

Convention News

THE fourth round of meetings of the 11 Working Groups begins next Monday, April 13th. All the Groups will meet as usual except Group 4 (Laity). The members of this Group have voted to suspend further meetings until the draft document is completed. Consequently there will be no meeting of this Group on Thursday, April 16th. It is to be hoped that the document will be in the hands of delegates in the not-too-distant future. Members of Working Group 4 will be informed of the date of their next meeting.

During the third round of meetings just concluded, there was a perceptible improvement in the way some of the Groups managed to discuss their document. The debates were more orderly and a certain progress was made. Other Groups however have not succeeded so well and are still trying to find their

way.

Working Group 9 (Ecumenism) at its second meeting continued discussions on the draft as a whole. Various speakers brought up points that they felt should be included in the document. The Introduction, it was suggested, should indicate clearly the importance of ecumenism and its meaning, and propose concrete ways for achieving Christian unity. God's will for the unity of all Christians should be stressed and attention should be drawn to the fact that this was one of the chief motives that inspired Pope John to summon the Vatican Council. The document speaks of "absolute loyalty to one's faith" and of the "complete rejection of indifference or the idea that one religion is as good as another": some delegates asked that the draft include a fuller explanation of these points. The problem of finding an acceptable term in Chinese to use when wishing to refer to all Christians was brought up; also the need to find a term to replace that of "separated brethren"—one that would bring out more positively the degree of unity that already exists between Christians.

A suggestion was also made that the Conveners of the Working Groups on Ecumenism and Religious Instruction should consult together on topics of common interest and that short notes on the ecumenical aspect of the areas being dealt with by other Groups should be added to their drafts.

When the discussion moved on to consider specific paragraphs of the document several important points were made. One speaker felt that we should not overlook the sense of unease that some Catholics experience regarding the ecumenical movement: the draft should not make light of this; it should stress that no movement is without its attendant risks and difficulties, but that here the advantages to be gained far outweigh the disadvantages. Another speaker referred to the importance of "top-level support for ecumenism", meaning by this the support of "parish priests, intellectuals, school principals, etc."

At its next meeting the Group will elect a re-drafting committee and take up the discussion of paragraphs 14-18 of the draft.

Group 10 (Government of Diocese) held its second meeting on March 20th. The first section of the draft document had been polycopied and circulated among the members of

the Group in advance. Discussion began on the Introduction (paras. 1-3). Some of the rather technical terms used—in-avoidable in a document of this nature—required explanation. A good deal of time was given to clarifications of this kind and to suggestions for Chinese equivalents. After a ten-minute interval, paragraphs 4-5 were taken up, and here again several questions arose about the meaning of certain passages; suggestions were offered regarding improved ways of conveying the sense intended in these.

It is hoped that the completed document will be ready within the next fortnight. The Chinese version is being prepared at the same time and should be ready very shortly afterwards.

Working Group 11 (Evangelization) at its second meeting was concerned with suggestions for making the draft document intelligible to the man in the street. The question was raised: for whom is this document intended? In the discussion that followed some maintained that being a Convention document it is intended for all; others suggested that it is addressed to the "literate layman"; others again likened it to the Vatican Council documents which are not easy for everybody to understand: and like the Council documents the draft document can be explained to the faithful by priests and nuns. One delegate saw it as a problem of getting away from jargon—of putting certain key ideas in simple terms: a) witness: how do we express what Christ has done for each of us? b) kerygma: how do we help prepare a person to listen to Christ? c) catechesis: how do we help Christians grow and be formed in their faith?

Suggestions were asked for the inclusion of further topics in the draft. Among those put forward were: stress on the missionary aspect of the Church, and in particular a statement of the reason why it is missionary; and a definition of the foreign and local missionary. In the view of one speaker, the mission of the Church is not salvation nor the establishment of the Church; the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation: her mission eschatological, the glorification of God, the unity of all men in love and truth, the growth of the Mystical Body, the promotion of the complete and genuine of growth of man towards God in Christ.

The following is the programme of meetings for the coming week:

Liturgy and Sacraments	: Monday, April 13th
Religious Instruction	: Tuesday, April 14th
Education	: Wednesday, April 15th
Laity	: No meeting
Priestly Life	: Friday, April 17th