CATHOLICITY:
A Threat or Help to Identity?**

Walter H. Principe

Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies and University of Toronto, Canada.

During Pope John Paul's visit to the East Indies the television broadcast of people dancing for the pope in their traditional dress caused quite a stir in one Toronto rectory. The housekeeper, a devout lady of Spanish origin, after watching the ceremonies on her own set, rushed in and exclaimed to the pastor with shocked look and voice: "Father, did you see those people dancing in front of the pope? They were half naked! And they even went and received Holy Communion dressed that way!" Dancing in the liturgy the Spanish lady might have understood since in Toledo in her native Spain the venerable Mozarabic liturgy incorporates dance into eucharistic worship. But, having seen women barred from Spanish churches because their arms were bare, she found it hard to understand or accept an expression of welcome, reverence, and worship so culturally different from her own.

This little event illustrates the tension between cultural or national diversities and unity in faith that will be examined here in relation to the general theme of our Congress. Have cultural or national identities been threatened or helped by application of the notion of "catholicity"? As I hope to show, catholicity as an ideal — or, if you will, a religious myth — involves a tension between unity in essentials of faith and diversity in the way this faith is expressed and lived in various cultures. To state my thesis briefly: if catholicity, seen as a fundamental trait of the church, is used to insist on a uniformity that overrides differences, it tends to threaten cultural, national, and even personal identity. But if it is used to open a unified but strictly defined faith or belief to all manner of cultural variety, it can be a help to such identity, even the identity of minority groups within a larger national body. I hope to show this by historical examples.

This paper will deal first with how the notion of catholicity developed historically within Roman Catholicism, to which this discussion must be limited (the Orthodox, Anglicans, and different Protestant traditions have concepts of catholicity that in part agree with but in part differ from that in Roman Catholicism). As distinguished from "Roman Catholicism" (i.e., the faith, system, and practice of the Roman Catholic

** Limitations of space have required elimination of the extensive notes and references in the original paper. With two exceptions, only documentary sources and general encyclopedia articles will be indicated within the text, using the following abbreviations:
Abbott — W.M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York, 1966).
Cath — Catholicisme
Congar — Y. Congar, *L'Eglise une, sainte, catholique, apostolique* (Paris, 1970).
DocCath — La Documentation catholique
DTC — Dictionnaire de théologie catholique
Klauser — T. Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy* (London, 1969, rpt. 1973).
NCE — New Catholic Encyclopedia
Origins — *Origins: National Catholic Documentary Service*
PL — Patrologia latina

Church in its concrete historical and cultural life), "catholicity" is a characteristic or "note" of the church. The word "catholic" derives neither from the Septuagint nor the Christian scriptures but rather from secular Greek, *kath' holou*, meaning "on the whole" or "in general". The Fathers of the early church used "catholic" of the church in two distinct but related meanings: first, the catholic church as the universal church distinguished from the particular or local church, i.e., the church spread throughout the world yet maintaining unity of faith, sacramental life, and fellowship or communion despite the variety of peoples embracing Christianity; second, the catholic church as the true, orthodox, authentic church, identified as such because considered as possessing the totality or universality of teachings and gifts coming from Christ — a universality distinguishing it from those called sects, heretics, or schismatics (names implying partiality).

The link between these two meanings is found in many patristic texts, e.g., those of Cyprian (d.258), or in this remarkable text of Cyril of Jerusalem (d.386):

> The church is called "catholic" because it extends through all the world, from one end of the earth to another. Also because it teaches universally (*katholikōs*) and without omission all the doctrines which ought to come to the knowledge of human beings about things both visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly; and because it brings under the sway of true religion all human classes, rulers, and subjects, learned and ignorant, and because it universally (*katholikōs*) treats and cures every type of sin committed by means of soul and body, and possesses in itself every kind of virtue which can be named, in deeds and words, and spiritual gifts of every kind (*Catacheses* 18, 23).

A little further on Cyril draws a practical conclusion for his catechumens:

> When you are staying in any city, do not inquire simply "Where is the Lord's house?" For the sects of the impious attempt to call their dens "houses of the Lord". And do not simply ask where the church is, but say: "Where is the Catholic Church?" For this is the special name of this holy church which is the mother of all (ibid. 26).

