

# THE CATHOLIC CITIZEN

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Daughter of the ancient Eve,  
We know the gifts ye gave and give;  
Who knows the gifts which you shall give,  
Daughter of the Newer Eve?

Francis Thompson

## The Age of Consent

By M. Chave Collison

Ann Stafford in this volume sets in relief against the backcloth of darkest Victorian England the battles and leaders in two campaigns; one for repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (1864, 1866, 1869) and linked with it the struggle to raise the age of consent.

The leaders included (as principal) Josephine Butler, beautiful, deeply religious, happily married; James Stansfield, brilliant Parliamentarian; Benjamin Scott, Chamberlain of the City of London; Bramwell Booth, devoted Salvationist; W. T. Stead, crusading Christian journalist, first editor of the *Northern Echo* then guiding the policy of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Behind them stood a steadily swelling body of English men and women; against them a hostile Press, many churchmen, a callously indifferent Parliament.

The Contagious Diseases Acts, enacted to reduce venereal diseases in the armed forces, required that in selected garrison districts prostitutes must register, and undergo periodical medical examination by police surgeons. Further, a police officer could summon any woman whom he "had cause to suspect" of prostitution; a magistrate, short of signed "voluntary submission" which enrolled the woman as a prostitute, could sentence her to repeated periods of imprisonment. Government thus provided "safe vice", established a double standard of morality, and opened the door to spiteful accusation, police corruption, persecution of the innocent. The Act of 1869 presaged extension to more districts, despite protests. Repeal workers called urgently on Mrs. Butler for leadership. Facing with horror the repellent publicity of work for the then "unmentionable" profession, though long the loving friend of many within its ranks, she began the "consecrated revolt". The details of this long intricate arduous campaign, ending only with repeal in 1866; are well set out in Ann Stafford's book.

Mrs. Butler early realised the appalling need to raise the age of consent. Girls under fourteen were

\* *The Age of Consent*, by Ann Stafford. Hodder and Stoughton. 30s.

on the police registers. In 1871 she told a Royal Commission, examining the effects of the C.D. Acts, as a result of repeal agitation, "I have seen girls bought and sold . . . our laws declare a girl of twelve a woman. . . . On this Parliament could and should act; the age of consent must be raised." The Commission recommended fourteen, but the Bill brought to the House of Commons incorporated clauses on the objectionable Acts bitterly opposed by the repealers; Gladstone withdrew it as too controversial.

The low age of consent offered easy prey for a vast national and international trade in young girls. London was the centre for this active market. The story of international repeal work with its startling results on the widespread Napoleonic system of "tolerated" brothels must be read at first hand. In England, after repeated failures with Parliament, and with a still massive indifferent public, Josephine Butler, Benjamin Scott, Bramwell Booth, and W. T. Stead devised desperate measures. They penetrated, in various guises the awful horror of London's underworld; and in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 6th to 1865 published the findings as of a "Secret Commission". The apparatus of decoy, certification of virginity before abandonment for payment down to "clients", padded rooms to stifle screams of young victims were described. The close link between corrupt police and brothel keepers was exposed. Categorically that first article "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" affirmed "A Child of Thirteen Bought for £5". To prove the wicked ease of such a purchase, Stead, posing as a dissolute man about town, had supplied Rebecca Jarrett, a converted brothel keeper, with money to buy from one Eliza Armstrong from her dissolute mother; had the child certified, took her to a brothel, looked in on her, left her unhurt, and sent her away.

Though critics raged at "obscene" articles, the report sold among scenes of excitement, and of rising anger among honest Englishmen. Faced with an enraged electorate, the Government on July 9th, announced the resumption of a debate on a pro-

posed Criminal Law Amendment Bill, thrown into the limbo of unfinished debate only the previous May, on August 14th, by Royal Assent, the final version of that Bill became the famous Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885. The sequence of events, press publicity, electoral anger, Government submission, and the content of the Bill, is made very clear in this well-documented story. By the final Act, the age of consent was raised to sixteen; categories of offence covered procurement, attempts at procurement, illegal detention for immoral purposes, removal of any unmarried girl under eighteen out of the possession of her parents for an immoral purpose, and much else. The evidence of a child too young to understand an oath and that of a person accused under the Act could be accepted.

