

CD-1087 Transcription

CBS News, "Paul VI: Minister and Witness," featuring Marc H.

Tanenbaum as a panelist. 13 August 1978.

M1: [00:00] The funeral of Pope Paul VI, in Saint Peter's Square, Vatican City. The ceremony, the final ritual of Giovanni Battista Montini's 58 years as a priest. The great square is filled with the world's mighty. Secular and religious dignitaries have come from everywhere. Thousands more watch on the sidelines and perhaps hundreds of millions around the world witness the papal funeral by radio and television.

M2: [Latin]

M1: The public nature of the papacy is never more evident than when the pope dies. The faithful can claim a last goodbye, a sense of exultation, an end and a beginning. Millions of others [01:00] not tied to Rome can marvel at the continuity this event represents in a world where change has become a constant. And for everyone, great and small, it's a spectacle, a reminder of the ancient connection between ritual and theater. The reign of Paul VI was the most public in history and the most troubled in modern times. He was the man in the middle, coping with great changes within his church and in the outside world. In his

extensive travels and statements, he offered himself, sometimes literally, in the interests of justice and peace. He called himself a pilgrim for peace, and reached out to everyone, including those with no faith at all. But somehow this broad message of brotherhood was overshadowed in the public mind by controversies within the church itself.

[02:00] In this broadcast we'll discuss the role of Paul VI as an apostle for brotherhood, a pilgrim for peace, a minister and witness. CBS News presents a special religious broadcast. Paul VI, minister and witness. Our guest today are the Reverend Doctor Eugene Carson Blake, former general secretary of the World Council of Churches and former stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. The Most Reverend Bernard Law, Roman Catholic Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau Missouri. [03:00] His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. And Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, National Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee. The moderator is Ted Holmes.

HOLMES: Gentlemen, welcome.

M3: Thank you. Welcome.

HOLMES: You know, to me, and I suppose millions of others, Pope Paul was really an enigma, a rather puzzling figure who seemed very progressive on one hand and rather

restrained on another. I never met him. I know all of you have and I wonder if you can shed some light on the man's personality. Dr. Blake?

BLAKE: He came to see us at the World Council in 1969, I think it was, in Geneva. He didn't plan to come to see us. He planned to go to the International Labor Organization. But when Cardinal Willebrands, now cardinal, found out that he was coming to Geneva, he said, "You can't go to Geneva without visiting [04:00] the World Council." And the pope said, "That's probably true and welcome." So he did come and spend some time with us. Right after the opening service, of which he -- I welcomed him and he made a reply and we had some prayer together with now Cardinal Willebrands and my officers doing the service. He and I were there worshiping rather than leading. Then we went up to my office and uncharacteristically he was excited. He began to talk. Fortunately his French was French that I could pretty well understand. And he said something like this, this is my translation. He said, "You know, I'm like a man who has been in the desert for days without food or water. [05:00] And suddenly I find myself in front of a banquet with all the food and wine, everything one could want, and I find I cannot eat it." This I think is the mark of the tragic pressure in which he lived. And the word

tragic, in the best Greek sense, is what I would use to describe Pope Paul. I have other things I could say but I'll stop there.

HOLMES: Would you agree that...?

M4: I think that, you know, what you say does illumine the man for us. I think to understand the Holy Father it's important to situate in the times in which he lived in these past 15 years. And his reign is bracketed by the violence that has become so characteristic of our time. [06:00] In '63, when he became pope, the assassination of John Kennedy, for whom he had a deep personal affection. And in the year of his death, the assassination of Aldo Moro, who was a deep personal friend. And to understand the man, one has to understand the times in which he lived. And I think that not to do that is to miss his greatness. I think to have been able to have shepherded the church in this period of such traumatic change outside the church and society as a whole, with such tremendous pressures, and yet to have been able successfully to have implemented the second Vatican Council and really to have set the stage for the five of us being here right now is --

_: Would anyone --

HOLMES: -- (inaudible) have been the perfect pope for the 1960s. [07:00] Is it too big a job?

LAW: I think that's an important consideration, Ted, for understanding the differing kinds of responses to Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul IV. Pope John XXIII was a supremely charismatic personality. He really was a media personality.

_: Yeah.

