

A Step Towards Peace In Works of Charity

My dear Friends:

As we prepare for another Thanksgiving Clothing Collection, the words of St. Paul in today's Epistle seem especially timely. In this stirring exhortation to Christian charity St. Paul says to us, as he said to the early Christians, "We give thanks to God."

Each year since 1949 I have asked you to look over your family wardrobe and to contribute your unwanted, usable clothing for distribution to the needy overseas through the Catholic Bishops' Relief Services. I can say that your response to my request has been most generous and done in the spirit of gratitude to God. For the past seventeen years you have donated some 2750 tons of clothing and shoes.

I know you share the sentiments of our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, who told his United Nations hearers in October of last year that the Catholic Church should intensify its charitable efforts as a concrete step towards building a peaceful world.

It is my hope that you will participate wholeheartedly in this thoughtful way to express our thanks to God for His great blessings upon you, upon your family and upon our nation.

Begging God's blessings upon you and yours, I am
Your devoted Shepherd in Christ,

James E. Kearney

Horse-Buggy Election

Voters this week were confronted with a ridiculous horse-and-buggy way of voting.

The complicated way of selecting the delegates-at-large for next spring's constitutional convention resulted in thousands of invalid ballots.

Many voters, confused in the booth as to precisely how to indicate their preference, simply by-passed any vote for the delegates-at-large.

All of which indicates that aspect of the election should be nullified and a new election held in a way that's as simple as voting for other candidates for public office.

— Father Henry Atwell

Democracy In Hierarchy

Washington —(RNS)— The U.S. Catholic bishops, at their annual meeting here Nov. 14-18, will limit themselves to three ballots in electing a president, the National Catholic Welfare Conference's Bureau of Information reported.

The president will be elected on the first day so that he will be able to preside at the remaining sessions at the Catholic University of America. This is the first time in the history of the U.S. hierarchy that the prelates will elect from among their number a president and vice-president.

In the past, according to the bureau, the senior ranking prelate has automatically presided at the annual meeting. Cardinal Spellman of New York has held that position since the death of Cardinal Edward Mooney of Detroit in 1958.

According to the Bureau of Information report, there are 260 cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and auxiliary bishops listed as eligible to vote at the annual conference. Each prelate has been asked to select a slate of 10 nominees for the offices of president and vice-president.

The president will be chosen by a majority vote in a secret ballot, the bureau explained. If no bishop receives a majority on the first ballot, a second will be taken. If a third ballot is necessary, it will be a runoff between the two leading contenders.

A vice-president will then be elected from among the remaining nominees. A plurality of votes cast will determine the winner of the election to the office of vice-president, the bureau reported.

In addition to the president and vice-president, the other 38 board members will consist of the following:
1. Eight bishops to be elected to fill posts "with portfolio" on the administrative board. They will comprise the board treasurer and the chairman of seven departments — education, legal, social action, youth, immigration, press, and lay organizations. The elected bishops will determine among themselves which portfolio each will have, the Bureau of Information explained.
2. Thirty bishops to be elected to serve "without portfolio." From among these will be chosen a secretary of the administrative board and 20 bishops to serve as assistants and advisors of the various departments. The remaining nine bishops will be considered "at large," the bureau said.

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**Bandsman
Bishop**

Louisville —(RNS)— Auxiliary Bishop Charles G. Maloney of Louisville joins the horn section of an archdiocesan school band concert. The bishop sat in for two numbers, but admitted later he had not touched a horn since seminary days. The young players are parochial school students in the Louisville area.



Confession Under Fire

By FATHER LOUIS HOHMAN
Diocesan Director of Vocations

In these days when practically every aspect of the Church is placed under critical scrutiny it is not surprising to find that the Sacrament of Penance, confession also comes under fire. For one thing, going to confession is such a personal thing, scratching away at it does the external mask of a person and baring his whole being to another human.

The principal criticism of the Sacrament of Penance in our time is the routinized which makes the confessor appear to be an absolving machine or the whole process a magical rite.

We detect at least a small resemblance between these complaints and the old one of Protestants of past generations that Catholics were using confession like a minute wash, only to return to the former sinful ways at the first opportunity.

There is a tendency of the critics to exaggerate the automatic aspect of confession but we all recognize that there is far too much routine recital in our confessions.

There is also a considerable amount of discussion these days relative to changes in the structure of confession. We might, for example, come to a time when at least our verbal sins could be forgiven in community at Mass.

Whatever may be the case, change in this area will probably be a long time coming and it will not affect the essentials of the Sacrament of Penance. (I do think this matter should be left to the experts alone at least until they have clearer ideas on the subject themselves.)

WHAT ARE the essentials of the Sacrament of Penance?

It is the meeting with Jesus Christ of a sinful human being to partake of his mercy and loving forgiveness and/or to be confirmed in his friendship. No doubt the most moving parable Jesus told was that of the Prodigal Son. Most of us have no trouble at all identifying with the young man who foolishly squandered his inheritance and now finds himself in the loving embrace of his father who has forgiven so generously. To really appreciate the Sacrament of Penance we must see ourselves, weak and capable of any sin, being embraced by the loving forgiving Christ. In this light we should be able to see why the priest's role in the confessional is such a sensitive and vital one.