The excitement spread far beyond Great Britain—triumph indeed; but anti-climax followed. Mrs. Armstrong clamoured for the return of Eliza. A newspaper agitation, aimed at Stead, was worked up. A dramatic trial indicted Stead, Bramwell Booth and Rebecca Jarrett for removing the child without her *father's* consent. Booth was acquitted; Stead and Jarrett were found guilty on this and a further charge of causing to be committed an indecent assault on Eliza's person, and suffered three and six months' imprisonment respectively. The jury admitted the purity of Stead's motives, and his own speech, now admissible in evidence, moved even the judge; but two Acts—Criminal Law Amendment 1885, and Offences against the Person 1861, condemned him.

Since 1885 the battle against immoral procurement, national and international, has never ceased. The 1886 repeal of the C.D. Acts finally affected the British colonies, but only after further repeal work.

The heirs of the great campaigns, the Josephine Butler Society, the Salvation Army, the British Vigilance Association, and internationally, the International Abolitionist Federation and the International Bureau, still fight on—and the great women's organisations have brought pressure to bear nationally and internationally for the better understanding of the evil of a double moral standard. It is perhaps a pity that in chapter fourteen Ann Stafford ends her book with well-meant insistence on today's need to give teenagers moral guidance. For the story of the campaign is an epic, and epics need no tags.

St. Joan's Alliance was represented at the reception given at the English Speaking Union by the Association of Ceylon Women in the United Kingdom, on July 16th, in honour of a visit to the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference of Mrs. Sirimavo Banarainike, Prime Minister of Ceylon.

### SLAVERY

On July 9th, 1964, in the House of Lords, the Duke of Devonshire, Minister of State for Commonwealth Relations and for the Colonies, answered a question from the Earl of Listowel as to which of the federated sheikdoms and amirates in the Federation of South Arabia had responded to the appeal of the Supreme Council of the Federation in August, 1963, to legislate against slavery, as follows:

"My Lords, since August, 1963, anti-slavery legislation has been passed in the States of Lahej and Baihan. Legislation is being considered in the Lower Yafa'i, Wahidi and Fadhli States. Laws are already in force in the Audhali Sultanate, the Lower Avlaqi Sultanate, the Upper Avlaqi Sheikdom, the Qa'iti Sultanate and the Kathiri Sultanate. The Haushabi authorities have informed the Federal Government that as there are no slaves in that Sultanate they see little point in enacting legislation: this attitude is generally shared by the rest of the States of the Protectorate of South Arabia, in which there is no legislation on the subject at present."

To a further question the Minister gave an undertaking that before Southern Arabia becomes independent the Secretary of State will exercise his power under the Treaty of Friendship to advise that the legislation under consideration be enacted and that the ownership of slaves should come to an end. "Is it thinkable," said the Earl of Listowel, "that any people for whom we are responsible should pass beyond British jurisdiction as slaves?"

At this moment 54 states out of 112 have ratified the Supplementary Convention on Slavery of 1956. The urgent need is for more ratifications. St. Joan's International Alliance will ask its Council at Antwerp to press for the appointment of a permanent body of experts to hasten the abolition of slavery. The Anti-Slavery Society tells us that no international instrument to abolish slavery has been effective except during the periods 1890-1914, and 1932-39, when there existed permanent bodies of experts to supervise the implementation of existing international conventions.

### OBITUARY

We are grieved to learn of the sudden death of Mrs. Hester Lalor in Melbourne on July 7th. Many members will remember meeting her at St. Joan's International Council Meeting in Rome in the memorable Holy Year of 1950 and later in London when she was visiting England with Miss Margaret Flynn. She joined St. Joan's in Australia in 1940 and was for some time one of the vice-presidents of the Victoria Section. Miss Inez Sexton writes: "She was a marvellous person with a great width of interests and numerous friends, cultured and witty, helping people and causes wherever she could; a dear friend and very gracious lady. Everyone says 'It was good to have known her.'" R.I.P.

## Notes and Comments

We are looking forward to an interesting and lively International Council Meeting in Antwerp, August 28th-30th, and to meeting friends new and old. We are particularly glad to welcome five delegates from Australia who have just arrived in London en route for Antwerp, as well as Señorita Celia Zaragosa from Argentina.