LAW: And people shape their attitudes to the degree to which somebody is a cool media type or a hot media type. Pope Paul, I think, did better, much better, than the understanding of him in the popular minds, mainly because he was not a charismatic media type. I think the expectation of a pope borders on the impossible. To expect a man, one, at the same time to be a holy person, great spiritual personality, someone who has great bureaucratic gifts to run the incredible complex machinery of an [08:00] international bureaucracy, to try to reconcile, as Bishop Law said, all of the claims of an international community of more than 600 million people who come out of situations that range ideologically from radical right to radical left, it really is an impossible assignment. Look what's happening to President Carter, who's getting chewed up to pieces in trying to run one nation. The pope was the center of all of the interaction of forces of an entire faith community with all kinds of people making absolutely contradictory claims on him. Simply to survive that I think

one really has to say the Holy Spirit (inaudible) at just maintaining that, that kind of -- the fact that he was surviving that period of time.

HOLMES: No, we don't want to -- we're not making an apology for him because there is some enormously influential things that he did and that he accomplished despite these hardships.

MANOOGIAN: I think so and to be the head of the church of the [09:00] magnitude of the Catholic community, that in itself is a very heavy responsibility. I can understand how he would be always under the pressure. But when I had the pleasure to meet him in 1969 in order to make the preliminary arrangements for our holding this (inaudible), to visit the Vatican from Soviet Armenia, I was amazed to see this austere looking person, so humble, so loving, so concerned and interested, not at that moment in international affairs but the human actors of the Armenian church, of my own diocese, of my own people, and I can never forget that.

HOLMES: I think that it -- I think that's what Dr. Blake [10:00] captured for us in that vignette of his visit to Geneva. And while I would agree that he has not -- did not project himself or was not projected as a media personality, I do think that he was a tremendously

charismatic person. I've been profoundly moved, as you were, Archbishop, both in personal contact with the Holy Father and observing him in a general audience.

_: That's true.

HOLMES: He did radiate a warmth and a love for the individual.

BLAKE: I think that that is the reason I use the word tragic about him and I want to be sure that people understand what I mean by that. That doesn't mean that I think he was a failure or got killed at the end (inaudible).

HOLMES: Yes.

BLAKE: All I'm really saying is his virtues in the times produced in part the difficulties. The good things that he did, and let's [11:00] not forget his position on -- for the poor, for justice, for equality. All of this goes beyond a great many of his predecessors in terms of both insight and complication. So I would push that.

HOLMES: Yeah.

BLAKE: But when a tragic character is -- and his virtues are -- produce the bad results. And that is, I think, if we wanted to go into it... What bad results you had didn't come out of any badness, it came out of virtue.

HOLMES: That's right.

BLAKE: He didn't want to hurt the left or the right. And he tended -- I remember three days after I had called on him,

he made an anti-ecumenical speech because there had been some publicity on my being there before. Well, now, this was pressure. He didn't want people to misunderstand [12:00] that they weren't members of the World Council of Churches and so on. And it's that kind of thing. I found myself in the latter years over in Geneva with progressive Roman Catholics, always standing up for their pope to them. And I said, finally, "I guess it's because I have a built in sympathy for church administrators." So that's the kind of situation he's in.

_: You're in very good company.

HOLMES: Unfortunately a lot of the -- a lot of his international stances were sort of obscured, it seems to me, by the controversies over birth control and priestly celibacy and the things that make headlines. How was he as an internationalist? He had a strong concern for social justice. What was the main (inaudible)?

M6: I would say that there were -- you know, that you could summarize his interest in this area in three general categories. The first was his [13:00] profound passion for peace and for disarming, symbolized, I think, by his visit to New York City when he cried out at the UN General Assembly --

HOLMES: Also in France.

M6: -- "No more war, war never again." And the second would be his concern, as symbolized by his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, his concern for a better distribution of the world's goods to meet the needs of the poor. And I would say that his writings, his teaching in this area is a mine for us still. And then thirdly, and it brings these two, I think, nicely together, is his concern for an international juridic world order that can really grapple with those first two. And this is symbolized in an action that has come about just in the past few months when he raised the status of our [14:00] observer, the Catholic church's observer, at the UN, both at New York and Geneva, to that of an archbishop, signaling in a very specific way the fact that the Holy See sees in this body a hope which is just beginning to be what we need if we're going to grapple with these problems.

MANOOGIAN: I think he kept the balance well, both in the international affairs and in his own internal church affairs. On the one hand he looked very conservative in the issues that you just mentioned.

