

Vatican by Augustinus

The Extraordinary Synod opens

The papal assertion of the Filioque leaves no doubt of what the "sign of the times" is.

In one rebuff after another to the ideologues of left and right, Pope John Paul II has established the primacy of the *Filioque* as the doctrinal direction for the Extraordinary Synod taking place from Nov. 25-Dec. 8 in Rome.

Quoting the Pope's pronouncement to a pre-synodal meeting with the College of Cardinals, the official Vatican daily, *L'Osservatore Romano*, on Nov. 21 ran a banner headline: "The Holy Spirit Proceeds from the Father and the Son."

According to the daily, the Pope told the assembled prelates, "The Latin Church believes that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son (*ex Patre Filioque procedit*), while the Orthodox Churches proclaim that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son."

In a correlative statement, the Nov. 22 issue of the Vatican's *L'Osservatore Romano* quoted John Paul II defining the papal relationship to the body of officials of the Vatican, the Curia: "The Curia is relative to the Pope and from him it receives its power, and in the identity of the point of views with him there is its force, its limit, its deontological [moral] code. Those conceptions that pretend to oppose the Curia to the Pope are aberrant."

A further move that has established the practical implementation of the two previous statements, is the pontifical dedication of the Synod to Pope Paul VI and to his groundbreak-

ing 1967 encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, which called for a just new world economic order. Clearly, Pope John Paul II feels the urgency of this encyclical.

It is reported in the Italian press that the Pope and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger of Munich recently convened a special meeting on the Church and the economic situation. The format of the meeting was a series of presentations by Ibero-American representatives to a congregation of German-speaking religious orders. Cardinal Ratzinger made his views explicit, that the post-war monetary system is a complete failure, requiring a corresponding overhaul.

The renewed emphasis on the *Filioque* doctrine expressed in the Nicene Creed—which establishes that insofar as the Holy Spirit proceeds consubstantially from the Father and Son, it is in this context that man is the "living image of God"—lays the basis for a firm Church stand behind a just new world economic order.

It was the Eastern Church's disagreement with the *Filioque* which led to the great schism with Rome 1,000 years ago. Today, the principle is under attack by those who use the need to reconcile Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism as a means of undermining the very foundations of the Western ethos.

John Paul II's decision to usher in the Extraordinary Synod with a reaf-

firmation of this fundamental doctrine indeed bodes ill for all those pseudo-Christians who, abusing the intent of the 1962-65 Vatican II Council, are seeking to destroy the foundations of Western society. They would replace this society with the inhuman values visible in Eastern Orthodoxy—values which are as much at the foundation of Soviet society today as they were of Czarist society before 1917.

The most pronounced abuses of the post-Vatican II period, whose 20th anniversary is the occasion for the synodal convocation, come from the British and American Churches who interpreted Pope John XXIII's watchword—"the sign of the times"—for the Vatican Council as license to aberrance on every issue from Church structure to international strategic politics.

The document submitted to the Synod by the British Council of Bishops is exemplary. The essence of the document echoes the Aristotelian logic that flow upward from the bottom, from the masses, and goes so far as to ascribe to the laity in its collectivity the power of infallibility.

The American Council of Bishops—who, in their controversial, recent pastoral letters have endorsed the nuclear freeze, made overtures to Fidel Castro, and adopted a liberalized pro-International Monetary Fund economic policy—lend their interpretation to "sign of the times" by advocating increasing the leadership role of women in the Church and re-examining priestly celibacy.

The Pope's immediate response was to ban further advance publication of synodal documents.

John Paul II cannot have made more clear what theory of moral obligations he will entertain at this Extraordinary Synod.