

## THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION BISHOP'S LETTER

THE purpose of the Diocesan Convention which we have decided to call is to review the work of the diocese in the light of Vatican II and to plan future development accordingly. In the last fifteen years our diocese has developed from a small mission to a full-grown local Church. We feel it is time we paused to do some stocktaking. Where have we scored, and where have we fallen short? What are the remedies? Are our pastoral structures and methods sound, or are they dated, clumsy, ineffective? Have the directives of Vatican II been followed here in truth and in spirit? Clearly our plan for the future must be based on an answer to these and many other questions.

A study in depth is called for. This can be successfully done only by the entire People of God in Hong Kong working together. Hence the idea of a diocesan convention in which clergy, religious and laity will all take an active and responsible part. (This is one of the reasons why we have chosen not to call an official Synod, which would give voting rights only to the clergy.)

A Preparatory Committee consisting of Rev. John Russell, S.J. (Chairman), M. McKiernan, M.M., S. Einaudi, P.I.M.E., Anthony Tsang and Mr. John Chen has been formed. Working assiduously, this Committee has produced a tentative list of ten schemata for the convention. These are published here, together with subheadings that make up a rough outline.

It is hoped that clergy, religious and laity of this diocese will contribute their comments and views on some, if not all, of these schemata, following the subheadings if possible, but this is not a fast rule. I would say this is the most important part of the first stage of the Convention, i.e. consultation. Your views will be studied and incorporated into the draft schemata which will be submitted to debates and revisions. It is easy to see that the success of the Convention will depend very much on your contribution at this stage.

The Diocesan Convention will be a major event in the history of the Hong Kong Mission. The good it can do is incalculable, its deliberations will influence our apostolate for generations to come. The Church is going through a very challenging period, but the very problems we are confronted with are a sign of life and activity. The tragedy would lie in unawareness and an unwillingness to face them. We are confident that the People of God in Hong Kong, enlightened and fortified by the Holy Spirit, will grapple with our problems and solve them by their collective strength and wisdom.

† Francis Hsu

## THE CONVENTION

THE decision was recently taken to hold a Diocesan Convention in Hong Kong. Bishop Hsu, as you are aware, made the announcement some weeks ago. The purpose of this Convention is the updating of the diocese in its life, activities and structures.

The Vatican Council called for an interior renewal of the People of God, summoning them to make the fullest possible response to the vocation to holiness received at baptism. Three years have passed. It is surely time for a little stock-taking in the diocese. Are our lives more marked with the love of God and of our neighbour to any significant degree? Do we find in an all-embracing, all-pervading love the deepest motivation of our every action and attempt to translate this love into the human terms of everyday living?

We are the People of God: does each of us, according to his function, fulfil his mission in the Church, which is the communication of God's love to men and the leading of men to love God in return? Have we yet succeeded in discarding the

ghetto mentality and begun to realize that we have a world to transform? Do lay people carry out their share in the Church's mission, in their family and social lives, and in secular activities by the testimony of a Christian life lived in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel? Do priests fulfil their ministry with all holiness, eagerness, humility and courage? Is their apostolic activity a manifestation of God's love for men and of their love for God and their fellow-men? Do Religious give striking testimony that the world cannot be transformed and offered to God without the spirit of the Beatitudes? Are they ever more ready to serve the Church of which they form an integral part?

These are internal attitudes and, as such, must spring from some interior necessity. They are the personal responsibility of each one, and obviously, cannot be imposed by exterior pressure. But, our outward way of life (both individual and community) can help cultivate—or stifle—these attitudes. Our pastoral activity should be the natural expression of these

attitudes. Our institutional structures are to be judged solely in function of the contribution they make towards fostering and encouraging these attitudes.

These external manifestations can and should be the object of careful and dispassionate scrutiny. It is hoped that they will come under review at the Diocesan Convention. Some of the topics which might profitably be discussed fall under the following heads:

1. Liturgy and Sacraments
  2. Religious Instruction
  3. Education
  4. Laity
  5. Priests
  6. Religious
  7. Social Apostolate
  8. Communications Media
  9. Ecumenism
  10. Government of Diocese
- We visualize the Convention as comprising three stages:

1. Consultation;
2. Analysis and study of results of consultation. This will be done by sub-commissions (not yet set up) which will draft docu-

- ments or compile a series of propositions;
3. Discussion by the delegates to the Convention of the matter prepared by the sub-commissions.

A lot more thinking remains to be done, especially with regard to the third stage of the programme, v. gr. the number and selection of the delegates; the form of their participation; etc. But meanwhile the work of consultation can go forward.

