

Dennis the Menace



"DENNIS! STOP THAT HORRIBLE SNORING! I KNOW YOU'RE NOT SLEEPING! DENNIS!....."

By DANIEL F. GILMORE
United Press International
Vatican City (UPI)—"Gaudet mater ecclesia..." intoned Pope John XXIII. "Mother church rejoices..."

Thus on Oct. 11, in medieval pomp and splendor, did Pope John inaugurate the great assembly of the Roman Catholic church—the second Vatican council—which now is joined in a great debate on the role of Christianity in the space age.

"Mother church rejoices," said the pontiff, and the leader of the world's half billion Roman Catholics, who will be 81 years old next month, himself had reason to rejoice. A very personal reason: it was convened on his instigation.

Pope John, the peasant's son who ascended the throne of St. Peter four years ago, is convinced that love of God and man fits in with any age. Yet he is acutely aware of the changes around him. Born in 1881, he is trying to think young.

This Ecumenical Council, the first in a century, was summoned "so that the church

will bring itself into step with modern times," he has said.

And that is the problem. Guidelines for this second council in the Vatican—the first here was in 1870—range over topics from the ethereal spirits to the hard facts of life. One of the "facts of life" is an efficient administration of the 1,962-year-old Catholic church.

Then there is the problem of church-state relations. This is a vast field. It concerns such things as Catholic schools and whether one can constitutionally say a prayer in public schools, to the simple profession of "I believe in God" in the Communist-ruled regimes of the world.

Deep in Study
The nearly 3,000 church "fathers" in attendance also are deep in the study of a redefinition of their own powers.

Pope John, unlike his predecessors, delegates authority. He is aware of criticism of "Rome and the Vatican." "It has become impractical to channel everything through Rome," the American Catholic

bureau of information states. This voice of more than 40 million American Catholics says:

"One of the items before the council is redefinition of the authority of bishops. Many routine decisions now must be referred to Rome before action. With about 550 million baptized Catholics in all parts of the world, it has become impractical to channel everything through Rome."

The bishops' meeting in council are certain to emerge with increased powers.

Extending Dogma
There is even talk of extending the dogma of papal infallibility to bishops.

This is not intended to mean that the pope—or possibly eventually the bishops—can't make mistakes in what they say or do. It refers to the doctrine that when they are talking strictly on subjects of faith and morals, they have the guidance of God and cannot err in those fields.

The church fathers also confront the challenge of militant atheism, spotlighted by the doctrine of communism which controls much of the world.

Yet Moscow saw fit to allow to attend the council two prelates of the state-controlled orthodox church of Russia.

Struggle Is Concern
The power struggle between East and West is of concern to the council. It will deliberate far into next year such problems as, for example, the moral issues of a possible nuclear war.

Many other topics conceivable in open church discussion only a decade ago also will be discussed, such as birth control, marriage for priests, slacks for nuns, taking some French classics off the index of prohibited books, and so on.

Catholics and non-Catholics alike are excited at the possibilities of a "modernization" of the Church of Rome that might eventually make it easier for a unification of all Christian churches.

Pope John, in addressing the opening council session, said it all comes down to the basic question of whether man is good or evil.

Problem Remains Unchanged
The great problem confronting the world after all

most 2,000 years remains unchanged," he said. "Christ is ever resplendent as the center of history and of life. Men are either with Him and His church... or else they are against Him."

The pope plunged into the council with the optimistic enthusiasm of youth.

"We feel," he said, "that we must disagree with those prophets of gloom who are always forecasting disaster as though the end of the world was at hand."

"In the present order of things, divine providence is leading us to a new order of human relations, which by men's own efforts and even

GROUNDING MENUS

Excelsior Springs, Mo. (UPI)—"The Mineral Water System of the City of Excelsior Springs" is the name of a bottling company here which appropriately has its mailing address: "The Hall of Waters Building in Excelsior Springs." This city, located 12 miles northeast of Kansas City, is a health resort known for its medicinal springs.

FORESTS GROW

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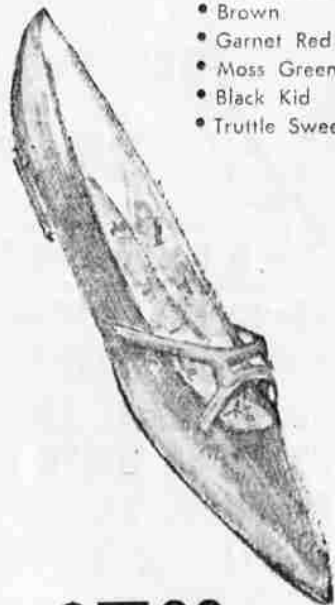
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