It was heartwarming to entertain Miss McGillicuddy at an informal luncheon on August 13th when she was passing through London on her way back to New York after an extensive tour in Europe where she never missed an opportunity of talking about St. Joan's. Together with Mme Leroy, she attended the Conference of International Catholic Organisations in Barcelona. In Paris, she met members of l'Alliance St. Jeanne d'Arc and visited UNESCO where she discussed with Miss Nicole Friederich the co-operation between Non-Governmental Organisations and UNESCO.

Oxford and Cambridge have each taken a step towards equal opportunity for men and women. The governing body of New College, Oxford, has voted to admit women as undergraduates, and Clare College, Cambridge, has announced a plan for a post-graduate centre which will be open to men and women Fellows.

An article in *The Guardian* by the Chief Education Officer at Leeds on girls' education has brought some response that is worth recording. Mrs. Rachel Powell writes "the boys are really as much stunted as the girls. I want an education which sees tenderness and adaptability as good manly characteristics and objectivity and outward-looking curiosity as good feminine qualities too."

Meanwhile, Princess Margaret speaking at the opening of the new Wolfson building at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, encouraged girls to resist those who say a university education is wasted if a woman marries young. She called this a "most mistaken view". "Intelligence," she said, "is a most precious gift and should be fostered according to the needs of its possessor."

The Alliance believes that neither boys nor girls should be pressed to seek for higher education for any other reason than that they feel the call for it. There is as much harm done by forcing young people into careers to satisfy their parents' ambition as is done by thwarting them in what they choose to do. Intelligence is found elsewhere than in colleges, but every boy and every girl who has the urge for further education should be encouraged to seek it, and it is still too often the girls who are discouraged by public statements and private prejudices from the full development of their talents which is their right and which enhances their value to society.

The thirty-second Annual Conference of the British Commonwealth League, which has now changed its name to "Commonwealth Countries League", took place at the Commonwealth Institute on July 1st and 2nd—Mrs. Hemming presiding. The subject of the discussion was—Design for Living Within the Commonwealth—Women's part in

- (a) social services—voluntary and governmental
- (b) adult education
- (c) politics and economics.

The principal speakers were Lady Henriques on Social Services, Miss Irene Hilton, president of the Federation of University Women, on Adult Education, and the Hon. Mrs. Kirkland-Casgrain, Minister of State, Quebec, on Politics and Economics. There were also extremely interesting contributions by speakers from many Commonwealth countries which helped to make this two days conference a most rewarding experience.

The conference was preceded by a reception given by the president, Mrs. Hemming, at her lovely house in Hampstead when speakers and delegates had the opportunity of meeting in an informal atmosphere in preparation for the more serious discussions to follow.

Before he left for Antarctica, Sir Vivian Fuchs expressed the view that the sub-continent is unsuitable for women; the work is too arduous for them, there is no adequate accommodation, and, he added, cryptically, "their psychological outlook would militate against them." In a letter to *The Times*, John Grierson quotes the very similar opinion held by Professor Mikhail Somov, Deputy Director of the Arctic and Antarctic Institute in Leningrad. Antarctica, he said, was a man's world "where only men live, and where men can devote themselves exclusively to work without restrictions which might be imposed by ladies." John Grierson feels that the consequence of these two pronouncements will be dire. "Might I with the greatest respect," he writes, "remind these eminent explorers and scientists of what has happened in the Oxford Union and the House of Lords? If there is one way to provoke the entry of women into any place, whether it is temperate, tropical, or polar, that has hitherto been forbidden to them, it is to advertise that place as womanproof!" History certainly bears this out; every profession, every calling, every sphere that was advertised fortissimo as unsuitable for women "provoked" (this is not, we need hardly say, the word we would have chosen) their entry. Mr. Grierson believes that Professor Somov and Sir Vivian may well have spelt the doom of Antarctica as a male preserve, but before he takes off in despair for Mars or the moon, he would do well to remember that even space is no longer womanproof!

## ST. JOAN'S ALLIANCE

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AND

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Society.

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## BOGOTA SEMINAR, 1963

The third United Nations Seminar on the *Status of Women in Family Law* took place in Bogota, Colombia, in December, 1963, the others being in Bucharest, 1961, and Tokio in 1962. Madame Celina Huergo de Martinez of the *Centro Feminine de Cultura Civica*, Argentina, attended as observer from St. Joan's International Alliance.