Through the courtesy of the *Sunday Examiner* we are now asking for your kind cooperation. Will you be good enough to set down in writing your ideas and suggestions for the updating of the diocese, under some or all of the 10 general topics listed above. An attempt has been made to break down these general topics into various headings. These lists are meant merely to be a stimulus to thought; it would be impossible to expect suggestions on each of the headings — and just as impossible to discuss more than a tiny fraction of the matter they cover at the actual Convention. We can only hope to

select what most people consider to be the more important issues. So please write out your suggestions on the points you feel to be of greater moment or on any other topic or heading that occurs to you. Your ideas may be the result of your own personal reflection or of group discussions. We would be glad to hear from you before the end of January 1969; but please do not put off until then all thought about these topics. Nor is it necessary to send in all your suggestions at the same time; it will probably be easier to send them in by instalments.

At a later date we hope to contact the main body of the faithful through their parishes. We have fixed Pentecost 1969 as a very tentative date for the Convention. Naturally, everything will depend on the speed with which the preparations go forward. It may very well prove necessary to postpone it to a later date.

THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE  
THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION,  
P. O. Box 2984  
Hong Kong

### 1. Liturgy and Sacraments

Diocesan Liturgical Handbook: for the seven sacraments; and sacramentals for various occasions.

Diocesan liturgical guide-lines for the celebration of Mass.

*The seven sacraments:*

Restoration of various stages of catechumenate and their proper rites.

Rites for baptizing an infant.

Age for 1st Confession.

Age for Confirmation.

Renewal of baptismal promises in the rites of confirmation.

Language in the Sacrament of Penance.

Public celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, suggested time and rites.

The devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament.

*The sacramentals:*

Traditional popular devotions, novenas and processions.

Healthy substitution for old traditional devotions.

Services of various seasons: Advent, Lent, etc.

Bible services.

Participation of the faithful in public recitation of Divine Office: Lauds and Vespers.

*Preliminary experiments of liturgical functions:*

Authorization and direction required.

*Sacred music:*

Diocesan hymn book.

Choir.

Congregational singing.

Chinese translation of Gregorian chants.

The teaching of religious songs in Catholic schools and in parishes.

Liturgical Christianization of traditional Chinese festivals.

Fulfilling Sunday obligation on Saturday evening.

The relationship of diocesan Liturgical Commission with:

Taiwan liturgical authorities; Macau (because of similarity of language); Parish Liturgical representatives.

*The Prayer of the Faithful:*

To enrich the Prayer of the Faithful prepared by Taiwan liturgical authority.

A Diocesan book of Prayers of the Faithful.

*Liturgical education:*

Parish level.

Diocesan level.

By means of Liturgical Conferences, occasional talks, etc.

### 2. Religious Instruction

*Diocesan level:*

The Catechetical Commission: organization, policy and work.

The diocesan catechetical institution.

Catechetical training of Religious.

Training of R.K. Teachers.

Revision of policies on catechists: organization, provision and education.

Use of mass media.

Lay theology course.

Religious education through lay associations.

Diocesan catechism booklet.

Public talks and catechetical conferences.

Proper catechetical programme for children, youth and adults.

Bible study.

*Parish level:*

The Parish Catechumenate: organization and instruction of catechumens.

Following-up instruction of the newly baptized.

First Holy Communion instruction.

Confirmation instruction.

Parish Sunday School.

Instruction on special occasions: Parish Summer School, study days, etc.

Training of parishioners in their Christian duties.

Sunday Sermon.  
Bible Sunday.  
Retreats.  
Lenten Mission.

*Family:*

Guidance to parents in the religious education of their children.

*School:*

Christian atmosphere in Catholic schools: Daily recitation of prayers, free participation in religious functions, counselling and spiritual care of students.

Text-books of R.K.

Lay associations in schools.

### 3. Education

1. The purposes of education in Hong Kong. The relative importance of these purposes.

2. Education suited to the native talents, sex, cultural background of the students.

3. Promotion of the harmonious development of the physical, moral and intellectual endowments of the students.

- a. Physical training. Technical education. Catholic schools too academic?

- b. Moral training... suited to the age, culture and religious background of the students. Development of sense of moral values, with deepening of the sense of responsibility for one's personal choices. Development of a mature sense of responsibility through the sharing of authority.

- c. Intellectual formation: artistic, literary, scientific. Ability to express thoughts and feelings in speech and writing, to think for oneself rather than to memorize.

4. Positive and prudent sexual education.

5. Social consciousness. Preparation to take part in the

life of society. Instruction in necessary and useful skills so that students can become actively involved in community organizations, be ready for dialogue with others, be willing to act energetically for the common good. Awareness of the social problems in Hong Kong, and willingness to contribute according to personal ability to the solution of these problems.