M6: Which a bishop should, right? Wouldn't you agree with me?

MANOOGIAN: Which only means --

M6: We have to conserve --

MANOOGIAN: Which only means that a responsible person cannot

act on the spur of his whim but he has to weigh very seriously all the aspects of any issue that is presented to him. And in the Catholic bureaucracy, that should be understood. [15:00] And he acted, I think, in a very well balanced manner.

HOLMES: In his encyclical on the development of people, he asked for justice, not charity, which seemed to me to be a revolutionary change, a new thrust. Is this something that he got from the council or was it in his own background?

LAW: I would say that it's a logical development of a body of social teaching which is rooted in modern times in the pontificate of Leo the XIII. To really appreciate Paul and what he did, both in terms of the church's internal life and external life, one has to see this as a developed -- it's a development which you can document in terms of Pius XII, in terms of John XXIII and in terms of himself. But I think he has made a unique contribution in our -- in the Catholic Church's approach to social justice in this area [16:00] of goods in the distribution -- the more equitable distribution of goods. And I don't think we've begun to scratch the surface of what he has to say, not only as a church, but I might say that, you know, that I think what he has to say is a word for all of us.

_: I think this word charity, however, has been worn out.

Thornton Wilder had a little book that I read many years ago. Said the trouble is that words wear out and charity has worn out. It's a bad word now. And that's the reason justice is much the better word. We do things out of love. *Caritas*, if you want to use a word that is worn, you can't use the normal word. Therefore I believe that the [17:00] insight that you have outlined here comes -- all of us recognize that people are not going to be thankful for rich people sharing --

HOLMES: Their old clothes.

_ : -- (inaudible). They just aren't. And the fact is they get mad and (inaudible) as far as I'm concerned.

TANENBAUM: In a sense, I think that, as Bishop Law has indicated, that that leadership which in effect was his own personal translation of the major themes of bringing the Catholic church into a more realistic relationship and involvement in the affairs of the world, dealing with the poor and with justice concerns, which was outlined in the church of the modern world, in effect touches many other things, namely that he took great visionary perceptions and created the social structures that made those possible. Those great documents, whether it was the church on the modern world or on ecumenism or the declaration dealing with the relationship with the Jewish people, the Vatican

declaration on non-Christian religions, [18:00] would have remained texts in the libraries or the Vatican archives had someone not set about to create social structures and create a personnel and bureaucracy that would make them work. I had a privilege of meeting with the pope briefly on two occasions, once had a longer audience -- on three occasions. In a sense, also what Bishop Law says about charismatic. Charismatic in a different style than obviously Pope John. Much more restrained. But I felt that warmth and spiritual presence. But his perception -- his visionary way of expressing insight was more modest and restrained and yet I think what strikes me as important in any evaluation of the pope and his papacy is constantly being aware of the differences between appearances and reality. In a sense, I'm saying is we really have to look at the bottom line of what happened in his papacy. When I look at what happened in relationship with the Jewish [19:00] people, Pope John had the vision and kind of openness but Paul that that openness, too. When we arranged an audience for Rabbi Heschel during the third session of Vatican Council II with the pope, and I was there to help arrange for that audience, his openness -- he had very little experience with Jews. Knew very little about Judaism. But it was that sense of banquet. He wanted to

open up, to understand Jews first as human beings and as a great religious tradition. And his meeting with Rabbi Heschel was an extraordinary spiritual event. Afterward he began reading the books of Rabbi Heschel, *God in Search of Man, Man is Not Alone*. Read them as meditative reading. And once on the balcony of Saint Peter's, he got up and quoted from the text of Rabbi Heschel as a source of great spiritual insight, which he commended to the attention of the Catholic faithful. But then he created the Vatican secretariat for Catholic Jewish relations, which in fact created the structures that Pope John [20:00] had talked about and the Vatican declaration pointed toward. If the Vatican secretariat had not been established by Pope Paul, we would not be as far advanced in Catholic Jewish relations or Jewish Christian relations in this country and elsewhere.

_: Or Catholic Protestant.

HOLMES: Archbishop, what about Orthodox relations?

MANOOGIAN: I think the pope, the Holy Father was the man at the right time because he went out of his way to meet as many communities, communions, as many nations, as you know.

HOLMES: Yes, a great travel (inaudible).

MANOOGIAN: Great travel and that was the --

HOLMES: The Pilgrim Pope.

