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III. The Chaplains' Meeting

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many words, that the tag "ghetto mentality", so often condemned during the conference, was really a propaganda device that could lead to the promotion of an attitude favorable to syncretism. Others have embraced the principles of the conference enthusiastically. For our part, we noted that while the discussions were heavily speculative, the delegates never lost sight of their spiritual objectives nor of the essentially religious and *Catholic* orientation of their work. This was especially manifest when after their morning sessions the delegates would troop to Mass and after their afternoon meetings would take time out to chant Vespers.

We are thankful for this opportunity to get acquainted with our Catholic brethren from other lands in the many informal dialogues that took place between sessions, and for the chance, during those times when the graduates shared the hall with the experts, to discover what is unconsciously Christocentric in the faith of other peoples. This engendered in many what we expect is a genuine deepening of charity, and enkindled the hope that in the glory of the Parousia, all men of good will shall come face to face, having done what lay in their power *ut fiat unum ovile et unus Pastor*.

ANTONIO G. MANUUD

3. The Chaplains' Meeting

The chaplains spoken of here are chaplains at secular universities all over the world. These priests are entrusted with the safeguarding of the Faith of students in an atmosphere which is all too often unreligious, to say the least; and over and above that, with the intellectual advance of the students' vital mastery of religious truth in a way that will keep respectable pace with their maturing mastery of secular truths.

There were five formal meetings, the talks and discussions of each centering around these topics: 1) the relationship of the chaplain to his Ordinary; 2) the precise nature of the chaplain's function; 3) the problem of the preparation of students for university life; 4) the special problems of students going

overseas to study; 5) seeking scholarships abroad and preparing students for them.

Welcoming the delegates and keynoting the first discussion, His Excellency, Archbishop Rufino Santos (now Cardinal), stressed the role of the chaplain as an extension of the Ordinary. The chaplain must be one in mind and heart with the Ordinary. In everyday action prudence must be the chaplain's guide, common sense his personal ally; but in all cases of doubt the Ordinary should be directly consulted and in all matters whatsoever obedience to the Ordinary is the safest norm of conduct.

A rather disjointed discussion followed. Query: How, practically speaking, is one to discover who the Catholic students are at a state university and then how is one to get in touch with them? Archbishop Santos pointed out that in the Philippines Catholics attending the state university must first obtain written permission from the Curia, which then informs the university chaplain. Some delegates objected to this solution since in their opinion chaplains would then be tied down to a parish structure and a benevolent paternalism within the university might result, not the most desirable situation.

The second meeting began with a consideration of the "theology" of the chaplain's position. Dr. Ruf of Fribourg said that in place of the stress on authority, which is identified with paternalism and in his opinion stunts the growth of the individual student, he would like to emphasize companionship; that is, fraternalism. This notion, he said, is based on the nature of the primitive Christian community, where the *presbyter* (the "elder") had the authority and the others — priests, deacons and laity alike—were under the charge of the presbyter but with no discrimination of rank among them. Applying this idea, the chaplain should not have any authority but should be associated with the student merely as a friendly adviser.

There were many objections to this proposal as not fundamentally sound and even somewhat dangerous. Nevertheless it was agreed that the chaplain's exact position needed to be clarified to facilitate his effective dealing with students. Dr.

Panikkar of the University of Benares undertook this clarification.

As indicated by the classical definition, "the participation of the laity in the work of the hierarchy", Catholic Action provides an auxiliary force for the hierarchy. The bishop has his proper apostolate *jure divino*; but so, too, has the laity. Hence all liberty is given to the laity in teaching and sanctifying society *within its own competence*. The chaplain, as the extension of the bishop, is an assistant in this apostolate of the laity.

The priest-chaplain, Dr. Panikkar pointed out, occupies a unique mediating position as between bishop and laity. The bishop alone has the fulness of the priesthood, both Orders and jurisdiction; the priest shares in his Orders, the laity in his jurisdiction. Sharing in Orders, the priest has a common ground with the bishop; sharing in jurisdiction, since there he is the extension of the bishop, he meets the laity on a plane of equality.

