

## Renaissance image of humanity finds champions

by Nora Hamerman

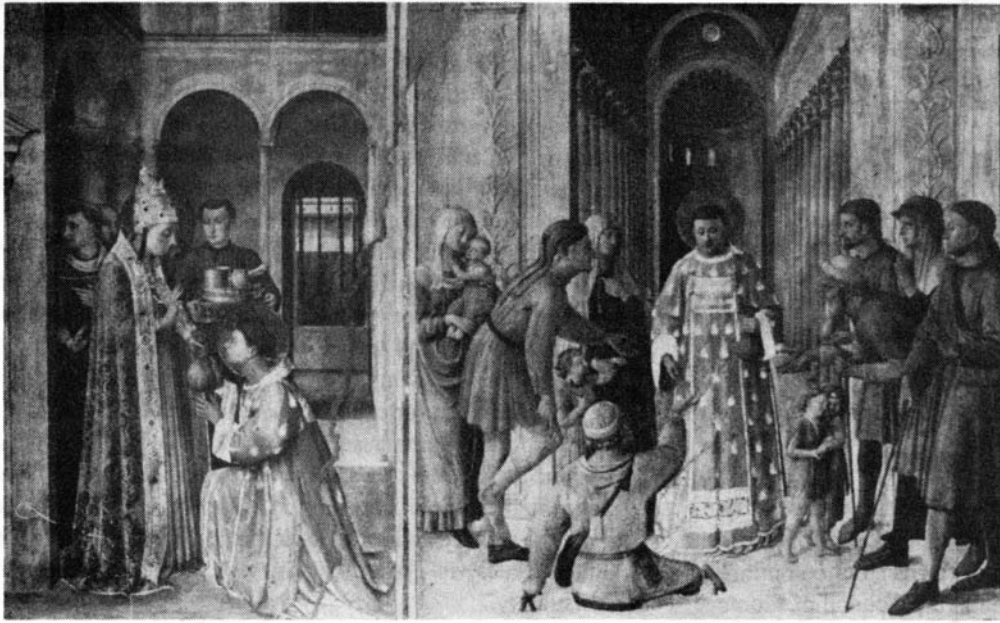
This year marks the 550th anniversary of a turning point in Western civilization, when the Italian Renaissance, with its rediscovery of science and its belief in the creative potential of the free individual, was launched as an international movement that still strikes fear into the shriveled little minds of the anti-science mob and the power-crazed oligarchy today.

The turning point, which the Schiller Institute recently celebrated at a May 5-6 conference in Rome, Italy, was called the Council of Florence. This ecumenical church council reached its high point in July 1439 under the glorious dome of Florence Cathedral, when the Union of the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches was proclaimed, after a schism of nearly 400 years.

Though the Union was short-lived, the Council of Florence ignited the combination of a revival of the Platonic tradition of classical Greek learning and the Christian heritage, as the basis for defending Europe against its then greatest strategic enemy, the Ottoman Turks. It spread the political ideal of man as the pinnacle of divine creation, responsible for the development of nature through exerting his mental powers, which is so hated by today's neo-pagan "ecologists."

Indeed, the World Council of Churches recently staged its answer to the Council of Florence, by holding a "Council of Basel" replay in Switzerland, on the site of a schismatic council which tried to fragment, rather than unify, the Christian churches in 1439. The WCC meeting was marked by a bitter attack on the Renaissance by a high prelate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Among the contributors to the Schiller Institute's two-day conference, were two Cardinals of the Catholic Church; four Italian senators; leaders of Italian industry and citizens' groups; professors of physics, architecture, history, and medicine from Bologna, Paris, Milan, Wiesbaden, and Mexico; and prelates speaking as heirs of all four of the oriental Christian churches that embraced the Union at the Council of Florence between 1439 and 1443. Speakers traveled from around Italy, from France and Germany, from the United States and Mexico.



Artists celebrated the Council of Florence program of developing the individual through city-building and education. This picture, painted by the Dominican friar "Fra Angelico" in the Vatican less than a decade after the Council ended, interprets a scene from early Christian history: St. Sixtus gives St. Lawrence the treasures of the Church (left), which he invests by distributing them to the poor (right) in front of a magnificent Renaissance church.

A major speech on Nicolaus of Cusa, the greatest of the cluster of geniuses who shaped the Council, was delivered by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the West German founder of the Schiller Institutes. She is the wife of Lyndon LaRouche, the American philosopher and political leader described by one participant "as the real chairman of this meeting," because of his role in rediscovering many of the greatest treasures of our Western heritage.

### Achievements of the Florentine Council

The year 1439 may be more important as a date than 1492, the year every schoolchild learns that Columbus "discovered" America. How many Americans today know that behind Columbus was a school of geographical thinking centered since at least 1410 in Florence, around such figures as Paolo Toscanelli (who later made Columbus's map), and that the Council provided the setting for an international scientific seminar on such questions? Or that 15th-century Florence produced the first Christian economic theory of industrial capitalism, developed by Bishop Antonino Pierozzi? That the architect Filippo Brunelleschi, who designed the dome under which the decree of Union was proclaimed in 1439, had a more advanced notion of mathematical physics than many scientists today, and was treated as a "madman" until his superior reason finally prevailed in the design competition?

How many people know, on the other hand, that the deep rift between Western democratic freedoms and the collectivist despotism of the Russian empire, dates back to the main theological debate that was supposed to have been settled in 1439? As many speakers explained to the Schiller Institute audience, it was at the Council of Florence that the *Filioque*—a phrase in the Latin Creed that emphasized the "di-

vine spark" innate in every human being, by specifying Christ's equal role with God the Father in the Trinity—was finally accepted by the Eastern churches, after a centuries-long dispute. Father Isydor Patrylo, general superior of the Basilian Order of St. Josaphat, told the tragic story of how the Moscow rulers rejected the *Filioque* already in 1443, setting the stage for the insane imperialist theory that Moscow was fated to rule as "Third and Final Rome."

The Schiller conference was as wide-ranging in its applications of the *Filioque* principle to current history, as the original Council must have been. Several speakers exposed the Green movement as in violation of the Judeo-Christian concept of natural law. The issue is a poignant one in Italy today, where in a mere five years, the "ecologists," who pretend to revere flora and fauna while openly hating human life, have grown from a minuscule band, to having successfully dictated the shutdown of all nuclear power. They recently got a law passed that will tax the plastics industry into extinction, and now have scheduled a referendum which would end Italian farming by banning *all* pesticides!

The conference highlighted two other issues central to the dignity of man and the right to life: the Lebanon drama, and the growth of tyranny in the United States, epitomized by the imprisonment of Lyndon LaRouche and associates for their political views. A resolution was passed, calling on governments to demand the withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon and the freedom and independence of that nation. Helga Zepp-LaRouche closed the sessions with an appeal, echoing many other speakers, that the image of man in imitation of Christ so beautifully unfolded by the fathers of the Council of Florence, might give participants the strength to stop the takeover of the United States by the fascist, Satanic forces that jailed her husband—and to win his freedom.