

# Father John Keating Delivers Lectures On Ecumenism

By William Arsenault

The first and second of April witnessed two learned lectures given by Rev. John Keating, CSP, Toronto. Father Keating's first talk concerned "Modern Ecumenism: A Protestant Phenomenon". On the second night Father Keating held the interest of his audience with the topic "The Contribution of the Council to Christian Unity".

Father Keating began with a short discourse on Martin Luther and pointed out that Luther set out to reform the church, not to start his own following. For many years after the first break, many wanted a reunion but difficulties made this impossible. The important fact to note was the element of desire for reunion, which was present.

During the 17th century, efforts were made for reunion, but much of the literature that might have been of influence was not written in Latin, the universal language of the church at this time. Efforts were therefore crippled by this lack of communication.

In the 18th century, efforts of ecumenism were almost at a standstill. Religion, for the most part, was a following of the ruler of the country. But in the 19th century, the idea of "revival" became the common feature of all religions. There were two great revivals in 1740 and 1800 in America, when Methodist and other denominations came together. The fact that these denominations came together to discuss the problems of spiritual revival shows us that they considered something lacking in religious service.

Edinburgh, 1910, marks the beginning of the Protestant ecumenical movement proper. American Anglicans were there; they had always been characterized by a desire for unity. It was realized at this meeting that it was not enough to discuss just missionary problems, but that they would have to go further.

As a result, permanent commissions were set up, the most important of which were "Faith and Order", and "Life and Work". As the founder of Faith and Order, Charles Brant, stated, "A new vision has been unfolded to us." Since there was unanimity among so many it was only logical that they should be together.

In 1927, a conference took place in the U.S. in which it was proposed to take stock of existing religious difficulties in an effort to see whether there could be actual unity, and the possibility of obtaining a greater degree of concord. This was a very provisional conference and it was not successful. It was not to the credit of the Catholics of this time that they were delighted when it did not succeed. The conference provided a letter from the Pope pointing out that Catholics had no right to be concerned with Protestant ecumenism. This was justified in that this type of ecumenism was too liberal for the present time.

There was another important council in Edinburgh in 1937. It was proposed that Christians should come together to discuss like principles and not only should there be a union of the two groups, Faith and Order, and Life and Work, but also, all denominations should form the World Council of Churches. This realization came about before the outbreak of the war, and was a great stride forward towards unity.

## A PROTESTANT MOVEMENT

As we study the meetings of the World Council of Churches, we find that the statements made at these meetings are protestant in tone. But although the movement is protestant in tone, there is no reason why we cannot understand it. We must realize that we haven't a common theological language. The World Council has definitely stepped up the idea of union. Within the council, we have Organic Unions, in which there is a union of denominations of the same traditions; Federal Unions, for collaboration of promotion of their ecumenical work and trans-congressional unions in which there are different traditions coming together to form one church. This last has been followed with great interest, and a good example of Trans-congressional union is the Church of

South India. Here we have varying groups coming together to form one grouping. This particular grouping is episcopal in character, and if the episcopacy is accepted by many churches who never before accepted it, this bridge is beginning to be crossed.

The World Council has always had unity as its primal point, but the question has been asked, "Is it losing its primal goal?" Protestant authorities state that as long as the Council has the strain of the influence of the Faith and Order group, that the Council will not drift away with its secondary endeavours, such as its missionary activity in relation to the United Nations. There has also been much pressure put on this council from the outside, as the Catholic Church enters into Ecumenism. There is gradually being developed a healthy relationship of Catholics to this Council.

## CATHOLIC RELATIONSHIP

In 1949, Catholic ecumenism spread its wings with the charter called "Ecclesia Catholica". This document unlocked the door for relationship with ecumenism. In 1961, the Holy Father sent delegates when the World Council met in New Delhi. Here, it was proposed that joint committees be set up in order to work out lines and methods to be used in inter-church collaboration.