But again there was disagreement, as now seemed inevitable. The trouble was that in an effort to avoid the supposed difficulties of paternalism or continual direct supervision all the speculative discussion seemed to overlook the fact that the Church, truly conceived, is essentially hierarchical.

The third meeting turned to another problem, the preparation of students for life at the university. Prior indoctrination in the Church's social teaching; at the university, special courses, student forums or weekend lectures and especially liturgical instruction so that the Mass becomes the center of the student's life: these were some of the practical means discussed. The impression left, however, was of a common failure to face or even recognize the root problem of the student's (particularly the *young* student's) apparent inability to grasp religious truth on anything but an extremely primary level. A questionnaire administered in the Philippines indicates that students coming to the university have no complexity or depth whatever in their religious knowledge. The cause may be mediocre teaching or "inoperative" faith or immaturity. But

even if these contribute, it is almost certainly at base a question of how to guide the minds of the young to a better apprehension of truth, that is, a psychological problem; and one that was not faced.

Monsignor Coonan of London focussed the fourth discussion (the difficulties of students going overseas) on three questions: 1) How can students be helped before they set out for the foreign country where they will study? 2) How can they be helped at arrival? 3) How can they be formed spiritually after arrival and at the same time prepared for their return home? All agreed that help was needed in all three phases, although not such help abroad as would harmfully narrow the experience of the travelling student. What is primarily needed (to start somewhere in a fairly virgin field) is some organized center in the student's native country which will give orientation to the student, make contact for him with a chaplain where he is going and provide his chaplain with necessary personal information about the student. Parallel with this need is, of course, the need of having more priests working specifically among the increasing number of foreign students in every country.

Scholarships (the subject of the last meeting) should be sought and got for deserving students, but "deserving" here means those who are mature and responsible, intellectually, psychologically and morally, not simply those who "mean well". Incapable students do their country and their Faith more harm than good, so every choice should be very carefully and objectively weighed. A clearing house making information about scholarship grants available to chaplains would be helpful and may soon be a necessity.

The discussions proved, if nothing else, that where there is agreement as to ends, there can still be enormous divergence as to means. The general impression gathered from all the meetings was that the chaplains, as men appointed to do a very special work, need besides the liberal (and priestly-professional) education of the seminary specialized training in psychology and guidance. Moreover, a university chaplaincy is not just

another priestly job; it is a wholly different priestly job, a unique one, making exceptionally full and peculiar demands on the personal and intellectual resources of the chaplain. During his preparation, therefore, the chaplain-to-be must achieve a complete orientation to his new situation. This means adjustment not merely to the "university" situation but also to the situation of each university where and as it is: a point recurrently noted was the failure of the Western mind to comprehend and, especially, make allowances for the differences inherent in Asian culture.

In informal talks among themselves the chaplains very commonly noted the very low level of religious knowledge among the local Catholic students participating in the students' "workshop" discussions. This is, lamentably often, "grade-school" knowledge: grasp of a litany of true propositions but no grasp of their full meaning or of the grounds on which assent to them is given. The women of our Catholic colleges (SCA representatives) seem woefully deficient in this regard. Another impression, gathered from both workshop and plenary sessions, was of a prevailing double standard of truth: truths of religion in one compartment, truths of life in another.

These defects were noted and commented upon and the fact of that observation and comment seems worthy of record. Whatever the complete cause may be, it is evident that some hard thinking about our methods of religious instruction (perhaps too much spoon-feeding?) needs to be done.

JAMES F. CULLIGAN

4. The Students' Assembly

The spirit of the Interfederal Assembly was well expressed by Mr. Thom Kerstiens: "One of the most characteristic phenomena of our time is the will for more international understanding and collaboration. But if students in general have the task of working for this international understanding, how much more is it the duty of Catholic students to work in this direction, for