

Ladislav Rubin, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Oriental Churches; Archbishop Paulos Tzadua, metropolitan archbishop of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

Archbishop Carlo Martini, archbishop of Milan, Italy.

Finally, we wish you all well in the Lord.

Synod '80

The Synod's Spirit / Canadian Delegation's Message

As a result of the 1980 Synod of Bishops "our conviction has become clearer and firmer that solutions to many of the problem we face will be found only when family members accept the ministry of bringing the good news to their own situations," the Canadian delegates said in a message to Canadian families at the synod's conclusion. "You are called by God to build up the kingdom by fulfilling responsibilities that are uniquely yours," they said. Although the synod could not produce "the rapid and final solutions" to difficult pastoral problems some might have hoped for, the bishops said they believe "an important step forward has been made." They said the synod recommended a "new and far-reaching study" of pastoral care of the divorced and remarried, whose aim "would be to develop a truly compassionate pastoral program while not putting into question the teaching on the indissolubility of marriage." They also said "many bishops recommended continuing research toward a new and fuller presentation of what is involved" in the teaching expressed in "Humanae Vitae." The synod gave them "hope for development, progress and new ways of seeing the hand of God in the lives of families and in each of our individual lives... We feel that we can go forward with you in further discovery of the truth and beauty of marriage and the family." Their message follows.

The fifth general Synod of Bishops has just passed into history. We Canadian delegates to that important meeting now turn our thoughts toward the people of Canada for whom family life represents such an important value. We feel the need to communicate with you briefly about what has happened here in Rome.

For us, the work of the synod began a long time ago in the program which the Canadian bishops launched in order that we would become more keenly

conscious of the lives and concerns of families today. We have had the loyal and effective support of people from coast to coast and in particular of a number of experts including married couples who have helped us immeasurably. At the conclusion of the synod we find ourselves pleased and hopeful with the results.

The most spectacular aspect of the synod is the fact that it brings together people from all over the world. It teaches us the catholicity or universality of the church. It becomes a special opportunity for a realization of that communion of persons which is the church. To attend a synod is to realize the power of the Spirit who is able to work all over the world and bring together in a remarkable unity a variety of peoples with their different temperaments, cultures and traditions. We believe that the Spirit has been at work and we are grateful for his presence.

Through all these days of work, our conviction has become clearer and firmer that solutions to many of the problems we face will be found only when family members accept the ministry of bringing the good news to their own situations. You are called by God to build up the kingdom by fulfilling responsibilities that are uniquely yours. This flows from your vocation as lay people.

A number of particularly difficult pastoral problems were taken up during the synod, as you know through the news media. There could not be the rapid and final solutions for which some might have been hoping. However, an important step forward has been made.

Regarding the matter of the pastoral care of those who are divorced and remarried, the synod fathers recommended that a new and far-reaching study be launched. Its aim would be to develop a truly compassionate pastoral program while not putting into question the teaching on the indissolubility of marriage. Likewise, regarding the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, many bishops recommended continuing

<

i.e., the right of every man, and especially the poor, to form a family and sustain it with appropriate help.

"2. To exercise its role in transmitting life right from its conception and to educate the children.

"3. Of intimacy in both conjugal and family life.

"4. Of stability of the bond and institution of marriage.

"5. Of believing and professing one's own faith and propagating it.

"6. Of educating one's children according to one's own traditions and religious and cultural values, with the necessary instruments, means and institutions.

"7. Of obtaining physical, social, political and economic security, especially of the poor and weak.

"8. The right to habitation fit for leading a family life properly.

"9. Of expression and representation before public authorities, economic, social and cultural, and those subject to them, either by oneself or through associates.

"10. Of creating associations with other families and institutions so that one may fulfill one's role fittingly and effectively.

"11. Of protecting minors, with the help of adequate institutions and laws, against harmful drugs, pornography, alcoholism, etc.

"12. Of honest leisure which may at the same time foster family values.

"13. The right equally to dignified life and dignified death.

"14. The right to emigrate as a family to seek a better life."

