

Convention News

First Meeting of Working Group

ON Tuesday evening, February 24th, the first meeting of a Convention Working Group met in the Library of the Catholic Centre. Over one hundred people attended this meeting of Working Group n.2 to discuss the draft document on Religious Instruction. (Working Group n.1—Liturgy and Sacraments—put off its first meeting until Monday, March 9th, by which time it is hoped that the draft document on the Liturgy will be in the hands of all the delegates).

The matter proposed for discussion was the Introduction to the document. This introductory section contains a summary outline of the three stages of faith: pre-evangelization, kerygma and catechesis. The discussion opened with a request for clarification of a statement in the document to the effect that "the ordinary recipient of kerygma would be an adult or someone who has reached a certain amount of maturity as to be able to make a responsible reply." Was this intended to exclude children? Various speakers pointed out that conversion, the response to kerygma, presupposed a certain maturity; that the practice in the early Church was to present the kerygma to adults; that children should be presented with the kerygma when young, but also at a later age when, because of greater maturity, they would be able to meet it as a challenge demanding a response from them. Another speaker considered that children in primary and secondary school were capable of receiving the kerygma and were able to lead others to Christ.

After some further points had been raised and discussed a proposal was made that the matter contained in the Introduction ought to be left to the Commission on Evangelization. Accordingly a vote was called for as to whether or not further discussion on the Introduction should be postponed. But before this vote was taken a question of procedure was debated. According to the ground rules for the meetings drawn up by the Steering Committee as the outcome of discussion with

the chairmen of the Drafting Commissions and later proposed to the Conveners of the Working Groups, only delegates have the right to vote: non-delegates to the Convention present may speak but not vote. It was now proposed that this rule be amended to permit everyone present at the meetings of the Working Groups to vote. Some time was taken up with debate on this issue. Finally it was suggested that debate on procedural matters was out of order and that the meeting should proceed to vote on the motion proposed, namely whether or not to postpone discussion on the Introduction to the document. This was accepted and the vote on the motion was then taken. The motion was carried by a very large majority and so the meeting moved on from the Introduction to discuss the first chapter: Religious Instruction in the Parish.

The discussion on this topic started from a suggestion that greater stress be laid on parish organizations and on the formation of the members of these organizations to enable them to live their Christian vocation more effectively. It was pointed out that in fact the document did propose ways in which such formation could be given: by means of group study of gospel attitudes, of recognizing one's responsibility in today's world, of fostering a greater sense of union with non-Christians and of encouraging a worldwide vision, thereby—in the words of the Council Decree on Missionary activity—"extending the range of their charity to the ends of the earth and devoting to those far off a concern similar to that which they bestow on those who are their own members."

The meeting ended promptly at 10 p.m. The matter for the next meeting of this Working Group was fixed, namely the first chapter: Religious Instruction in the Parish. This second meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10th, in the Catholic Centre, Roof Garden, at 8 p.m. Mass will be celebrated in the chapel on the 3rd floor beforehand, at 7.15.