All the American countries, except Cuba, Chile and Venezuela were represented at Bogota, also the High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organisation and the Inter-American Commission for Women. Mr. Lawson, Chief of the Section for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, and Mrs. Margaret Bruce, Chief of the Section on the Status of Women, attended for the Secretariat.

Mrs. Alberto Garavito Acosta of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs represented the Colombian Government and Dr. Esmaralda Arboleda de Aribé, a Columbian Senator, presided over the meetings.

The discussions, unlike those at Bucharest, which were held in Scinter Palace, took place in a modest classroom of the Xaverian University.

The Seminar agreed on the following:

*Age for Marriage, Consent to Marriage and Registration of Marriages.*

The age for marriage should be raised; full and free consent of both spouses and registration of marriages essential.

*Effects of Marriage on Personal Status.*

Marriage should not affect the legal status of women in any way that would be incompatible with the principle of equality of spouses during marriage, as proclaimed in article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

A woman should have the right to choose to retain her own name, to assume her husband's name or to use both names;

Choice of the family residence should be made by mutual agreement between the spouses, and a married woman should have an equal right with

her husband in this respect;

Marriage should not restrict the civil capacity of the woman and, in particular, a wife should have the right: to engage in an independent occupation without prior authorization of her husband; and to obtain a passport; and to move freely in her own country and abroad without such authorization.

*Effects of Marriage on Property Rights.*

The need for full application of the principle of equality of husband and wife with regard to ownership, administration and disposition of property during marriage and at its dissolution.

*Dissolution of Marriage, Annulment and Judicial Separation.*

The importance of preserving the stability of the marital union. Emphasis was placed on the need for education, and for establishing and developing marriage preparation courses, marriage counselling and 'Family Courts'. During matrimonial proceedings every attempt should be made to reconcile the spouses;

Legislation regulating divorce, judicial separation and annulment should not be incompatible with the principle of equal rights of spouses set forth in article 16(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

In all proceedings for divorce, judicial separation and annulment, decisions concerning custody should be made on the basis of the best interests of the children;

Effective measures are needed to enforce maintenance orders. It was considered essential that such orders should be enforceable in jurisdictions other than that in which the original order is issued. Attention was drawn to the need for multilateral treaties on this question.

*Parental Rights and Duties.*

The law should provide for equal rights and duties of parents with respect to the person and property of their children.

*Legal Status of Unmarried Women.*

The unmarried woman and unmarried man should have equal rights;

On the need to facilitate the proceedings for establishing paternity and maternity.

*Inheritance Rights of Women.*

The principle of the equality between men and women should be ensured in the laws governing inheritance rights;

The importance of insuring the rights of the surviving spouse to share in the estate of the deceased, whether or not there are children of the marriage.

*Social Factors Affecting the Status of Women in Family Law.*

Under land reform programmes, the wife should have an equal share with her husband in the land acquired, and that her interests as a surviving spouse should be protected.

Non-governmental organisations and other private groups can play an important role in assisting women to become aware of their rights and of the procedures available for enforcing them.

In the course of the discussions Madame de Martinez made several interventions. She said that St. Joan's International Alliance believes that marriage is not only a civil contract but a Sacrament entailing an indissoluble monogamous union. The Alliance considered that the minimum age of marriage should be sixteen years for both sexes; that men women should have equal rights in marriage and should have equal guardianship of their children.

Madame de Martinez proposed that "family courts" should be set up in each country. She also pleaded that recognition be given to the work of the housewife in the home which was a real contribution to the family budget and to the economy of the community. She pointed out that in some Constitutions the housewife was described as "inactive" or of "no occupation" and listed with the insane and convicts, etc. Both these proposals were accepted, the latter by a very large majority.

We are indebted to Madame de Martinez for a detailed report of the Seminar; lack of space permits us to give only a summary. The discussions were keen and informative and well worth further study. The official report can be obtained from the United Nations—1963 Seminar on the Status of Women in Family Law, Bogota, Colombia. ST/TAO/HR/18.

It is perhaps worth quoting from the Nigerian Government's reply to the question of granting extended maternity leave (I.L.O. Report VI(2))—"Yes, subject to the production of a medical certificate issued by a qualified medical officer. . . . Otherwise No; for this would constitute special treatment of married women. Since equality of treatment is advocated regardless of marital status, it would be wrong and unfair to differentiate between married and single women and between one class of workers and another."