Augustine (d.430) developed the theme of the church as the *catholica* in opposition to the North African Donatists. They held they were the only true church because they claimed they had preserved pure faith, holy ministers and hence valid sacraments where others had lost them by apostasy in times of persecution. In relation to our Congress theme, we note that their religious position was linked with an ethnic and social problem since they drew support from the native Berber population, which disliked those who were Romans by origin or who had accepted Roman culture in North Africa (see *NCE* 4, 1001-03). Augustine frequently calls them the *pars Donati*, the "part" or "portion" of Donatus, their leader, and opposes to them the universal church spread through the world — the *catholica*, a name the Donatists cannot claim (see *PL* 43: 81-82, 114, 190, 194; cf. *schisma Donati, PL* 43: 114, 190). He ridicules the Donatists for thinking that the true church could have perished from the entire world and have remained only in Africa (see *PL* 43: 190, 194, 297-300). He opposes to their particularity the certitude of the whole world, which he says, "is secure in judging that they are not good who in any part of the earth cut themselves off from the whole world" (*PL* 43: 101). Although these texts stress geographical extension, Augustine links this closely with the other aspect of catholicity, authenticity or orthodoxy (see *PL* 43: 333-34, and Congar, p. 154).

The Donatists' refusal to engage in discussion together with the violence of some among them led Augustine to abandon his earlier conciliatory attitude and to seek the intervention of the emperor, who sent a tribune, Marcellinus, to preside

over a conference or debate at Carthage in 411. Persuaded by Augustine's arguments, Marcellinus required the Donatists to submit or suffer the penalties of civil law. Here one sees an instance of catholicity, supported by the emperor's civil authority, used to work against a particular group whose identity was based not only on theological and religious characteristics but also on ethnic and cultural traits (see *DTC* 1, 2277-80, and *NCE* 4, 1001-02).

In the middle ages, catholicity tended to be described with increasing emphasis on orthodoxy (faith as *fides "catholica"*), this qualitative aspect founding the quantitative or geographical aspect (see Congar, pp. 157-59). A text of Boethius, influential since frequently commented on, went in this direction (*De Trinitate,* 1). For Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas catholicity was less quantitative and more qualitative, i.e., the fullness of Christ communicated to the church through a faith open to all persons and corresponding to the totality of human aspirations (See Congar, *ibid.*).

The rise of Protestantism shifted emphasis in the concept towards universal geographical (quantitative) extension. Since in its early days Protestantism was restricted to a few countries, Catholic apologists claimed catholicity for their church by reason of its extension to all nations, including the new ones being evangelized by Catholic missionaries (see Congar, p.17). This view, still found in some 20th-century textbooks, lost force as Protestant missions spread worldwide. Emphasis shifted back to the qualitative aspect, interpreted to mean that the church is catholic by possessing all truth, all means of salvation through the working of Christ and the Spirit bringing everything under Christ as Head. This qualitative catholicity is thus seen as the spiritual efficacy of Catholic Christianity to transcend all particularities and to integrate the positive human cultural values of each group or people within catholic unity (see Congar, pp.159-79). That this unity is not the same as uniformity is being brought out increasingly today through the concept of "inculturation", which is being used not only by theologians but by all church officials. Inculturation means that the Christian gospel must be allowed to take root in different cultures, feeding the worship and spiritual life of Christians while remaining as free as possible of cultural importations. The Word of God and church life must incorporate the best elements of each culture even while criticizing any aspects of a culture judged incompatible with the gospel message. Catholicity is thus taken to mean that Christ and his gospel can respect diversities and yet bring them into a harmonious unity without uniformity.

Pope Pius XI had already expressed this attitude practically by encouraging native priests and bishops and by changing church attitudes towards cultural customs in countries such as China (see *NCE* 1, 120-22; *Catholicisme* 2, 1060-63). The most important endorsement of catholicity and inculturation came in many documents of the Second Vatican Council emphasizing the need for variety within unity for the church itself, for liturgy, ecumenism, the missions, eastern churches, and the church in the modern world (see Abbott, pp. 65-66, 151, 300-301, 347-49, 357-61, 376-77, 595-96). Based on these conciliar teachings the new *Code of Canon Law* (15 Jan. 1983) stated the rights of all church members to their own (approved) liturgical rite and to "their own form of spiritual life" so long as this accords with church teaching (no.214). These provisos and that of canon 216 saying that "no initiative . . . can lay claim to the title 'catholic' without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority" suggests a continuing (and perhaps fruitful) tension between the centrifugal push of diverse cultures and the centripetal pull of church leaders to unity.

