



Bring All To Christ

by Fr. Michael Moses

The recently published declaration, *'Dominus Jesus': On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*, has captured much attention and has been the subject of some highly emotional discussions. Some Catholics have expressed very negative responses and indeed certain headlines both in the secular and Catholic press have deflected the discussions away from the central purpose that the declaration itself very clearly highlights.

First of all, it is important to clarify the nature of this document. At the Vatican press conference, early September, where the declaration was introduced, Archbishop Tarcisio Bertone, the Secretary of the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith explained that the term 'declaration' indicated that the docu-

ment did not teach "new doctrines, but rather reaffirms and summarizes the doctrine of the Catholic faith defined or taught in previous documents on the Church's Magisterium."

'Dominus Jesus', Archbishop Bertone said, "indicates correct interpretation, in the face of doctrinal errors or ambiguities diffused in today's theological and ecclesial ambience. ... Given that this is a doctrinal document of the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith, expressly approved by the Supreme Pontiff, it has the status of the universal Magisterium."

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the Prefect of the Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith explained the fundamental thrust of



Fr. Michael Moses, left, gets some help from Fr. Ian Taylor during a Fraternity retreat.

the document at the same press conference. He said the document was a necessary response to "the theology of religious pluralism", which is growing "not only in theological circles, but also more generally in Catholic public opinion."

The cardinal noted that "dialogue—or rather the ideology of dialogue—becomes a substitute for missionary activity and for the urgency of an appeal to conversion."

The declaration, above all, is a clarion call to rally Catholics and re-ignite in them the urgency of the call to bring others, especially non-Christians to "conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ" (#22) for "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we can be saved" (Acts 4:12, see #13); for "there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tim 2:5-6, see #13).

The entire document echoes what Pope Paul VI said in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), written in part to counter and correct misinterpretations of the Vatican II Council: "Neither respect and esteem for these [Non-Christian] religions nor the complexity of the questions raised is an invitation to the Church to withhold from

From The Editor...

'Dominus Jesus': The Right Spark

The 'Dominus Jesus' declaration has caused consternation in some places, in other areas it has brought great satisfaction. For sure, it cannot but affect our way of being Church at the start of this millennium.

When we, in the Port of Spain Fraternity, sat down to discuss this document, the brothers were convinced that because the declaration is a 'declaration'—and therefore teaching nothing new—the difficulties, such as they are, have been caused, to a large extent, by priests who did not teach as well as they might. The prophet Jeremiah had a similar complaint: *'The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests teach as they wish'* (5:31). As Fraternity priests, we felt a certain responsibility to ensure, first of all, we understood the document and then to assist the faithful in an appreciation of it.

But my mind also goes back to our Fraternity conference in August when we sensed through various reports and discussions the Lord urging us to embrace the missionary activity even while we work at building up our existing Fraternities. We have, in recent months, visited Ghana, Slovakia, Ukraine with the intention of setting up new Fraternities or assisting in the overall work of evangelization.

In this issue, Fr. Michael Moses of the Port of Spain archdiocese argues that 'Dominus Jesus' aims to spark the evangelizing mission of the Church.

—Fr. Cuthbert Alexander

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood

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Dear Friends of the Priesthood,

I am sitting here in my room thinking and praying about what to share with you in this month of All Souls. The invitations to Africa, Ukraine, and Slovenia fill my mind and my heart with excitement; the vision of Pope John Paul II for a new Springtime of evangelization looms before me; our own existing fraternities and the inquiries from dioceses in this country continue to reach out for assistance, prayer, and encouragement. As I continue to take it all in, the faces of two brother priests, who are with the Lord, now flash before my eyes: Fr. Jim Ferry and Fr. Forrest Rouelle. Both had a tremendous love for priests, both had a missionary heart and zeal for the restoration of the priesthood, both caused the Fraternity of Priests to flourish, and both are presently with the Lord interceding for us.

