospitals.

The Swedish physician says "determination of the true number of criminal abortions performed in a country is extremely difficult" but in Sweden there are "certainly many women who, though aware of the abortion law, underwent criminal termination of pregnancy without even applying for a legal one."

Dr. Hultdt pointed out some of the stumbling blocks that kept women from "legal" abortion and continued to divert them to infamous practitioners. "Some probably hesitated about applying because of the extensive and trying formal procedure. Others...feared that the social investigation would reveal details which they preferred to keep secret or that their relatives would be informed in some way they were seeking an abortion."

Commenting on Dr. Hultdt's paper, Dr. Kaltreider asserts: "Most of the advocates of liberalization of abortion laws have maintained that the number of criminal abortions will decrease when the law is relaxed." Adequate data would indicate that it is just not so, he concludes.

The Baltimore obstetrician and gynecologist also gave the back of his hand to those who see in a liberalized abortion law, a type of population control. "If, in the future, abortion will be the method of population control, the obstetrician-gynecologist will have to develop a nonprofessional to do the abortion or else his time will be consumed night and day, as a mechanical robot," Dr. Kaltreider says wryly.

One of the more deplorable notes in the abortion bill controversy has been struck by those newspaper pundits who, graciously taking time from directing international and national affairs of state, are attempting to light the faggots of religious bigotry. It is their contention—direct and by snide innuendo—that opposition to the bill has been generated among Roman Catholics exclusively.

This is patently untrue...as untrue as the rumor that all proponents (including the editorial writers) are card-carrying members of Planned Parenthood. It is a sad and sobering thought when one realizes the journalists would ignore the medical, medicosocial, economic, and humanitarian implications of the proposed amendment in favor of the easy out of shrieking "Pope! Pope!"

One was lured into believing this form of narrow, denominational rebuttal was fast disappearing, save in the most remote regions of the land. But here we have it uttered seriously by, supposedly, fully literate men. This is the type of shoddy editorial demagoguery that once marked graduates of the Ku Klux Klan school of journalism, void of the veriest elements of sense and decency.

The interfaith, interdisciplinary, and international Conference on Abortion, jointly sponsored by the Harvard Divinity School and the Kennedy Foundation, disavows this religious element in the question. At Washington, DC, in 1967, it said:

"Abortion is not an issue which divides Catholics, Jews and Protestants along denominational lines...we reject attempts to make this issue into an ecumenical battle, as if Catholics represented one 'hard-line, conservative' position and the Protestants a 'liberal, enlightened' one. What we appeal to, for conscience formation, is a common tradition, drawn from our common Judaeo-Christian heritage and represented just as much by such men as the late Protestant theologian Karl Barth, the chief rabbi of England, Immanuel

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Students' aid asked for needy

NEW YORK (NC)—Pope Paul VI addressed an appeal to the more than five million Catholic school students throughout the nation to help alleviate sufferings of millions of children throughout the world.

A recording of the Pope's traditional Ash Wednesday message, opening the students' phase of the 1969 American Catholic Overseas Aid Fund Appeal, was carried by the major radio networks of the country.

In recent years the American Catholic school students have contributed more than \$1 million annually to the fund.

The adults' phase of the appeal will be conducted from March 10 to 16, climaxed with the traditional Laetare Sunday, March 16, collection taken up, generally, in all parishes throughout the nation.

The annual campaign is the chief support for Catholic Relief Service—United States Catholic Conference, overseas relief agency maintained by US Catholics.

CRS, founded in 1943 by the US bishops, has grown into the largest private relief organization in the world. The agency now operates in some 80 countries, serving more than 40 million of the world's hungry, destitute and underprivileged.

In his message to the students, Pope Paul underscored the starvation, misery and tragic sufferings of hundreds of thousands of children in Vietnam, the Middle East, Biafra and other critical areas of the world.

"We appeal to you today on behalf of the suffering children throughout the world," the Pope told the nation's Catholic school students

Classifications discontinued

NEW YORK (NC)—The National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures (NCOMP) has discontinued its weekly classifications of motion pictures, engulfing the service in its bi-weekly publication Catholic Film Newsletter.

The four-page publication issued on the 15th and 30th of each month was introduced by the NCOMP last month. At the time, it was explained, the Newsletter service was needed because of "increasing complexity and sophistication" of contemporary films, plus a new maturity of movie audiences.