This new attitude towards variety within unity remarkably reversed a long-standing tendency to stress orthodoxy as a unity often translated into uniformity not only in basic faith but in many details of Roman Catholic life, worship, and practice, a tendency that was already evident in the 4th century (see Congar, p.172). In relation to our

Congress theme, let us look — with some fear of oversimplification — in this second part at some historical examples where, first of all, catholicity viewed as uniformity tended to threaten cultural, national, and even personal identities.

One such example, from the middle ages on, is the relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches of the east. Although there was some mutual respect for legitimate varieties between these two great branches of the Christian church (e.g. different liturgies, the role of patriarchs), a number of debated points raised problems, e.g., the use of leavened or un-leavened bread in the Eucharist, the importance of the epiclesis or invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist, the insertion by the Latin church of the disputed *Filioque* clause into the creed used in the liturgy, and the pope's claim to universal jurisdiction. In the matter of the *Filioque* and in the claim of the pope to universal jurisdiction, the Roman Catholic Church seemed to the Orthodox to be aggressive and to be challenging their doctrines. And since these and the other matters already mentioned were deeply rooted in the cultures and lives of the Orthodox (who always maintained a close link between religion and nation), the Latin church's attitude could seem to threaten as well their national and cultural heritage and identity. Indeed, some scholars hold that these cultural-national issues were often as basic as the theological differences or at least prevented mutual understanding and compromise (see *NCE* 2, 936-50, and 5, 21-25).

One might argue that insistence by the Orthodox on their positions threatened western culture and identity. They, however, at least never made a claim to universal jurisdiction and would have been (and I believe still would be) ready to accept the pope as patriarch of the west provided it did not threaten the authority of their own patriarchs. In this respect, I think we can see today that the newer notion of catholicity is not a threat but a help to affirming the rights and so the identity of the Orthodox. In a strikingly new approach, the Second Vatican Council acknowledged past deficiencies of the Roman Catholic Church towards the Oriental Church and also spoke very positively about the legitimate variety and richness of their traditions not only in liturgy, spirituality, and discipline, but even in expression of doctrine (see Abbott, pp.355-61). More concretely, on December 7, 1965, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Istanbul joined in nullifying the mutual excommunications that had been proclaimed centuries earlier, and in 1975 the same pope kissed the feet of Metropolitan Meliton to show his desire to serve humbly to help achieve unity — facts recently recalled by Pope John Paul (see *Origins* 15, p.127).

Another example where catholicity as a drive for uniformity caused tension and a threat to cultural diversity was the western liturgy. The ancient Gallican rites of the northern European peoples, more rhetorical and poetic than the combined Roman-Frankish liturgy that supplanted it, seem to have been the victim of such concerns for uniformity (see Klauser, pp.45-46, 72-76; *NCE* 6, 258-62). A clearer case, because better known historically, was the imposition in 1568 of the *Breviarium ROMANUM* and in 1570 of the *Missale ROMANUM* by Pius V on the western church except in sees having had their own special liturgy for more than two hundred years. A Congregation of Rites was soon set up with authority to rule in all liturgical matters; then came the *Pontificale ROMANUM* and the *Rituale ROMANUM*. The whole process is described by Klauser (p.117) as a "rigid unification in the liturgy and rubricism". Before this, local bishops or groups of bishops had the right to regulate liturgical action more suited to their own cultural or national identities. In France many could claim a "Gallican" tradition of more than two hundred years and the growth of Gallicanism led to French opposition to uniform Roman liturgy; this opposition spread into Tuscany but was headed off by a national synod (*ibid.*, pp.119-20).

