

Latin being revived in land of its birth

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VATICAN CITY The message was common enough but the medium was not the one normally used for advertisements in the Vatican daily newspaper L'Osservatore Romano.

"Ille lam habet Consiliarium Advrsus Inflationem et tu? (He has an adviser against inflation and you?) read the quarter-page Latin language caption under a picture of two men smiling at what appeared to be a dividend statement.

The all Latin ad placed by an investment firm was the latest in a series of indications that Latin is being rediscovered in the land of its birth.

The ad was unusual because the Vatican paper has been printing less in Latin since 1965 when the second Vatican Council ruled that masses should be said in the vernacular.

Other signs that lovers of the words of Cicero and

Caesar are trying to revive the language include Latin comic books and a proposal to make Latin a second language for all Europe.

Father Carlo Egger the top Latinist in the Vatican's Secretariat of State is one lover of Latin who has been working to keep the language alive within and without the church.

"A whole generation has been deprived of Latin," Egger told Reuters referring to the end of compulsory Latin in some school systems. "After the decline there was a revulsion for Latin but the new generations are rediscovering it."

Egger is one of several churchmen whose passion is inventing Latin words for people places and things that did not exist when the early Christians were put to death on the grounds where Vatican city now stands.

Tzadia (Chad) Commeatus Diploma (passport) Unitarium Nativum Coelus (the Unit-

ed Nations) and Sella Rotalis (wheel chair) are some of the words and phrases Egger has had a part in inventing or modernising over the past 30 years.

In the Vatican Egger inherited the mantle of top Latinist from the late Cardinal Antonio Bacci who enjoyed telling visitors that he thought and even dreamed in Latin.

Bacci who died in 1970 used his hobby of inventing new Latin words for modern times to publish an Italian-Latin dictionary of hard-to-translate words and phrases.

Bacci proposed "imagination" transmission per electricas undas" (image transmitted by electric waves) for television and "immodica et inverecunda nudandi corporis ratio quae hodie invaluit" (the immodest and shameless way of baring one's body that is prevailing nowadays) for nudism.

Egger said his mentor was "sometimes too wordy" and

promised that the translations in a new dictionary he and colleagues are compiling would be more concise.

Reginald Foster 44 an American priest and lover of Latin who works with Egger in the Vatican said there always will be disputes among purists moderates and modernists who attempt to fit the ancient language into the modern world.

Foster said he feels that serious Latin students must understand and love the standard language before they can be exposed to new terms.

People are obsessed with new words," he said. "Forget about finding words for electric hair pins and let's learn the original Latin first. If the rebirth of Latin comes we will have to go back to teaching it in a direct and beautiful way."

Another priest who has attracted attention for his efforts to revive Latin is Lam-

berto Pignini who publishes "Juvenis Commentarius" (youth magazine) a comic book in Latin.

The success of Pignini's magazine and the interest shown by teachers in countries where Latin is still required learning recently co-authored with Bsrcco Gligori an Italian University professor in a new 200-page book "Eurolatinum the Latin language of Europe."

The authors proposed that a form of colloquial Latin be taught in European schools.

The authors did not propose the eventual elimination of national languages but they said that a United Europe could be built only on the foundation of a common second language.

English should not be allowed to become Europe's second language because it would lead to cultural disadvantages for other European languages they added.