## WOMEN WORKERS IN A CHANGING WORLD

The I.L.O. Committee on Women Workers with Family Responsibilities met sixteen times and produced five resolutions which were accepted by the General Conference on July 8th.

During the first few days much time was given—or taken—by some delegates who described in detail the measures taken in their respective countries to help the married women workers to reconcile their home and work responsibilities and by others who explained why they could not provide such measures. Necessity for flexibility dictated the form of the instrument proposed—a recommendation rather than a resolution—favoured by the U.K.; or a convention, favoured by the Communist countries generally.

It was interesting to hear echoes of the suggestions and criticisms contained in statements and memoranda distributed on behalf of the N.G.Os.

The first resolution appeals to governments to implement the conventions on Equal Pay, 1951, and Discrimination, Employment and Occupation, 1952, and the recommendation on Vocational Training, 1962; requests States members to establish central units for research, planning and action on women workers' problems; and the I.L.O. to continue the study of vocational training for girls and women; the repercussions of technological progress; the conditions of work and social security of women particularly in agriculture; and protection against new occupational diseases.

The second resolution requests developing countries, members of the I.L.O. to give priority to assisting women to integrate themselves into the national economic life; calls upon the I.L.O. to intensify its activities towards the economic and social advancement of women working in these countries; and requests the I.L.O. to organise regional meetings on women workers in a changing world.

The third resolution asks the I.L.O. to give a precise definition of "part-time work" and to undertake enquiries to determine (a) the number and nature of part-time employment opportunities and (b) the numbers and characteristics of persons who have, or seek, part-time employment.

The fourth resolution appeals to all member States to guarantee the application of the Maternity Protection Conventions (1919 and 1952); and to include the question in the agenda of a forthcoming session of the I.L. Conference, and the fifth resolution asks for the inclusion in the agenda for the next I.L. Conference of the item "the Employment of Women with Family Responsibilities" with a view to the adoption of a recommendation.

P.C.C.

## The Month in Parliament

### Education Bill (Lords)

Dr. Horace King, who made a valuable contribution to the debate on the Education Bill during its second reading, complained that the Association of Education Committees in its recommendations to the Plowden Committee (now studying all facets of primary school education) mixed up teacher supply with professional advantages. "It put forward what I regard as a bastard theory. It suggests that it would be good to raise the age of leaving the primary department to 12 or 13, and raise the age of entry to 6, on the ground that the older the children are the greater the status of the school and the more attractive to men teachers. I must protest with all the force I can command at this concept that the status of a school depends on its size or the age of the children in it, or that there is something more dignified about a man teacher than a woman teacher. I thought," he continued, "that we had ended the hangover of sex equality in education and that we were moving away from the concept that the smaller the children the more there could be packed into a class and the less the teacher need be paid or the lower his status. If we are to change the school transfer age, let it not be tied up with the question of attracting men, especially if the argument is fallacious." (July 1st.)

### Refreshment Houses Bill

Commenting further on the Bill "to protect people who ought to know better" Miss Alice Bacon quoted from the letter of a man constituent, who called it a "silly Bill": she read, "It would be much better for the time of the House to be spent helping old-age pensioners to get a decent living. Our male M.P.s seem to be getting dafter. Can't we have an all woman government and get something sensible done? After all it is the only form of government not yet tried." (July 3rd.)

### V.D. and Compulsory Examination

Commander Kerans asked the Minister of Health to reconsider his refusal to issue instructions that venereal disease be compulsorily reported. Mr. Braine, Parliamentary Secretary to the ministry, replied, "No, sir. I agree with my hon. and gallant friend that the increase in certain diseases since 1954 is a matter of serious concern, but compulsory notification would be of little use, unless treatment of the patient, notification of his consorts, and examination and treatment of the consorts were also made compulsory. Only in the most exceptional circumstances would such extensive compulsion be acceptable in this country, even if it were likely to be effective." (July 6th.)

### Obscene Publications

Mrs. Eveline Hill said she believed that the general public would be very much in agreement with the purposes of this Bill. She had had numerous letters from parents, teachers and social workers begging that the Home Secretary should stand firm and pursue this Bill as it was written, because they believe that the mass of pornographic literature which is flooding the market, and which can be so easily acquired by young people, is of no use whatever to this country.

