

ADY 4923

IN FRUCTIBUS

*Motu Proprio of Pope Paul VI
establishing a pontifical commission
to implement the Decree on Communication Media.*

March 7, 1964



Among the many benefits which, not without the special divine benevolence, the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council has already brought to the Church of Christ, we consider that the decree should be included regarding the mass media, which was approved by the council itself and promulgated by us at the public session of December 4 last year.

These instruments in fact—among which the press, radio, television and motion pictures have a particular importance—owing to their close and mutual relationships, pose in our times problems so grave as to influence not only culture, civilization and public morality, but religion itself. Therefore they require today not only a particular solicitude on the part of the holy pastors and an efficacious presence of the faithful, but also the active collaboration of all men of good will.

How much importance we attach to these instruments for the Catholic cause can be easily gathered from the words we pronounced on that solemn occasion: "The other fruit, not of small value, that the council has produced is the decree on mass media, an indication of the capacity of the Church to unite the interior and the exterior life, contemplation and action, prayer and the active apostolate. We hope that this decree too will help to guide and encourage numerous forms of activity in the exercise of the pastoral ministry and of the Catholic mission in the world."¹

For these reasons, we deeply desire that this decree, like the other measures approved with the assistance of the Holy Ghost by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, should be diligently and faithfully implemented. We consider that we can give a valid contribution to this implementation by instituting without delay a commission to which this whole sector will be entrusted.

Already our predecessor of happy memory John XXIII, almost at the beginning of his pontificate, had given with the *motu proprio Boni Pastoris*,² a new orientation to the appropriate, permanent pontifical commission to which the task had been entrusted of "examining the various activities related to motion pictures, radio and television, to foster them and direct them, in conformity with the teaching and the directive norms contained in the encyclical *Miranda Prorsus* and with the directives which were to be given later by the Apostolic See."³

The same commission which has ever since then been attached to the Secretariat of State⁴ attended to its task with such thoroughness and such zeal as to deserve the appreciation of all.

Moreover, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council have considered it necessary that the competence of this commission should be extended to all mass media including the press and that experts, including lay-

men, from various countries should be called upon to give their cooperation.⁵

Therefore since this authoritative vote of the venerable Fathers of the council is in accord with our desires, we, modifying the name and amplifying the task of the above commission, by our own initiative, with certain knowledge and after mature deliberation, by virtue of this letter and from henceforth institute the Pontifical Commission for Mass Media, entrusting to it as regards the interests of the Catholic religion, the problems relating to motion pictures, to radio and to television and to the daily and periodical press; nevertheless as regards the sector of the press attention will be given later to the promotion of those undertakings which this Apostolic See will regard as opportune in a matter of such importance.

In addition to the tasks which have been entrusted to this commission by the already mentioned apostolic letter *Boni Pastoris* it will be within its competence to implement the directive norms of the decree of the Second Vatican Council regarding mass media, as also, according to the provisions of article 23 of the same decree, the preparation of the appropriate pastoral instruction which will be submitted for our approval.

The particular solicitude of the commission will be directed in the spirit of the conciliar decree toward helping the Ordinaries of dioceses in the fulfillment of their pastoral activities in this sector.⁶ The relationships, then, of the commission with the sacred congregations of the Roman Curia—whose competencies the present letter does not intend to change—will be governed by the norms established in the already cited *motu proprio Boni Pastoris*.⁷

Lastly, so that it may be able to deal with the new and grave tasks, the commission will be provided with the necessary means for its activity and will avail itself of the help of persons experienced in the field of mass media who

will be called in suitable numbers to form part of the commission itself.

Thus this pontifical commission, operating within the sphere of its functions, in conformity with the teaching of the Church, and with the necessities of our times, will be a great help in the diffusion of truth and by this work for the concord of peoples; since, as our predecessor of happy memory John XXIII admonished, "working for truth, one works for human brotherhood."⁸

What we have decreed and established in the present motu proprio we order that it should be fixed and valid, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome at St. Peter's on March 7, 1964 on the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, the first year of our pontificate.

¹ Allocution of Pope Paul VI to Fathers of the council Dec. 4, 1963.

² *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, volume 51, 1959, pages 183-187.

³ cf. *ibid.* p. 185.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 187.

⁵ *Decree on Mass Media*, article 19.

⁶ cf. *ibid.* art. 20-21.

⁷ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. 51, 1959, pages 185-186.

⁸ Allocution of John XXIII to members of the Foreign Press Association in Italy, Oct. 24, 1961; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. 53, 1961, page 723.

Translation provided by N.C.W.C. News Service



1964

Write for free publications list to:

NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W. • Washington, D. C. 20005