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A Moment of Church Renewal: Vatican II: Last of the Councils

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self,"—is it altogether felicitous to conclude that "the major theological problem around which [Gregory's] attention revolved from the beginning to the end of his works" is a problem which he (as B. himself admits) did not once explicitly state because "his thinking is not speculative enough to formulate the problem in...abstract terms?" B. says, further: "The problem is implicitly present in all his works and gives to them a unity of which he himself was perhaps not conscious.")

Together with the customary bibliography, B. also gives us an index of Scripture texts used in Gregory's works: Gregory's importance (he reminds us) as a major source in the reconstruction of the *Vetus Latina* is now generally admitted. In another appendix, B. discusses the authenticity of three minor works and of various fragments attributed to Gregory. There is finally a chronology of Gregory's works; B. uses internal criteria based on his own research on the development of Gregory's thought to help him establish the chronology.

This dissertation is obviously the issue of much careful, methodical, painstaking work, of much patient collating of texts, citations, cross-references. Obviously Father Buckley did not spare himself the *durus labor* his subject demanded. What he says of Gregory on p. 134: "Nothing is too commonplace or insignificant to escape his notice," may well be applied to his own conscientious attention to detail.

We may be allowed to congratulate Father Buckley for these *primitiae*, we trust, of his scholarly labors.

C. G. ARÉVALO, S.J.

A MOMENT OF CHURCH RENEWAL

VATICAN II: LAST OF THE COUNCILS. By Rock Caporale, S.J.
Foreword by Bishop John J. Wright. Baltimore: Helicon Press,
1964. 192 pp.

During the second session of Vatican II, Fr. Rock Caporale interviewed some 90 people connected in some capacity with the Council: 73 were bishops or cardinals, 17 theologian-experts or Protestants observers. He interviewed them as a student of sociology; the interviews were meant to find out what bishops and other leaders in the Church from all over the world thought about "vital conciliar issues"; the book itself, a summation of the survey written in non-technical form, was meant to be of service to bishops participating in the Council, to the Christian

community, and to those in charge of the organization of the Council. With the Council over, the book retains its interest and value, and some recent notices tell us that it is scheduled for publication in French and other languages.

Caporale's questions touched on: the bishops' conception of a council, its function in the Church, its relevance to our times (Chapter II); the bishop's view of Pope John XXIII's personality, of his motivation for the summoning of the Council, of his attitude towards those who did not share his views on *aggiornamento* (Chapter III); the usefulness of the Council's earlier sessions (the book was sent to press early in 1964), the gains derived (Chapter VIII); what was changing in the Church, the significance of those changes, the implications and developments foreseen as following on the changes (Chapter IX); the reactions to the Council in the various dioceses, the communication of the concerns and ideas of the Council to the dioceses, the extent of consultation between bishops and their communities (Chapter X); the number of languages known by the bishops, their reading preferences (what periodicals they preferred to read as sources of information on the Council itself) (Chapter XI); the leadership patterns of the Council (Chapter XII).

What Fr. Caporale has given us is a summary of the general impressions and ideas he gathered in the course of the survey. "What I intend to present here," he says, "is the vibrant image of the Church, as I perceived it in the course of my contact with its leaders. I have tried to interpret this through a comparative analysis of opinions and facts."

Instead of trying to summarize the contents of the book, we may perhaps give a small sampling of some of the more interesting things in just one chapter on "the changing Church":

Two thirds of the bishops interviewed agreed that since the beginning of the Council there have indeed been significant changes in the Church. The extent of the change they observed varies; some saw it in nearly all the bishops, others only in some of them, while still others identified particular groups which have changed. Even so, some bishops testified to having witnessed some "total conversions." But on the whole it was a confirmation and a reinforcement of attitudes held before, or a more explicit agreement with the lucidly stated proposition of respected leaders, and the rejection of those they disliked. On the other hand, the opposite phenomenon was equally observable, the rigidification and retrenchment of conservative positions. This was typically a phenomenon of individuals rather than of entire groups. At worst it was a phenomenon of the minority, the "*pertinaces*" as one bishop called these reactionaries. The change of attitudes and ideas among the most res-

ponsive bishops was primarily the outcome of increased appreciation for the opinions of other bishops.

(A Filipino bishop): "At the beginning of the Council there were no contacts. There were no prejudices either, but each bishop thought only of his own little diocese. Through the dialogue amongst us we became aware of the viewpoints of others. Many of our bishops had never traveled, many had never seen a Negro bishop before. We had lived in isolation. Many changes have taken place since."

The picture was not onesided however. There were at least five bishops who said they had observed no significant change either in the bishops and the leaders in the Council or in the Church structure.

(An African bishop, speaking of some factors influencing bishops in the direction of change:) "When the vote on *de fontibus* was taken, the decisive factor that made the bishops put an end to it was that they were fed up with it." (A Latin-American bishop:) "Even overwork and fatigue have their say. I saw a bishop vote *placet* even before explanations were given as to what we were voting for."