6. The right of students to religious liberty. Provision for the moral training of those who do not wish to attend religious knowledge classes.
7. Lay teachers: conditions of work, salary, opportunities for promotion in schools administered by religious, understanding of the aims of Catholic education.
8. The role of priests, religious, and laity in education in Hong Kong. The future administration of schools to be in the hands of foreigners or of local people, in the hands of priests and religious or in those of the laity?
9. The training of those engaged in Catholic education in Hong Kong.
10. Cooperation between those engaged in Catholic education in Hong Kong.

## 4. Laity

### Youth

Crises of authority  
Reaction against tradition  
Irregularity of youth  
Methods of imparting the "Good News" to youth  
Youth activities  
Leadership training  
Need for youth workers  
Youth's contribution to help solve social problems  
Youth's participation in social service  
Dance parties  
Reading matter  
Christianization of Commonwealth Day; Children's Day, etc.

### Family Life

Pre-Cana Conferences  
Catholic Marriage Advisory Council: continued Education and Advice for newly married couples  
Introducing into the secondary school curriculum a course on:  
"Matrimony and the Christian Family" (including sexual education).  
Responsible parenthood  
Parental duties in the education of children  
Filial piety  
Care for old people  
Social and spiritual help  
Christianization of Ching Ming Festival and of other traditional Chinese festivals  
Christianization of various holidays, eg. Father's Day, Mother's Day  
Family prayer and Gospel reading  
Real concern and communication among family members  
Publication of "Family Movement" books and magazines

### Organization

Renewal of lay associations  
Lay initiative and autonomy  
Discontinuation of lay associations which have become irrelevant to the needs of modern society  
Mixed lay associations (with

male and female members)  
Dialogue between officers and members of associations  
Admission of non-Catholics as Associate Members  
Dialogue among associations  
Individuals participating in too many associations  
Care for unorganized lay people  
Voluntary commitment to missionary activities for a limited period

### Participation in civic affairs

Learning the social teaching of the Church  
Active involvement  
Service to the community  
Social justice  
Government services  
Renewal of social order  
Witnessing to the Faith in professional and social life  
Voicing of opinions  
Contacts with and among Catholics working in Government or holding influential positions in civic and social agencies.

## 5. Priestly Life

### VOCATIONS

Criteria and methods by which to discover vocations, follow up and bring them to maturity.

### SEMINARY

Assessment of seminary training on various levels: spiritual, intellectual (more emphasis on Chinese culture), social, pastoral, pre-priesthood pastoral experience.

### SPIRITUAL LIFE

Re-assessment of priestly vocation and life; prayer life; hearers, preachers, and doers of the Word; witnessing to the truth; evangelical poverty; apostolic spirit; discipline.

### RELATIONS BETWEEN PRIESTS AND BISHOP

Brothers in the priesthood co-responsible for and to the people of God; exchange of visits.

### RELATIONS BETWEEN PARISH PRIEST AND ASSISTANTS

Sharers in the same priesthood and responsibilities; sharing of planning by periodical meetings; team work: by categories or districts?  
Parish Priest leader and coordinator; community life.

### UPDATING OF PRIESTS

Training and guidance for newly ordained priests; annual study-week; central library for priests; refresher courses abroad; Vatican II and us; permanent commission composed of experts in various fields to organize and promote seminars, study days, pastoral lectures, etc.

### RELATIONS WITH THE FAITHFUL

Dedicated service; house-to-house visitation; greeting parishioners before and after Sunday Masses; conducting classes of catechumens; introducing the newly baptized to the parish community; parish day; parish social functions;

parish newsletter; what sort of priest do the faithful consider to be a good priest?  
the faithful and parish finance.

### HOLIDAYS AND RECREATIONS

Local: individual and collective;  
Sabbatical: frequency; duration; plan.

## 6. Religious

[The Convention does not intend to deal with the internal affairs of religious communities.]

Vatican II and Religious.  
Relevant form of witnessing to spirit of Gospel in individual and community life.

Indigenization of foreign-born Religious.

Communication between Religious (on Provincial and community levels).

Cooperation among Religious (inter-Congregational initiatives?)

Priorities in apostolate: assessment of contribution of Religious to diocese.

Greater consciousness of Religious as integral part of Church and diocese: need for making their own movements in the Church and enterprises of the diocese.

Relations with Bishop.  
Relations with parishes and the diocesan clergy.

Relations with the laity: position, responsibility and remuneration of lay people in religious-run institutions.

Mutual hospitality among religious communities, e.g. on occasion of religious profession, etc.

Communication between conferences of major superiors and individual communities.  
Federation of communities.  
Seeking of alms.