### End of Parliament

As this Parliament has now ended its long innings we wish to express our appreciation of the many excellent contributions made to its work by Mrs. Thatcher, Miss Mervyn Pike and Lady Tweedsmuir and also of the zeal shown in the interests of those reforms we especially desire by Miss Joan Vickers, Dame Irene Ward, Mrs. Eirene White and Miss Herbison.

We earnestly hope that, whatever Party forms the next Government, there will not only be more women members, but that the fullest use will be made of all the available talent and zeal for justice that the women elected may possess.

### Sir Winston Churchill

Members of all Parties joined in the expressions of admiration and gratitude made to Sir Winston Churchill on his retirement from political life.

The Prime Minister spoke of the difficulty in trying to decide how adequately to record the thanks of Parliament; he said that members from all Parties had agreed that whatever was to be done would be in keeping with the history of the House and with its character as the representative forum of the nation. Therefore they had chosen a method adopted by the House on July 1st, 1814, in respect of the Duke of Wellington, that an expression of appreciation should be sent to Sir Winston by representatives from all Parties.

Sir Alec thought that this precedent would appeal to Sir Winston's vivid sense of the sweep of history.

Mr. Wilson spoke of his almost "old-world courtesy" that went far beyond the normal calls of parliamentary comradeship. Mr. Macmillan summed up Sir Winston's character by reference to the words written by him on the fly-leaf of his "History of the Second World War"—"In War—resolution; in defeat—defiance; in victory—magnanimity; in peace—goodwill!"

The Prime Minister, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Grimond, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Sir Thomas Moore and Mr. Shinwell were appointed to convey to Sir Winston the thanks of the House.

### Finance Bill

Mr. Maudling proposed an amendment to the Finance Act which would give tax relief to persons over 65 living on small fixed incomes. He suggested raising the exemption limit by £35 for a single person and £55 for a married couple, so that the figure below which income tax should not be exacted will now be £360 and £575.

Dame Irene Ward, who has waged a long battle in this cause, expressed her surprise and pleasure. "It has taken the House a long time," she said, "to become aware of small fixed incomes. It takes a great deal of hard work to get action, but we have got action today." The clause was accepted. (June 30th.)

### Strengthening of Marriage Bill

Mr. John Parker presented a Bill to enable a further marriage to be contracted by either spouse when a separation has persisted for five years. (July 29th.)

### Royal Assent

The Royal Assent was given to the Bills, including: Young Persons (Employment) Act; Education Act; Malta Independence Act; Refreshment Houses Act; Divorce (Scotland) Act; the House adjourned until October 19th. (July 31st.)

C. M. Cheke

### REVIEWS

We warmly welcome the *Bulletin of l'Alliance Sainte Jeanne d'Arc* a copy of which is enclosed.

As Madame Leroy reminds us in an editorial, it is rather a resurrection than an innovation; it brings back to mind the days when Marie Lenoël in *La Revue Jeanne d'Arc* and Leonora de Alberti in *The Catholic Citizen* wrote with such conviction and vigour for the raising of the status of women of all races.

**Konkrete Wünsche an das Konzil.** By Prof. Dr. Viktor Schurr, Richard Baumann, Marianne Dirks and Dr. Anneliese Lissner. (Butzen & Bercker Kevelaer.)

We regret that this book did not come into our hands when it was published in 1961, because many of the hopes and aspirations of its authors are now being fulfilled by the Vatican Council. The writers express themselves with great caution and reserve, as if they were advanced and rather audacious. It is astounding that only three years later most of their wishes are already accepted, in spite of the fact that the laity has played so small a part in the work of the Council. They had complained of this lack of consultation which would make any decisions taken by the Church the expression of a part of the Church only, its numerically greater fraction, the laity, having no voice.

The authors' requests to the Church, framed with such reserve, seem not very "advanced" after the passage of only three years. This gives us the

measure of what the short Pontificate of Pope John has achieved, for almost everything the authors proposed has been, or may shortly be granted; e.g. Such generally accepted measures as the use of the mother tongue, adaptation to local custom, greater prominence given to biblical reference, episcopal jurisdiction, etc. A half-hearted request for a change in clerical garb, some clergy being irked by the wearing of "woman's dress" has obviously failed to make an impact and in lighter vein one might suggest that a future hoped-for dilution of sex-consciousness in the service of the Church may ease the distress of this minority.