Gallicanism itself was one of the most tenacious movements in western Europe seeking to maintain national identity against Roman pressures and the views of French

Ultramontanists. Gallicanism seems to have originated in the 13th century when the arrival of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders introduced in practice the role of papal authority that had formerly be claimed in theory. In both universities and parishes the advent of the well-trained, inspiring friars, backed by the authority of the pope, was seen as a threat by the secular clerics who were professors at the university and by the bishops and local diocesan clergy. At first the secular clerics of the University of Paris had been helped by the pope in the very establishment of the university and its privileges, but at a certain stage the influence of the Mendicant Friars changed their allegiance and they appealed to the bishops to make common cause for the good of the local church; both groups then began to ally themselves with the king in his growing nationalistic policies and struggles against the pope. Much of this was, of course, a matter of power, but the alliance of the friars with the pope to extend his influence seems to have been reenforced by a certain view of catholicity. Gallicanism became an even stronger force at later times in French history (see *NCE* 6, 262-67). Even at the First Vatican Council it played a part in the opposition of a group of French bishops to the definition of papal infallibility, one result of which they saw as the weakening of the local churches.

The great missionary movements of the 16th and 17th centuries and later point up the issue of catholicity in relation to cultural identities. The expansion of a partially homogenous western Catholicism into North and South America, Asia, and eventually Africa and Australasia forced missionaries to ask themselves how they should preach and teach and how they should develop the worship and spirituality of converts from backgrounds so diverse from their own European culture (see *NCE* 1, 120-22). How much uniformity was required?

Coming into contact with an ancient rich civilization in China, the Jesuit Matteo Ricci sought to integrate as much of traditional Chinese religious views and practices into Christianity as he could (see *NCE* 12, 470-72). Rivalries among missionary groups and among European nations seeking control in China added fuel to a controversy about such adaptations. There were serious theological issues involved in the Chinese rites of homage to Confucius and veneration of ancestors as well as in use of certain Chinese terms to speak about God, but at least one element in the opposed views was how much diversity in concrete cultural expression could be allowed by unity in faith (see *DTC* 2, 2364-91; *NCE* 3, 611-15). At the time Ricci's opponents won out and these adaptations were eliminated. Although earlier in this century the policy was changed and use of these rituals was accepted as not being superstitious or opposed to Catholic faith, Roman Catholicism in China kept a very strong European flavor, as I experienced on a visit to China when I observed church decoration, ritual, and spirituality that differed little from that of the European past (see *Cath* 2, 1060-63; *DocCath* 80, no.1843, pp.17-19).

We could ask similar questions about the extensive missionary efforts of the Spanish and Portuguese in South and Central America and in the south and west of what is now the United States (see *NCE* 9, 944-74). The general impression is that the conquerors, colonisers, and missionaries submerged the existing rich cultures of the Indians with European ways; in religion this meant a Christianity of Spanish or Portuguese flavor. Thus the mission churches of the Spanish, beautiful as they are, did little to incorporate the culture of the original peoples. The same is true, with minor exceptions, of the liturgy: I have seen the old Mass books, vestments, altar pieces and statuary in the surviving Spanish missions, and they are straight out of European Spain and are fully conformed to Roman usage. One exception that should be noted was the work of the Jesuits in establishing "reductions": these were attempts to achieve a good measure of inculturation of the gospel (see *NCE* 12, 165-66).

Another interesting exception to the general pattern, and an example of qualitative catholicity respecting cultural identity, is the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe among Mexicans and other Hispanic Americans. It is devoutly believed that Mary, the mother of Jesus, impressed an image of herself on the cloak of an Indian peasant. The devotion to Mary and her Son that followed upon this, with the approval and encouragement of the bishops, can be seen as an affirmation of catholicity in its qualitative sense because the image is not that of a Spanish lady but rather of a Mexican Indian madonna, an image that contrasts strikingly with the Spanish features of paintings and statuary in the mission churches. It would be hard to imagine a stronger assertion of the value of the native Indian identity and culture than such a portrait and the ensuing devotion, a devotion that now supports the identity of millions of Hispanics in Mexico and elsewhere, including many in the United States (see *NCE* 6, 821-22).

