

Council Decisions Will Affect Millions of People

EDITOR'S NOTE: The second session of the Ecumenical Council is drawing to a close after making decisions that will affect millions of people. The following dispatch is the first of three, summing up the council's accomplishments, reporting on what may be expected from future sessions, and assessing the role of Pope Paul VI.

By LOUIS CASSELS
VATICAN CITY (UPI) — On a bright blue Roman day last week, a priest and a newsman

stood outside St. Peter's Basilica and watched 2,000 colorfully-garbed bishops pour through its massive iron doors at the end of the days meeting of the Ecumenical Council.

"No matter how often you see it, its a moving spectacle," the reporter said.

"Yes," said the priest. "I can never forget that these men are making decisions that will affect hundreds of millions of people for centuries to come."

He did not exaggerate. At its first session, in the fall of 1962,

the Ecumenical Council did not accomplish very much. It got bogged down in endless debate, and had to grope its way painfully to efficient procedures.

Religious Bodies
But the second session, now drawing to a close, has been tremendously fruitful. It has completed action on some projects, and initiated others, which will lead to far-reaching changes not only in the internal life of the Catholic Church but also in its relations with other religious bodies.

Since it reconvened last

Sept. 29, the council fathers have:

—Finished work on a lengthy liturgical reform document designed to convert Catholic laity from silent spectators into active participants in public worship. Among many other things, it authorizes use of modern languages instead of Latin in large portions of the Mass and in the administration of such sacraments as baptism and marriage. This document will be finally approved by the council and formally promulgated by the Pope at a public ceremony Friday.

—Endorsed by an overwhelming majority a theological doctrine known in council jargon as "the collegiality of bishops" which affirms that bishops have a divine right to share with the Pope in the government of the universal church. This doctrine, which has the full support of Pope Paul VI, is intended to correct the emphasis on papal supremacy which has characterized Catholic thought since the last Ecumenical Council in 1870, and to restore the much more ancient concept of the

Pope as the head of the college of bishops.

Vast Power
—Begun work on practical measures for enhancing the powers of bishops (and correspondingly reducing the vast power now exercised in the name of the Pope by the Roman Curia). Proposals for decentralization of church government, considered by the fathers in two weeks of sharp debate, include the establishment of a "senate of bishops" in Rome to which national hierarchies would send elected representa-

tives; the granting of real legislative powers to national conferences of bishops, such as the U. S. National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) and an explicit council statement that bishops possess not merely such powers as the Vatican has delegated to them, but all powers of decision which have not been specifically "reserved" by the Pope. The practical effect would be to greatly reduce the number of matters that must be referred to Rome. Voting on the details of this controversial document was deferred until the next council session.

—Approved the restoration of the ancient order of deacons, which goes back to the new testament, in areas where there is a serious shortage of priests.

Deacons, unlike priests, may be married men. They will be ordained clergymen, and will perform many of the functions of priests, but will not be authorized to celebrate mass or hear confessions.

Remove Obstacles
—Begun debate on a document which seeks to create an entirely new climate in inter-faith relations. It recognizes the right of Protestant churches to be regarded as Christian bodies in which the Holy Spirit is authentically at work. It calls on Catholics, from bishops to laity, to do all in their power to "remove obstacles" to Christian reunion and to achieve greater mutual love and understanding with the "separated brethren."

It puts the Catholic Church officially on record, for the first time, in favor of religious liberty for all. And it strikes a blow at one of the historic roots of anti-Semitism by declaring that the Jews must not be made scapegoats for the crucifixion of Christ, since the guilt for that "decide" rests upon all mankind. This document on "ecumenism" (ecclesiastical slang for the movement toward Christian unity) was the last to be taken up at this session, and voting on its provision doubtless will await the next session.

Moral Standards
These are only the highlights of the work accomplished by the council fathers this fall. Many other things might be mentioned — their overwhelmingly favorable reception of a document which emphasizes the importance of the laity as Christ's ambassadors to the real workaday world... approval of a decree upholding freedom of the press and calling for higher moral standards in all media of mass communications... their decision, by a very close vote, to devote a single modest chapter rather than a whole lengthy document to exposition of Catholic beliefs about the Virgin Mary.

But even a partial listing of the second session's accomplishments should make clear that the Ecumenical Council is no longer bogged down in talk.

It has begun to move, and it seems to be moving with a might determination toward the goals of reform, renewal and reunion which fired the heart of Pope John XXIII when he called the council into being.

Next: What may be expected from future sessions of the council.

Father of Convicted Murderer Killed in Industrial Accident
GREAT FALLS, Mont. (UPI) — The father of Dennis Schmelzer White, 17, has been killed in an industrial accident at Ashland, Ore., less than one month after his son was convicted of murder.

Everett Marion Schmelzer, 37, of Talent, Ore., was killed Wednesday at a lumber mill when he fell from the side of a fork lift and the vehicle's wheels ran over him.

The White boy, who had taken the name of his stepfather after his mother divorced Schmelzer and remarried, was convicted here Oct. 22 of first-degree murder in the July 14 ax-killing of Godfrey Johnson, 70. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Reports here said White asked permission to attend his father's funeral but prison officials refused to let him leave the state.

Schmelzer and his present wife were in Great Falls for the trial of the frail teen-ager.

The jury found the White boy guilty of slaying Johnson with an ax during burglary attempt at the home of the elderly man's son in Great Falls. Johnson's wife, Alma, 73, also was beaten with the ax but survived.

Schmelzer is survived by five other children, Tony, Carol, Randy, Ronald and Linda.

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Try and Stop Me
By BENNETT CERF

THE MAN who gave fair Harvard its name may never have seen it. The college was opened in 1637. John Harvard, a young cleric in Charlestown, Mass., died in 1638 and left his entire library and half his other property to the struggling new institution of learning. The General Court thereupon ordered that it be named in his honor. No portrait of John Harvard ever has been found. The statue in the Yard is a visualization for which a freshman posed.

After the opening of an off-Broadway play, the author, dismayed because a large part of the audience never came back for the second act, alighted to Critic George Oppenheimer. "I wrote this entire drama in four days flat," Oppenheimer answered coldly, "What took you so long?"

Going the rounds again is George Burns' classic story of the pig who swallowed a stick of dynamite, rubbed against a building, and caused an explosion that razed four city blocks. "It sure inconvenienced us," admitted the owner. "For two or three days we had a mighty sick pig on our hands!"

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Smart, Slimming
Motor Hotel Group Favors Sales Tax

PORTLAND (UPI) — The Oregon Motor Hotel Association has approved a resolution favoring a statewide sales tax if the receipts are used for real property and income tax relief.

The resolution also stipulated that the tax should be non-selective and have one uniform rate.

It was passed Saturday on the concluding day of the association's convention here. Other resolutions urged legislation to control excessive highway noise and a lien law to protect owners of mobile home parks against customers who do not pay their bills.

Mel Stricklett, Portland, was elected president.

In addition to Stricklett, new members of the board of directors are Ernest Tremper and Walter Johnson Portland; Don Dennis, Hal Boone and Carl (Rudy) Nystrom, Eugene; Paul Farnsworth and Robert Rea, Bend; J. R. Beadmore, Depoe Bay; J. T. Hamilton, Medford; Harry Molatore, Klamath Falls; Bob Sussman, Pendleton; Halle Urquart, Ontario; Carl Labiske, Astoria, and William Metcalf, Seaside.

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by Alice Brooks

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