## 7. Social Apostolate of the Church

**Tentative Definition:** This covers all the work the Church does with people not in a specifically religious sense.

### 1. INDIRECT HELP

#### 1. Social Justice

1. Basic problem of Hong Kong's social ills is unjust wages, extremely long hours of work, and child labour.
2. A diocesan-wide group to study and teach social justice, such as Serra Club sponsors vocations, seminars, sermons, etc.
3. Parish-level social justice study groups.
4. Teaching programmes specifically for employers.
5. Use of mass media for social justice.

#### 2. Apostolate to the Workers

1. The worker and the dignity of work.
2. The leadership courses for Christian workers to train them to implement Church's social programme for labour.
3. To teach them the workings of trade unions, parliamentary procedure, etc.
4. The Church to back officially just complaints of workers.
5. The Church is in fact and in deed interested in the workers.

6. A great thrust among young workers to help them to adjust to industrial life, and

7. To make them understand their rights and obligations.

8. Church to speak directly to workers through mass media.

**3. Credit Unions and Consumer Unions**

1. Church and credit and consumer unions.

2. A credit union in every parish and every trade group.

3. Mass media to help people appreciate credit unions.

### 2. DIRECT HELP

#### 1. Material Assistance

1. Material relief to show forth love for the individual.
2. Motivation in relief.
3. Non-Catholics often ridicule recipients of our help.
4. Relief to enhance the dignity of the individual, and
5. To broaden the love and integrity of the giver.

#### 2. Medical

1. Patients' reaction to our medical services.
2. Personal love and compassion of those administering these programmes.
3. To heal the sick and announce to them the kingdom of God.
4. Service to the poor and helpless.
5. Standard of medical help in dispensaries.

### 3. INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN AND THE SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

1. Instruction in our schools on Church's Social Doctrine.
2. Motivation of students.
3. Challenge of sacrifice for youths.

4. Programmes of help for others that students can do themselves.

5. A social welfare council in each parish like the St. Vincent De Paul Society, to bring needs of people and problems of community up for discussion and solution.

## 8. Communications Media

### Films

Organization and promotion of film-study groups at all levels.  
Diffusion of information and cooperation in using films/film-strips in catechetical, family-training and other forms of apostolate.  
Encouragement of higher cultural and moral standards among Hong Kong film producers.  
A Catholic (Christian) film-unit to make films for cinema and TV — documentary/report-type.  
Film censorship.

Formation of a talented group to devise and prepare script for programmes for radio.  
"Listener-groups" voicing views on radio programmes.

### Radio

Formation of a talented group to devise and prepare script for programmes for radio.  
"Listener-groups" voicing views on radio programmes.

### Television

"Viewer groups" voicing views on TV programmes.  
Volunteers ready to appear on TV to speak honestly as Catholics.

Formation of a talented group to devise and prepare scripts for programmes for TV.

### Press and Literature

How to improve the *Kung Kao Po*.

How to improve the *Sunday Examiner*.

Launching a Catholic daily newspaper?

Launching a Catholic cultural magazine?

How to make use of secular newspapers to spread a Christian influence among the local community.

Launching an association of Catholic cultural workers?

Modernizing spiritual reading matter.

Simplification of Vatican II documents.

Readable translations.

### Other forms of Communications Media

Apostolic possibilities of:

Choral groups

Ballet

Puppet shows

Exhibitions.

## 9. Ecumenism

Need for Ecumenical movement in Hong Kong.

Need for new structures to promote ecumenism?

Ecumenism on parish level.

Ecumenical formation of clergy.

Ecumenical education in schools and associations.

Ecumenical orientation of catechumens.

Cooperation with other Christians in social/charitable and educational work.

Pastoral care of mixed marriages.

Common witness to basic Christian values.

Ecumenical celebrations: v.g. Unity Octave, Bible Sunday, etc.

## 10. Government of Diocese

Priorities of Diocesan Apostolates.

Work and distribution of clergy.

The Parish Community:

structures;

boundaries;

personal parishes;

position of vicar-cooperators.

Horizontal dialogue among diocesan clergy and with religious.

Closer relations:

between bishop and faithful;

between bishop and clergy;

between bishop and religious.

Public Relations Office.

Establishment of Board of Mediation and Conciliation;

Appeal board, Ombudsman?

Diocesan Administration:

more delegation?

decentralization?

appointment of episcopal vicars?

Appointments:

responsibility of the Bishop;

purpose and role of the Personnel Commission;

methods of consultation;

preparing and introducing the priest to his new post.

Terms of Office:

advantages and necessity of continuity of work;

disadvantages and dangers of too long a term of office;

term of office of Parish Priest;

term of office of assistants;

age of retirement and subsequent problems.

Assessment of Diocesan Commissions Senate, Pastoral Council, Liturgical Commission, etc.).