A lengthy section of the manual is devoted to the suggestions of its "Evangelical" collaborators. These are interesting and revealing, but they are of less concern to the readers of *The Catholic Citizen* than the report by Marianne Dirks and Dr. Anneliese Lissner, on a questionnaire addressed by the editors of the German periodical *Frau und Mütter* to their hundred thousand readers. On reading through the numerous replies which are reproduced, as samples, one is struck by the gratitude of the writers, for the opportunity to give their views on subjects they hardly dare discuss freely. And yet their views are almost pathetically mild and relate to what is largely their own concern: Can infant baptism be deferred for a few days, so that the mother may also attend; can a First Communion be made at the "right time" (that of the mother's choice)?, can confirmation be less early? There is evidently very little "dialogue" on these questions, or perhaps with the particular section the questionnaire has tapped. Two more interesting views are the request for a sign of communal sympathy for all the members of the congregation, symbolically expressed at the Eucharistic *Pax*, by the clasping of hands, and a request that prayers for the necessities of the living be said together, and more often than the prayers for their dead. The lay diaconate is often mentioned, which is not surprising as there are too few priests. It is asked for men, married or not. One correspondent adds "and women too as in the early Church."

F.M.S.

### HERE AND THERE

During a meeting of priests in Austria, an enclosed nun answered critics about convent life. She had received special permission to attend the meeting.

"Everybody is complaining about women's religious institutions," she said. "They are said to be old-fashioned, unadaptable and unfit to do their job. Cardinal Suenens wrote a book about it which was translated into several languages.

"But not one priest has told us what we should do. There is endless repetition of how it should not be and how ridiculous we are. This endless complaining and lamentation has deterred many a girl from entering a convent."

The nun said that the sisters themselves were aware that much should be changed. The question was: In what way? The bishops gave no directives, the Canon Law remained unchanged. So what could the sisters begin to do?

Modernisation of the habit was something but not much. The core of the matter was not allowed to be changed and the regulations of canonical rite remained the same.

"The sisters are old-fashioned," she said, "and in most places it is only the aged or sick priests who are considered good enough to be our chaplains, as they are unfit for any other work."

Vocations were being hindered and girls were advised against entering the religious life. But when a priest fell ill he asked for a religious nursing sister. Seminaries asked for religious personnel. In spite of all this, they kept laughing at nuns. Was that consequential . . . or nice?

*Catholic Herald*, July 24th, 1964.

\* \* \*

When Russia was still pagan and before the schism between East and West, its Prince, Vladimir, sent messengers abroad in search of the true religion.

It was after they had attended the Divine Liturgy in the church of Santa Sofia in Constantinople that they reported: "We knew not whether we were in heaven or upon earth, for surely there is no such splendour or beauty upon earth."

At that time, in the year 612, there were eighty priests, a hundred and fifty deacons and forty deaconesses, seventy sub-deacons, a hundred and fifty readers, twenty-five cantors and seventy-five doorkeepers. ("*The Orthodox Church*" by Timothy Ware, quoted in *Pilgrim's Newsletter*, Aylesford.)

#### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "*The Catholic Citizen*", July-August, 1939  
Soeur Marie André du Sacré Coeur, Missionary of our Lady of Africa, (Cardinal Lavignerie's White Sisters) and docteur en droit was sent by her Mother General to French East Africa in 1932 to study the position of African women and the best means of raising their status. A result of this visit has been the publication of her book "La Femme Noir en Afrique Occidentale".

Two years ago she returned, since when she has done much propaganda in France, trying to arouse public opinion on this subject. She felt that only a legal reform could change a most unsatisfactory state of affairs and give a little liberty to black girls and widows. Since 1937 she has given numerous lectures including one to l'Alliance Sainte Jeanne D'Arc in Paris.

In June this year she spoke before the Missionary Group of the Chamber of Deputies, the first time a Religious has spoken before them. The Missionary Group adopted Soeur Marie Andrée's recommendations and urged their acceptance by M. Mandel, the Colonial Minister, who embodied them in a decree which was passed unanimously through the Chamber of Deputies—*A Worthy Daughter of Cardinal Lavignerie*.

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