MANOOGIAN: Right. And that was the dictate of the time.

(inaudible) also visits and has gone out of his own cathedral. For the Orthodox people I think it was a great opportunity to bridge the gap which was created from the [21:00] fifth century. And it was for the first time in 15 centuries that the (inaudible) visited the Vatican. And (inaudible) the first was delighted to do that. Any other (inaudible) in another time would have hesitated. Yes. And I think all the Orthodox communities were grateful for having that opportunity, for the patriarch, ecumenical patriarch (inaudible) and his visit to Jerusalem and the other patriarchs of Catholic Church.

HOLMES: Now, that was a start but are these dialects still going on? What is the hope for the future?

LAW: Well, I wanted to say that in each of these instances you had much more than simply the gracious gesture. But out of those came, in most instances, with -- the [Catholic?] was (inaudible) first with [Atana Goras?], with [22:00] Archbishop Ramsey, in our relationships with the World Council of Churches. There came either joint declarations in terms of what we can say now together and in other instances the joint working group. There came the machinery, as Rabbi Tanenbaum has pointed out, for carrying this forward, so that to the present moment there are

international dialogues going on. Certainly time goes on and there are new problems that arise. But I think that rather than to be a discouraging moment, for example in our relationship with the Anglican communion and the question of the ordination of women and our differences there, this is a new and real problem. But that doesn't mean that, well, it's all gone now. But it simply means that what would perhaps not have been a problem at an earlier day because we would have been so [23:00] separated anyway is now something of profound concern to the two of us, that it not -- that somehow we find a way to build on the unity and with the Eastern Orthodox (inaudible).

HOLMES: Let me ask you this. Robert McAfee Brown, a Protestant observer at the Council, said that Pope Paul -- perhaps Pope Paul's greatest contribution to ecumenism was to say at the opening of the second session that the church would share the blame for the divisions in the first place, which was something apparently that had never been officially said before.

LAW: You know, who can say. I think that was very important to say that. I think it was very important for the council document to deepen our appreciation of the spirits presence at work within churches and ecclesial communities separated from us. But I would find it personally difficult to

[24:00] to isolate that one moment.

BLAKE: I'd like to have you tell what you did to me before we came on. I asked you when you first met him. And you tell it.

LAW: Well, it was in relationship with Upsala. It was 1969.

_ : The World Council --

LAW: The World Council meeting in Upsala and I was one of the 14 official observers of the Vatican, which was the first time that the Vatican had sent official observers. And we had planned -- we were from all over the world. I was the only American official observer. There were other Americans present. Catholics. We had planned to meet in Sweden. But at the Holy Father's personal suggestion, which carries a good bit of weight with us, we all met in Rome and he arranged a three-day retreat experience in which we studied the scriptural theme, "Behold, I make all things new," for Upsala. And then as we made our way to the airport for Stockholm, he received us in personal audience [25:00] and he spoke of his deep appreciation of our work, his personal concern, the importance with which he saw Upsala and the assurance of his prayers for us during that time.

BLAKE: I think that is background of why things worked. I have several Roman Catholic friends who know more about the World Council than many of our member churches, I think,

because they've studied it. And whether they have more time to study or just are brighter I never have known. But the recent head of the Paulist Fathers was Tom Stranksy, and he knows more about Protestant missions than any Protestant that I know. All over the world.

TANENBAUM: He also knows about Jews and many others in the same way.

HOLMES: Is this likely to slow down, this -- the impetus that was created by Vatican II and carried on by Paul. What are we to look forward -- can it be stopped?

_: I don't think -- [26:00] I don't think it can be stopped. The second Vatican Council is a council of the church and there's no -- you know, there is no sense of a mood to stop it.

MANOOGIAN: I understand the issue now is the selection of the candidate for the successor and it will depend on the outlook of that person, on the issue.

_: The world has become a very precarious place. We live in an age of nuclear proliferation and the vast distribution of arms, possibility of annihilation of the total human family. But that's (inaudible) in the economic conditions of very wealthy people and three-quarters of the world impoverished. How can one retreat from that?

HOLMES: Yeah. I think that's a good place to end and we must,

unfortunately. Time has run out. I want to thank you all very much for being with us on this special program about Pope Paul VI.

_: Thank you. [27:00]

M1: CBS News has presented a special religious broadcast, "Paul VI: Minister and Witness."

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