After he returned from the synod, Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco issued a statement to the people of his archdiocese. The archbishop is president of the (U.S.) National Conference of Catholic Bishops and attended the synod as a member of the U.S. delegation. His statement was received by Origins at press time. It follows:

"To the priests, deacons, religious and the people of God whom they are called by Christ to serve in the Archdiocese of San Francisco:

"Before leaving for the synod, I asked your fervent prayers especially to the mother of God, for the success of that great ecclesial event. Now on return I want to thank you and to share with you something of the rich and joyful spirit which characterized the synod.

"News reports would create the impression that only one or two subjects occupied the entire month of the synod. In reality, the topics were manifold and wide-ranging. All related to the theme of the synod: *The Gifts and Role of the Christian Family in Today's World.*

"To mention only some of the topics: the spirit of faith in the Christian family, discovering the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel, the theology of the sacrament of matrimony and its doctrinal and anthropological foundations, the role of woman in family life, the relationship of different cultures to Christian marriage, mixed marriages, the indissolubility of Christian marriage and the problem of divorce."

▷

research toward a new and fuller presentation of what is involved in this question.

Besides trying with our brother bishops to discern God's will in these difficult matters, as a delegation from Canada we tried to bring to the synod some other concerns of our people. We spoke of the special needs of poor families and of the urgency of transforming the structures that cause the injustices which oppress them. How we will communicate the message of the Gospel in our own families will depend heavily on our response to the needs of the poor.

We urged that the aged should receive more love and care within the family. We called for greater efforts so that women can attain full recognition and dignity. We drew attention to the need for serious study of new biomedical developments. We also called for an all-out effort in the church to deepen our understanding of human sexuality.

In all these matters, we have stressed the role you yourselves, as families, have to fulfill. We do this in confidence, for we have seen what great resourcefulness our families have. Our convictions about the family's role in evangelization and social progress, as an agent of history, have been confirmed.

Although we cannot proclaim great changes in the fundamental values of the Gospel or the teaching of the church, we do believe that we have gained deeper insights into them. In a remarkable intervention Cardinal Hume spoke of two ways of looking at the church: either as a fortress which repels strangers who come near it, or as a pilgrim who seeks the way in darkness and difficulty. We feel that this synod has espoused the latter

attitude and has given us hope for development, progress and new ways of seeing the hand of God in the lives of families and in each of our individual lives.

In particular the spirit of the synod has not been to lay down laws and regulations. Rather it has been to realize again that the church is not concentrated in the bishops but is indeed fulfilled in all of us and particularly in all of our families.

Together we hope to be able to accept the true meaning of the Gospel with all of its challenges, including the cross. We have no desire to be false to the prophetic role assigned to us, which is to proclaim the same Gospel as the Lord himself proclaimed. But we also recognize that although the fundamental values do not change, our comprehension of them is progressive.

We feel that we can go forward with you in further discovery of the truth and the beauty of marriage and the family which make women and men participants in God's work of creation. Each family's response to Christ's call to holiness stems from the ordinary situations of daily life. Families don't find their sanctity some place else, but right in the midst of what they live through day by day. When we try to help families grasp what is demanded by the Gospel, we pastors do not always find words that are communicative and convincing. Therefore we will have to continue searching with you for words that will touch the minds and hearts of the men and women of today.

The synod on the family has ended, but it was only a time for planting. Now we must set to work together to cultivate what has been sown and bring it to harvest. □

Synod '80

Status Report on Code Revision

The status of the revision of the Code of Canon Law was described by Cardinal Pericle Felici, prefect of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law, in a report he gave to the Synod of Bishops Oct. 21. According to a summary of his presentation distributed by the synod's information committee, Felici said the work of revising the code, begun 17 years ago, is nearing completion. He described the "new, complete text" of the code as the "product of intense and careful work" which incorporates the decrees and acts of Vatican II, the principles of the 1967 synod for revising canon law and the results of the

commission's lengthy consultation with the Roman Curia and experts, episcopal conferences, religious orders and universities throughout the world. "As to the last stages of work," he said, "John Paul II...did not believe it necessary to take into consideration the requests of some prelates for further consultation before the promulgation of the new code. In fact, such further consultation, while it doesn't seem necessary in view of the vast consultations already done...would retard the publication of the new Code of Canon Law, greatly desired by many for the good of the universal church." The text of the summary follows.