North American Indian tribes were so diversified that one would have to study each in detail to form an accurate judgment on how the notion of catholicity was interpreted and put into practice. If one may judge by reactions today that reaffirm the cultural and religious values of past Indian traditions, the native peoples judge that Catholic missionaries by and large threatened their cherished cultural and tribal identity by the way they presented Christianity. There were, however, different approaches and, as in China and South America, the Jesuits, with their traditions of humanism and greater openness to secular culture, seem to have made serious attempts to understand and preserve the best elements of native culture. Nevertheless, they brought with them an intellectual and cultural baggage that Indians and scholars of the Amerindians would consider weighted with European and French Catholic outlooks. There were differences in approach among the Jesuits themselves, and those seeking greater adaptation were, as in China, criticized both by their brethren and by other missionary groups.

On his visit to Canada in the summer of 1984 Pope John Paul in three addresses stressed the importance of the native cultures and the need to integrate them within the gospel teaching (see *DocCath* 81, no.1881, pp.941-43, 968-70, and 972-74). A very moving occasion was his taking part in a ceremony of purification conducted by the Indian leaders, one of whom waved smoking wands, as a sign of harmony with nature and of purification, not only in the four directions but also about the pope himself. He received the gesture reverently, but I could not help noticing that some of the other church dignitaries on the stand with him seemed somewhat disgruntled and remarkably unenthusiastic!

As with the Spanish missions and the Amerindians, it is impossible to generalize about the missionary movement in Africa. Some attempts have certainly been made to integrate elements of various African cultures into Catholic life and practice, but it seems true that the notion of one true faith and its European inculturation taken as normative have threatened African culture and identity. For example, Catholic teaching and discipline concerning monogamy has disrupted established social and economic structures, especially by rendering the position of widowed women economically difficult through rejection of the leviratic practice that had provided support for these women. Another example: at a conference a few years ago African theologians called for the development of an "African theology", i.e. an understanding of the gospel in relation to the particular culture, history and problems of Africa (see *DocCath* 75, no.1736, p.196). This initiative, however, received a rather cool response from Rome, and this may have been why Pope John Paul II was somewhat rigid in his reaction to African cultural expression on his first visit to Africa, especially in regard to the liturgy. But it must be added that his world travels seem to have modified his views and he now speaks constantly on these visits about the value

of each culture and the need for inculturation (see *DocCath* 82: no.1890, pp.225-26; no.1892, pp.341-44; no.1893, pp.367-69).

The liberation theology of Hispanic America and the reaction to it by some in these lands and by the Roman curia seem to me to be partially a tension between two views of catholicity. In 1970, at a theological conference in Brussels, I heard Gustavo Gutierrez say that although the theology of the conference was undoubtedly interesting for the Europeans present, those from South America would have to develop their own theology in relation to the culture and needs of their own people. In informal gatherings at the same conference theologians from North America were saying the same thing. Gutierrez and others did develop such a theology, working from the praxis or concrete religious life and needs of the people and in turn, by their theology, supporting efforts towards justice and humanity. But their work has become a constant and, I am afraid, almost morbid preoccupation of Roman curialists worried about Marxist elements in some of its exponents (see *DocCath* 81, no.1881, pp.890-900). Gutierrez recently denied the essential role of Marxism in this theology (see *ibid.*, pp.906-909). I have seen this preoccupation and fear — perhaps arising from other sources not always expressed — in Rome at meetings of the International Theological Commission. The conflict seems to be between a view of catholicity that insists on one standard way of presenting the gospel and one which insists on inculturation, taking the official pronouncements in favor of it seriously whereas others become fearful when inculturation or qualitative catholicity begins to happen in concrete reality. To the extent that a rigid, narrow theology of the Roman curia and like-minded South and Central American prelates prevails, there seems to be a threat to cultural and national identity and values.

Looking at the other side of the picture, has the notion of catholicity been a help to the cultural, national, or personal identities of some peoples? Here I am thinking not so much of the simple fact that many groups or nations are mainly Roman Catholic and so have integrated their faith and practice into their cultural and national life, but rather what is the influence on their identity coming from their sense of belonging to a church or communion that transcends the limits of their own culture and nation, a church that is indeed universal both geographically and qualitatively?