Father Keating ended his first lecture by enumerating reasons why the Catholic Church does not join the World Council of Churches. First of all, in order to be a member, no denomination can consider their church absolute. The unending position of Roman Catholicism would only lead to trouble.

The World Council has brought many churches together with many different cultures. If the Catholic Church joined the Council, those minority denominations who fear the Catholic Church might withdraw. Also, another minority group who didn't belong to the Council and who are about to join might refrain from joining, and this would cripple the movement. Again, if voting power was to rule, Catholics would dominate the Council.

Many Protestants feel that the best thing that the Catholic Church can do is to stay out of the Council, and to organize on their own a movement towards unity.

## THE VATICAN COUNCIL

Father Keating's second lecture concerned the contributions of the Vatican Council to Christian Unity.

As Father Keating mentioned in his first lecture, Catholic Ecumenism spread its wings in 1949 with the document "Ecclesia Catholica". This was to be the blueprint which was followed for some

time by the Catholic Church. Ecclesia Catholica unlocked the door to the Ecumenical Movement, but the door was thrown open by Pope John XXIII. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." Truly, John XXIII can merit this quotation for he was a great Pope. He stood out among men of his time and in his simplicity showed a love for mankind. He came along at the psychologically correct moment and gathered together the elements of Catholicism. The Vatican Council took much preparation, and Pope John initiated many contributions, for example, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

As a focal point of this lecture, Father Keating pointed out valid criticism of the Church in the past and how this criticism is overcome by three great documents which have sprung from the present Vatican Council: The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, The Constitution of the Church, and the Decree on Ecumenism.

## CONSTITUTION OF LITURGY

Father Keating began this portion of his lecture with the critical statement:

"In the past many men of good will could not understand the Mass and considered it an unscriptural, unintelligible piece of priestcraft." This criticism is valid. In the early days of the Church, the emphasis was on ritual and as a result, the emphasis on scripture was minimized. There was an existential approach to the scriptures in which the existence of Christ present preceded consideration of His essence. But Lutheran reformers insisted that since God has revealed himself in scriptures, He is, in reality, speaking to us in the scriptures and therefore, there must be more emphasis on the reading of the scriptures. The Scripturists, such as Luther, constantly hammered this point home and insisted that the reading of the scriptures be accompanied by a homily. The Constitution of the Liturgy recognizes the fact that more emphasis must be placed on the scriptures and our services are now becoming more Protestant in that way.

The criticism that the Mass is unintelligible resulted from the whole-scale use of Latin in the Mass. In the days of the Reformation, Latin was the universal language of the clergy and this to a certain extent justified its use.

But even in those days there was not the great wall of China but the great wall of Latin which was preventing conversions and uniting Catholics in a bond of ignorance. But again, the Constitution of the Liturgy is bringing the vernacular into the Mass much to the approval of our separated brethren.

And finally, we must admit that in the past, the liturgy of the Mass was to a certain extent "priestcraft". In the early days, as the church began to grow, the altar gradually made its way to the back of the church and the priest turned his back on the people. By the time the Middle Ages arrived, the Mass seemed like a little private devotion of the priest. The reformers of the 16th century used this as a focal point. They claimed that all laity held priestly powers. But this was only heresy in an extreme. The Constitution of the Liturgy tries to restore this sense of unity and desires the participation of the people.

## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH

The Church has been described as an aloof, authoritarian, idiosyncratic organization. Father Keating, beginning with this criticism, discussed each of its elements.

In the past, outsiders considered the Church as aloof in the sense that it seemed to look down on them as second class Christians. This is part of the uncompromising attitude of the Church. But the Constitution of the Church maintains a transcending notion to the various institutions of worship, insisting that we are all bound together in a transcending order, but also admitting that some are institutionally defective. We recognize other denominations within the same bond which is Christ.

To the criticism that the Church is authoritarian, it must be said that all institutions must be to a certain extent, in that they must lay down the rules of faith. The difficulty arises in the possibility of the Church becoming excessive in its power. There have been times in the past when authority was set up to be more important than salvation, but if we examine the history of the time in question, we usually find reasons for the mistakes.

