

Pope Draws Praise From Protestant Leaders as Church's Spiritual Head

Vatican City (UPI)—"A great Pope who is aware of what is going on in the world..." "He would not like to be remembered not only for bringing about the Ecumenical Council, but to be known as one interested in building bridges and tearing down barriers..."

"I felt I was in front of a really holy man..." Three comments from three different men about his holiness, Pope John XXIII, who observed his 81st birthday Monday.

The three men had one thing in common—they were not Catholics but leaders of Protestant churches. They were unsparing in their praise of the man who invited them to come to the Eternal City to act as observers for their churches at the historic Ecumenical Council.

At 81 Pope John also continues to be unsparing of himself as spiritual leader of the world's half a billion Catholics, but there are unmistakable signs that the aging pontiff is tiring.

During recent public ap-

pearances he has seemed short tempered—which is completely out of character—and his usually clear voice has seemed much weaker than usual. He has been short of breath, particularly during speeches.

Such signs could be simply a result of the amount of work he has been doing, particularly with his beloved Ecumenical Council well under way. The council has made tremendous demands on his time and energy and he moves at a fast pace—a pace almost unbelievable for a man of 81.

In a city where the Pope's health is a constant preoccupation, rumors about it are equally constant. The Vatican flatly refuses to discuss the Pope's health. It is known, however, that a year ago Pope John was suffering from prostate gland trouble—the first serious illness of his life. Although it cleared up after a month, there are indications the trouble has returned.

The pontiff has expressed himself unafraid of death. "I am always ready to move

over to the other shore," he has said. But one thing is certain—he wants to see what he considers the great work of his pontificate, the Ecumenical Council, finished.

He called the Ecumenical Council, the first since 1879 and the 21st in Christian history, against the wishes of many Catholic leaders, including a good number of the cardinals who make up the Vatican's administrative body, the Roman Curia.

Through his own personal will he saw to it that it was the best prepared Council in history. Three years of extensive work had gone into the Ecumenical gathering when it opened in St. Peter's basilica on Oct. 11.

Pope John has not been attending the working sessions because he felt his presence might influence the Council fathers in the Latin-language discussion of the various subjects. But he has been following virtually every word and action on closed-circuit television from his private library only a few hundred feet away from the specially-built

Council hall in St. Peter's basilica.

Rule Closes Debate
And, when debate has seemed to be stretching on endlessly with repetitions of the same points time and time again, he has stepped in to speed up discussions. He put down a rule that the Council presidency—a job that revolves among 10 cardinals—could close debate on a subject when it felt all viewpoints had been put forth.

Even then, however, Pope John made certain there would be no arbitrary closure of debate when more Council fathers wished to speak. He ruled that the closure action of the presidency must be approved by a show of hands and that those who still wanted to have their say could present written documents to the secretariat.

If the Pope should die before the Council is finished—and it could go on for years—

its work would be automatically suspended. The next pontiff would have the choice of reconvening the council or leaving it unfinished.

Called 'Interim' Pope
In many ways the personality of Pope John has overshadowed his four-year pontificate, which began Oct. 28, 1958. At that time, because of his age, he was called by many an "interim" Pope, a Catholic leader to sit on the throne of Peter between the 19-year reign of Pope Pius XII and a younger, more energetic man.

Certainly an "interim" Pope he is not, if that im-

plies inactivity. The council alone disproves that idea. On the occasion of his 81st birthday, the pontiff undoubtedly looks back to his modest beginnings in the little Northern Italian village of Sotto il Monte. He was born Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli on Nov. 25, 1881, the third of 13 children of a poor sharecropper, Giovanni Battista Roncalli, and his wife, Marianna Mazzola Roncalli.

Little Angelo appeared destined to till the soil, like his brothers and sisters. But at the age of 11 he decided he wanted to become a priest.

And become a priest he did,

ladder, and finally into the Vatican diplomatic service. On Jan. 12, 1953, Pope Pius XII named Msgr. Roncalli a cardinal and Patriarch of Venice, the post he held until his election as Pontiff.



Small Worlds Around Us

By LYNN M. WATKINS

(Register and Tribune Syndicate 1962)

Fiddler Crab a Gentleman If He Remembers His Wife

We could hardly credit him with gentlemanly acts, yet there is at least one simple gesture he performs at times that smacks a little of gallantry. We have to admit, however, that there are times when he is in too much of a hurry, is too scared or downright forgetful to be chivalrous. He saves himself, while his mate who may have been a little slow on her feet, tries desperately to enter only to find he has already closed the door and sealed up the entrance.

This little character and his demure, colorless mate are the fiddler crabs, who burrow in the mud just above the high water mark and whose numbers on some warm sea beaches reach fantastic numbers. The male fiddler is really burdened. A tremendously enlarged foreclaw reminded someone once of a fiddle. This huge appendage comes in handy in combat with fellow fiddler crabs, as well as serving as a stopper to block the opening of the burrow.

Under stress of fright he backs in to the burrow opening and wedges his enlarged

claw into the opening from the underside. He expects and hopes this barrier will keep out his enemies, other fiddler crabs that might take possession of his burrow.

If the emergency isn't too serious or immediate, he will often hold up his flight to supposed safety for a short time to allow Mrs. Fiddler crab to dash into the burrow. Her front claws are normal and equal in size and of no value whatever in blocking the tunnel. So, to some degree, she depends on her mate's chivalry and protectiveness by running ahead and getting inside before he backs in and closes the portal.

Closes Door

Peculiar that she should want to go below, for the sea-grass nest of the fiddler crab is very wet and exceedingly soggy, but it's home, he it ever so dandy. Gentleman that he is at times, Mr. Crab wedges his big claw, completely blocking the entrance. Of course this method of closing the portal precludes any possibility of any further activity on his part; he can't go away. After closing the door he has to stay with it. When he leaves, the door leaves with him.

The poor little guy, however, doesn't realize that some humans, seeking fiddler crabs for fish, may come along and being more or less familiar with crab habits, will see the large claw protecting the burrow entrance and will reach down and pick him up, dump him into a pail with a great many others of his kind and carry him away from the beloved mudflat. He, the crab, is always faced with that eventually.

Or, if for any reason he leaves the door ajar, some of his natural enemies may grab his claw and pull him out, leaving his soggy home unprotected and his mate an uncaring widow.

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by Marian Martin

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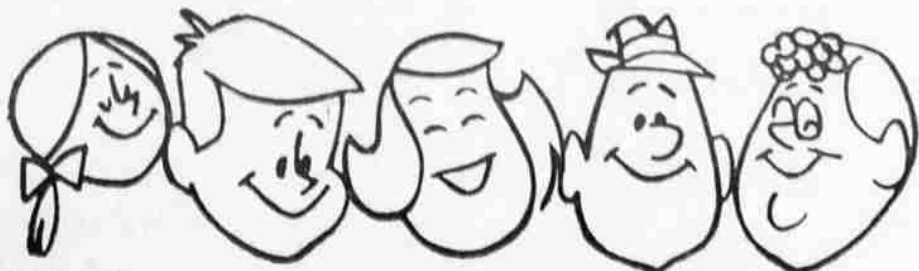
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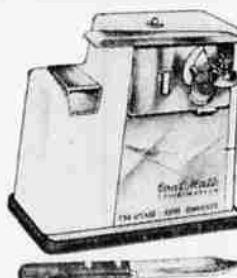
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