Perhaps someone might object that it is paradoxical if not downright contradictory to think that such a notion could help cultural or national identity. On one level one could reply to that objection by saying that because the Christian gospel requires self-reflection and *metanoia* or conversion with respect to selfish or destructive manifestations within one's culture or nation, it helps that identity by making it more authentic and more faithful to its nobler aspects, and this by helping to overcome any narrowness, selfishness, or other weaknesses that could debilitate its better identity. I think this is true, and would point to the example of the bishops of the United States, wrestling, in communion with the pope and bishops of other lands, with questions of nuclear armaments and economic structures and drawing elements of critique from their Catholic communion. Their prophetic challenge to the people of the United States to become the morally dedicated nation it has always thought itself to be is an example of how a more universal communion or catholicity can help to better a national culture or identity.

Here, however, I would like to proceed on another level by suggesting a few concrete examples of instances where I think the sense of belonging to a universal or catholic communion has reenforced national or cultural identity. The simplest case is perhaps that of Poland in many periods of its history. Poland's link with the universal church began with the baptism of Mieszko, Poland's first ruler, in 966; Mieszko's elder son, Bolesaw, secured political and ecclesiastical independence for

Poland. For centuries the Poles defended the Christian west against the east, but it was especially between 1795 and 1918 that the link with the universal church was crucially important for Polish identity as Germany, Russia, and Austria tried to suppress Poland. In this period the church came to be regarded as the one force that could help preserve Polish culture, language, and identity.

Although between the two world wars the church lost the support of many intellectuals, it retained its influence with the peasants and to some extent with the workers. Soviet domination of Poland and the good record of the church during the second world war and afterwards again made the church the rallying point for Poles of every group or class. And, of course, the election of Cardinal Wojtya to be head of the Roman Catholic Church was a most striking symbol as well as a social and political force aiding Polish confidence in its identity against those it considers its oppressors.

Ireland can be examined as another possible example, although, as my Irish friends are the first to point out, its history is too complex and difficult for anyone, especially an outsider, to grasp fully and to summarize. It does seem that when Protestant rulers repressed Catholics during several centuries, it was not only the Catholicism of the Irish that had become part of their culture but also their sense of a link with the universal church that helped unite them in opposing the English restrictions and strengthened their identity. When, however, it came to seeking national independence, the matter was less simple because some of the people and the church's hierarchy rejected and condemned those opposed to the treaty of 6 December 1921 giving complete autonomy to the south; the opponents to the treaty were part of the Sinn Fein movement that refused to negotiate with the British and sought complete independence of all Ireland. They became bitter towards the church, a bitterness that still remains among those seeking full independence of Ireland by taking over the six counties of the north, by force if necessary. They do not, however, represent all Irish people, many of whom agree with the hierarchy in condemning violence as a means of establishing complete national independence (see *NCE* 7, 613-27).

Another complicated example is that of Québec in Canada. Most Québecois consider themselves a nation or at least a people with an identity quite distinct from that of other Canadians, whom they used to call *les maudits anglais* or, if they were English-speaking Catholics of any national origin, *les irlandais*. The basic distinction of the Québecois from other Canadians was rooted in their colonizing history and in the language and religious culture they had brought from France. It is true that their own history in Canada gradually gave them a self-identity distinct from that of France as well as from that of other Canadians, but at the time of the French revolution and afterwards this distinction of identity from France was reenforced by their sense of catholicity. For as the French nation turned away from the church in the late 18th and the 19th centuries, the people of Québec, led by their clergy and by priests from France who came to Québec because they rejected the French revolution, intensified their loyalty to Rome and to the universal church. In the process Québec became increasingly aware of its unique identity. Today, even though Québec society has become very much secularized, the French version of the Canadian national anthem still sings of carrying *la croix* together with *l'épée*, and the most secular and anti-clerical must take account of Québec's traditional sense of catholicity even as they seek to define its national and cultural identity in new ways (see *NCE* 12, 14-17).