The Church is also criticized for being totalitarian. If the Pope sneezes, the rest of the Church takes out their handkerchiefs. The Council has set forth in clear terms that there has always been a constitutional monarchy in the Church in which all Bishops share an equal responsibility. Although there is primacy, this idea of equal responsibility helps to make the constitution idea more understandable.

The question of the Church as an idiosyncratic arises for the most part from devotion to Mary. Luther was a strenuous defender of many of the doctrines concerning Mary, for example, the Immaculate Conception, but most Protestants began to consider her hindering the way to Christ. The constitution of the Church, chapter eight, took up the problem under three aspects: 1) The role of Mary in the Economy of Salvation 2) The role of Mary in the Church, 3) The role of Mary in the Vernacular.

der three aspects: 1) The role of Mary in the Economy of Salvation 2) The role of Mary in the Church, 3) The role of Mary in the Vernacular.

The role of Mary in the economy of salvation finds its foundation in the fact that Mary is the Mother of God. The Role of Mary in the Church is understood in her association with Christ and his works through faith, hope, and charity. Every member of Christ's Church is a mediator and Mary, above all, is the type and image of the entire Church.

As to the vernacular of Mary, the Constitution points out that she certainly deserves it, but the Church must abstain from false exaggerations. The Church is willing to admit that there has been excesses.

## DECREE ON ECUMENISM

As a climax to his final lecture, Father Keating discussed the Decree on Ecumenism.

The preface of this decree points out that unity among Christians is the primary concern of the Second Vatican Council. The introduction goes on to point out one Church and that discussion of unity should only be done between competent experts. "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

The second chapter is the heart of the decree, in which is stated that spiritual ecumenism is the heart of the whole spiritual movement. There must be a change of attitude toward our separated brethren in the area of religion. In the past, none of us can deny that when it comes to religion, there is an invisible wall between the Protestant and Catholic. If someone attacks our value system, he strikes at our foundation of security. The tendency is to strike back in hostility. But this kind of hostility, if it cannot be eradicated, must at least become dormant.

The decree also points out that there must exist a holiness of life if there is to exist real ecumenical spirit. There must be a struggle to obtain this holiness in relation to the scriptures where it is revealed in the word "Love". If the Christian does not love Christ, how can the overflow reach out to his separated brethren?

There must exist public and private prayer. If we neglect to pray for unity, we are neglecting our Christian duty. If we do not begin to pray together, we will not come together.

## WHERE SMART STYLES ORIGINATE

Come in and browse around. We have a complete line of dress shoes and Campus Casuals, for Fall and Winter Wear.

## AGNEW SURPASS

Queen Street, Charlottetown

## Miller Brothers

MUSIC STORE

Great George Street

## WESTERN TIRE & AUTO

SUPPLY CO.

180 Queen Street

FOR ALL YOUR SPORTING NEEDS

— IN THE HEART OF THE CITY —

## THE DUNDEE MOTEL

Mrs. Reta Peters 200 Pownal St.  
Resident Manager P. O. Box 519

10 Deluxe Units—5 Motel Style—6 Housekeeping Units

\* Off-Street Parking \* Television \* Radio

## CAPITOL THEATRE

— Get More Out Of Life — Go Out To A Movie! —

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday — April 26th, 27th, 28th  
CHALK GARDEN

Deborah Kerr, Haley Mills and John Mills

Thursday, Friday, Saturday — April 29 - 30 & May 1st  
THE DISORDERLY ORDERLY

Jerry Lewis

Mon., Tues., Wed., — May 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th  
BECKET

Richard Burton and Peter O'Toole

Friday and Saturday — May 7th and 8th  
THE BRASS BOTTLE

Tony Randall and Burl Ives

## TOPS IN

Collegiate Footwear

10 percent Discount

to Students

WRIGHT SHOE COMPANY