

# Convention News

**WORKING Group 1** (Liturgy and Sacraments) met on Monday, March 9th. Father Giampietro (Chairman of the Drafting Commission) in introducing the document, revealed that five separate drafts had been prepared before agreement was reached on the version now presented for discussion. He then outlined some of the principles that had guided the drafting commission in their work: a) the necessity of discussing only those topics which were of immediate interest to our diocese; b) the need for bridging the gap between liturgy and daily life; c) the need for clarifying the relationship between the liturgy and the living Church; d) the need for ensuring the active participation of all those present at Mass. He emphasised that the Working Group must be prepared to discuss liturgical theology and not just matters of ritual. The liturgy is of the spirit, he pointed out, and so the internal approach is all important.

Some comments were offered by way of criticism of the document as a whole. One speaker made the point that the liturgy had been introduced by our Lord as a dramatic way of teaching doctrine: this purpose has been overlooked in the draft, which seems too intellectual in its approach; the document does not touch on problems peculiar to Hong Kong until page 41; what is said up to that point could be applied to any diocese in the world; ours is a Chinese diocese, with 3½ million non-Christians; the liturgy should be organised so that they too may benefit from it; the draft gives the impression that the basic community in the Church is the parish: but this is

not necessarily so, since the basic community could very well be the large family group or clan.

Another speaker pointed out that although the diocese is 99% Chinese, the predominant culture in Hong Kong is not purely Chinese; those who wish to sinicize the liturgy should consider that this is not necessarily the best course for a mixed culture like that of Hong Kong. Other speakers commented on the composition of the document, suggesting a more logical presentation of the subject matter. To one there seemed an overdose of theory in the draft; to another the language seemed insufficiently biblical.

Working Group 6 (Religious) held its second meeting on March 16th. At the previous meeting some dissatisfaction had been expressed with the draft document's lack of theological content. Two delegates, who had prepared statements on the theology of the religious life aimed at remedying this shortcoming, read these to the Group. The first, prepared by Father Pieraccini, was based on chapter 6 of the Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church. The many aspects of the theology of the religious life touched on in this first statement included: the gospel basis of the religious life, its relationship with the structure of the Church, the help it provides towards the development of the human personality; religious working in and for the Church, bringing Christ to the world in different ways, working in the world and for the world in the Church.

The other statement, prepared by Sister Rose Bernadette, dealt with such topics as man

in today's world, the dignity of the human person, and Christ, the new man.

In the course of the general discussion that followed a plea was made that the theology of the religious life taken from the documents of the Vatican Council should be set out in a readily understandable way, since the language used in the Council documents is too abstruse and makes little appeal to the young. A motion to this effect was passed unanimously.

Working Group 7 (Social Dimension of the Church) held its second meeting on March 17th. A motion was proposed at the outset that paragraphs 1-4 of chapter 2 of the draft document be accepted as they stood. In the ensuing debate some speakers questioned the accuracy of several of the statements contained in these paragraphs. More carefully worded alternative statements were proposed in the form of amendments and accepted by the meeting. Paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 in their amended form were put to separate votes and approved by large majorities. Paragraph 2, unamended, was also accepted.

Towards the end of the meeting it was suggested that the method of discussion at future meetings be discussed. Some felt that they had not been given sufficient time to express their views; others were confused through lack of familiarity with parliamentary procedure. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chairman for the admirable way in which he had carried out a thankless and difficult task.