Another example, or series of examples, is that of immigrant groups forming minorities within a larger national population. For Roman Catholic immigrants the integration of their native language, customs and religion in their homeland culture

undoubtedly helped them to maintain a cultural identity within new lands and differing cultures. But I would suggest that their sense of catholicity, of belonging to a universal church linking them not only to their homeland but to other Catholics in general and to Catholics in their new homeland, helped them to preserve a certain cultural identity within a larger and sometimes hostile majority. In Canada, for example, Irish Immigrants were greatly helped at first by Québec Catholics on their arrival and sometimes afterwards; in turn, the Irish and Scots Catholics in Canada helped the Italian immigrants, and in the west Ukrainian Catholics were aided by German Catholics who had already established themselves there. Similar examples could be given for the United States and undoubtedly for Australia.

Finally, help to cultural and national identities would seem to be forthcoming from the new views of catholicity and inculturation that have already been mentioned. The Second Vatican Council, building on the work of theologians, reflected the new anthropological awareness of the richness of all cultures, including many formerly thought primitive and impoverished. It therefore emphasized catholicity as embracing cultural variety within unity of belief, and this theme has been stressed by church officials and others since the council. There are good examples of its effects. The internationalization of the college of cardinals has already led to the election of a non-Italian pope and serious consideration of a non-European pope. The growth of indigenous clergy and the gradual replacement of foreign-born bishops and other administrators also serve to make the church more truly catholic, especially as these bishops take part in the synods called regularly for discussion of major issues in the church.

Nevertheless, despite these excellent statements by councils, synods, and popes, and despite the real progress that has been made, it would be unrealisatic to ignore that within Roman Catholicism catholicity is still sometimes interpreted as emphasizing a unity that tends towards uniformity and that therefore threatens cultural or national identity. A recent example is the suspension of several Ukrainian priests of the Oriental rite who, being married, were ordained in Canada by their bishop. Ukrainian Eastern-rite Catholics maintain that at the time of their union with Rome they were promised the right to a married clergy, which they have in the Ukraine; in North America, however, perhaps under pressure from other Roman Catholic bishops, this right has been denied them.

Another case is the attitude and practice of the Roman curia manifested in many ways towards the churches of North and South America and towards missionary bishops. At the beginning of this century the so-called "heresy of Americanism" was condemned by Rome even though this "heresy" was later shown to be largely the invention of European theologians (see *NCE* 1, 443-44). Today it appears that many European members of the curia fail to understand the North American cultural identity and too quickly judge elements within it to be incompatible with Catholic tradition. North Americans played a leading role at the Second Vatican Council in the drive for a document favoring religious liberty and met their greatest opposition from some European bishops. Today, very pessimistic views about North American Catholicism have been issued by leading Roman curialists. Religious orders, especially of women, have been treated in ways that show an ignorance of the place of women in North American society, e.g., by insisting on a style of obedience, dress, apostolate, and way of life that might still be acceptable to Italians, Poles, and Germans but not to most North American religious women. The importance of national episcopal conferences have been downplayed, perhaps, one suspects, because the episcopal conferences of the United States and Canada have adopted an open, democratic method of consulting all Catholics, a method that derives from North American and British cultural traditions but that is literally foreign to the mentality of most European curialists, whether German or Italian or whatever.

In South America pressure has been put on the bishops of some countries to condemn or silence theologians of liberation. When I was in Rome in 1984 the bishops of Peru had been summoned to the Vatican for this purpose, but they refused to go along with the curial pressure. Documents have been produced concerning South America that show little evidence of consultation or concern for local conditions. And throughout the world bishops in missionary lands and others in ministry who have pleaded for new thinking about ordination and ministry in the face of a drastic shortage of priests have been given only minor concessions that do not really meet the problem.

Thus, despite real advances, the tension seems to continue and a remark made by Marshal McLuhan in a lecture he gave in Toronto some years ago seems more pertinent than ever. He spoke about communication now taking place at the speed of light (Marshall never worried about the accuracy in physics of his metaphors!) and said that as this process draws the world together more and more, the crucial question for the Christian churches is whether they can cease to be churches of European and (in some cases) North American culture alone and whether they can open themselves to becoming the church or churches of all cultures and nations. For the Roman Catholic Church this question means which interpretation of catholicity, and of the related concept of inculturation, will prevail, and this not only in theory and pronouncement, but in concrete daily practice. Future historians of religion will, I believe, look on the remaining years of our century as one of the most crucial periods for the resolution of this issue.