(Another bishop): "People vote for a proposition because Ottaviani opposes it."

An Italian bishop, with rare intuition, traced the position of both the so-called progressives and the traditionalists to a common emotional and irrational factor: "The two are parallel and opposed. Both answer a need for the fashionable, for a group with whom to stand. Thus fascinated by words, ideas and persons, we surrender our originality and individuality." This was an often-heard complaint.

On the voting process:

Invariably to their dismay, several bishops saw the majority of the *Ecclesia docens* subscribe to ideas and suggestions with which they disagreed or which they considered dangerous, unsafe, or possibly erroneous. Which side was right? And what of their opinions? Did they have to change and submit to the majority decision? These hints of possible psychological reactions by minority bishops serve only as a stimulation to conjecture as to what a fascinating study this would represent...

(A Latin American bishop:) "I was never in the minority. After the results of some voting were made known, some minority bishops thought that the Church was going to the dogs, that the primacy of the Pope was all but ended, and that we were almost heretics. Although now they don't label us with such terminology,

they are still shocked and astonished." (A Canadian bishop:) "I never found myself with the minority. But I asked myself: is it good? Or have I been carried away with the crowd? If I were to find myself with the minority occasionally it would not bother me, but if I should find myself with the minority consistently, I would reconsider my position with regard to *sentire cum Ecclesia*." (Another bishop:) "The minority takes it in good stride, but conversions rarely occur. Voting does not change people, only personal contact and dialogue does." (A U.S. bishop:) "The learning process here never operates a complete reversal of thinking, but only a gradual revision of positions." (A Venezuelan bishop:) "I voted with the minority once; then I saw that the Church thought differently. I am open to change; I like to listen."

Caporale concludes the chapter with these remarks:

We can gather from the above statements a glimpse of the complex play of human, cultural, spiritual and physical factors that concomitantly resulted in the final product of the Council... [As the discussion and voting progressed], the opinions of the bishops were gradually crystallizing in one direction and consensus was being achieved, which was a far cry from the very divergent positions of the first days of the Council. This process all but confirmed the Church's consciousness that she possesses the truth and that the process of debate and disagreement serves only to highlight the effort which the Church undergoes in her attempt to become consciously aware of what she is and what she stands for. This is a unique phenomenon that finds no parallel in any other congress of human legislators.

There is also a section (Chapter VI, 1) on the work of the experts, the specialist-consultants and commission "work-horses", "the cream of the intellectual resources at the disposal of the Church." One point: by far the majority of them came from Europe and North America, particularly from Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, the U.S. and Canada. One result, as remarked by a Bishop from Asia: "By and large, the topics raised at the Council referred to the Western countries. When we asked the *periti* our questions and our problems, they had no answers. They make laws for our regions, too, but without knowing the actual situation there." The suggestion that a way should be found to organize the work of the *periti* into a permanent function in the Church was well-received it would seem, by many of the bishops questioned.

In the section on the Protestant observers, the author records that they were generally surprised and pleased by what took place at the first two sessions of the council, finding that this raised real hopes for the restoration of unity among Christians.

In the book's last chapter Caporale asks the question, The Last Council? He argues that at the base of the difficulties that beset the Conciliar system, as any other system of human deliberation, there is the crucial problem of change in a large-scale organization. And he asks, "What prevents the Church from facing this problem of change as an ongoing process, systematically solving new problems as they arise, without letting them grow to critical proportions or cumulate, unsolved, until a council is convoked?" His suggestion: to institutionalize change itself, as only a mechanism of ongoing self-analysis and periodic taking-stock of herself can assure the Church that she will not find herself so involved in temporary and particular situations that her major objectives are lost sight of. The highly concentrated function of sporadic councils needs to be spread and decentralized over time and space, to bring about a gradual and progressive achievement of what normally would be the objectives of an ecumenical council. "The council's objectives could possibly be achieved through other means, as for instance, through a graded hierarchy of consultations, at the regional, national and continental level, and finally, through a body of world-wide representation." A real reform of the Roman Curia, plus the setting-up of the Senate of Bishops—both projects already announced by Pope Paul VI, would go a long way toward achieving the objectives Caporale lines up as a task the Church must work at in the post-conciliar period.

In all, this book makes highly interesting reading, and Bishop Wright does not exaggerate when he calls it (in his foreword) an "intriguing, fascinating study." It catches *in vivo* members of the hierarchy of the Church at a moment of renewal, in its forward thrust to meet the challenge of the present and the years to come, responsive to the Spirit and to the signs of the time. For this reason it should serve as an excellent companion to a study of the theology of ecumenical councils.

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PHILIPPINE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

NEW WRITING FROM THE PHILIPPINES: A Critique and Anthology, by Leonard Casper. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1966. xv, 411 pp.

Professor Leonard Casper, who has written much about Philippine writers, has perhaps done his best work in this large and handsomely printed volume. This is certainly one of the best anthologies of Philippine literature in English. The first 154 pages are a Critique in which Mr. Casper discusses, first the Philippine