In this month when we remember in a special way those who have gone before us I am reminded of the account from 2 Kings 2:9 where Elijah is to be taken up to heaven. He says to his disciple Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "I pray you, let me inherit a double share of your spirit." In this month of special prayer and grace I am asking for a "double share" of Fr. Jim's and Fr. Forrest's spirit, a spirit of tremendous love and missionary zeal for priests. I am challenging every priest reading this letter to earnestly ask for a double portion of this spirit—claim the gift, seek your inheritance! I am asking each lay person to pray for that double portion for your parish priest and for every priest you know. When priests are excited about their priesthood, the world catches fire. I believe that these are exciting days for the Fraternity of Priests. With a

renewed spirit burning within us, who knows what God will do!!!

I personally want to thank my friend and brother, Fr. Bob Franco for his leadership over the years, for his time "at the helm", and for his ever generous spirit. His time of rest from the board is well deserved, but time is so fleeting, he will probably be re-elected in the next few years (take it from the voice of experience).

To all of you, your prayers, your generosity, and your partnership with us is so critical and so appreciated. Please be assured of our continued prayer for your intentions and your loved ones. As we move together into this new millenium, let us together recommit ourselves to Christ and to the new Springtime of life just ahead of us.

In Jesus,



Fr. John Allard

- SAYS THE LORD -

My brothers, the love in my heart is like a raging fire that wants to purify you and inflame your heart with love for me.

I have loved you with an everlasting love and I want to see that love enkindled in your hearts. Love me with all your heart, as I love you with all my heart.

Give yourselves totally to me and let me do with you as I want. That is the secret of holiness: total submission to my divine will.

—St Cloud Fraternity

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these Non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ. ...[Christianity] effectively establishes with God an authentic and living relationship which the other religions do not succeed in doing, even though they have, as it were, their arms stretched out toward heaven” (EN#53).

From the very start, the declaration calls us to recognize the urgent need for missionary activity: “In the course of the centuries, the Church has proclaimed and witnessed with fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus. At the close of the second millennium, however this mission is still far from complete. For that reason, St Paul’s words are now more relevant than ever: “Preaching the Gospel is not a reason for me to boast, it is a necessity laid on me: woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:16)! This explains the Magisterium’s particular attention to giving reasons for and supporting the evangelizing mission of the Church, above all in connection with the religious traditions of the world. (#2)

It states further: “The Church’s constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only *de facto* but also *de iure* (or in principle). (#4)

It is not without significance that with the exception of the Vatican II documents, the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* is the only other document cited so frequently—no less than 21 times! *Redemptoris* which, as the declaration states “calls the Church to the task of announcing the Gospel as the fullness of the truth” foreshadows the declaration.

John Paul II states in #46 of this encyclical: “The proclamation of the Word

FR JOE GETS 2000 AWARD

Every year, during the annual meeting of the Fraternity of Priests, one priest is honored with the Committed Brotherhood Award. This year the award went to Fr. Joe Losh from the diocese of Columbus, Ohio.

Father Joe was the founder of the Columbus Fraternity in 1987 and has served as co-leader for 10 years, often attending the annual meeting. He is faithful in coming to meetings, leading worship, and attending the Priest, Deacon and Seminarian Conference in Steubenville. Father Joe is a man of prayer, having been ordained 36 years



At the August conference, Fr. Bob Franco paid tribute to Fr. Joe Losh, right, recipient of the Committed Brotherhood Award.

and currently serves as a pastor and a prison chaplain in the Columbus diocese.

of God has *Christian conversion* as its aim: a complete and sincere adherence to Christ and his Gospel through faith ... Nowadays the call to conversion which missionaries address to non-Christians is put into question or passed over in silence. It is seen as an act of ‘proselytizing’; it is claimed that it is enough to help people to become more human or more faithful to their own religion, that it is enough to build communities capable of working for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity. What is overlooked is that every person has the right to hear the ‘Good News’ of the God who reveals and gives himself in Christ.”

Let us once again listen to the declaration: “Indeed, God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4); that is, God wills

the salvation of everyone through the knowledge of the truth. Salvation is found in the truth. Those who obey the promptings of the Spirit of truth are already on the way to salvation.

“But the Church, to whom this truth has been entrusted, must go out to meet their desire, so as to bring them the truth. Because she believes in God’s universal plan of salvation, the Church must be missionary. ...” (#22).

Fr. Michael Moses, a member of the Port of Spain Fraternity, is the founder and a past principal of the School of Evangelization in Trinidad. He teaches at the Catholic Bible Institute in that country.

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Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!