The first question most potential converts ask is, "Why must I confess my sins to a man? Why may I not confess them directly to God?" To say that Jesus Christ willed to use his Apostles and their successors as his agents in this matter is certainly correct but somewhat unsatisfying to the inquirer.

What I think these people really want is the assurance that the priest will act toward

at the same time having a deep empathy for the problems and circumstances of people.

The confessor of our time must have at least a working knowledge of the foundations of modern psychology. He must be able to distinguish emotional problems from moral ones and know when to refer a penitent to a professional in the field of psychology or psychiatry.

The priest confessor must have the maturity to see people not in blacks and whites but in the grays of reality. People now have a keener sense of the many factors which contribute to the way they live and act, and rightfully expect the confessor to have an appreciation of the same.

Finally, as Abbot Marmon reminds us, the words of the confessor are worth no more than the spiritual resources he has acquired in his own interior life. God does work through him, but as an instrument. The quality of the sculptor's chisel will determine the quality of the sculptor's art.

If we really believe that the Sacrament of Penance is a saving, healing, strengthening, meeting with Christ, then we must convey this truth to the people by every means at our disposal, but mostly by the way we act toward them. We must love the confessional, love the sinner.

When the penitent hears that final "God bless you" he must know in his heart that he has met Christ, and for that is stronger, more loving, closer to God. He must know he is more ready to face the battles with temptation and life itself. He must know a peace which the world cannot give. In the words of the Psalmist, "The Lord is my light and my health. Whom shall I fear?"

Students Start 450 Mile Trek

Cordoba, Argentina — (NC)—Thirty Cordoba Catholic students began a 450-mile walk from here to Buenos Aires in an effort to force changes in both the Church and the national government.

The priest of our time must also become more expert in moral theology and its applications than ever before. He must keep his mind open to developments as a good doctor or lawyer would in his own field. He must have more than ordinary respect for the teaching authority of the Church while

Pope Says Everybody To be Saint

Vatican City —(RNS)— Pope Paul I, in speaking of the Beatitudes and their call to a universal vocation, told a crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square that "everybody must be a saint always."

The pontiff spoke from the window of his private study at noon after leading pilgrims in the recitation of the Angelus. An estimated 20,000 persons gathered in the square to commemorate the Feast of All Saints.

"What would you say," the Pope declared, "if we today, on the Feast of All Saints, repeated to you the grand message of Christ on the Mount, the Sermon of the Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted; Blessed are the poor in heart for they shall see God . . ."

"Perhaps you would say that words so sacrosanct are better said and listened to in church during the celebration of the Mystery of the Word and Grace by which Christ Himself becomes present. This is quite true, but if we say and listen to them there, we can think about them and live them everywhere."

Birth Control Funds Up

Washington —(NC)— Federal government spending on birth control programs during the current fiscal year will be some 70 per cent greater than that of the fiscal year which ended June 30, 1966, according to a report by the Bureau of the Budget.

The report, made public by Sen. Ernest Gruening (D. Alaska), estimated federal birth control spending this year at \$25.3 million compared to an expenditure of \$14.7 million in fiscal 1966. Total spending on birth control programs in fiscal 1965 was only \$2.3 million.

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Feedback

(Continued from Page 1)

one idea of prayer and another of Church music, and the other does not include or relate to the other. Another disgruntled member of the choir admitted: "I'm a phony — just a lot of mezzosized repetition." Curiously qualified this by explaining that "somehow, when I sing, I think more about what I'm doing."

The problem of spirituality was explained by one chap who stated that unsuccessful congregational singing is "where it is simply the substitution of a new routine of singing for an old routine of singing." Thus the work is done, a teaching Sister said, one of creating "an atmosphere of unity among the people which will then result in more spontaneous desire to God's praises together."

The spirituality of this new ritual is one which must be seen from the essentially Christ-like sense of man's oneness with the community in the saving Christ could be called, in fact, the fulfillment of the modern, yearning for human community as it is revealed in many factors of 20th-century life.

Communism, for example, enjoyed staggering success providing a community of common ideals and goals for millions of adherents. The world has given birth to a world consciousness radically different from the exclusive national and opportunistic of another. The social amelioration of the fellow man has come to be regarded more and more as responsibility of all. Existentialist thought has also given fresh sense both of what it is to be a person and what it is to be a community of people.

In the renewal of our world a similar sense of community at the heart of liturgical quality, one which flows an awareness, moreover, of it is to be God's people.

What must be fixed in each mind is the awareness that we are truly this community of God's people working together our common prayer, with Christ and the Spirit even as we are seen visibly and actively in the presidency of the liturgical priest. One colleague expressed the point in this way: "People want to participate more in the Mass. They did in the past — brings us away from the old way of praying the Mass, burying our noses in a book or by falling asleep while listening to a dead language."

In the new liturgy we longer "attend" Mass, we participate. We are active because we each have a role to play in and for the community. "Singing part I know what's in it" is the way a twelve-year-old girl expressed it. Our congregational singing can be the same dynamic force as the great shout of the Jews commanded by Joshua at the walls of Jericho. This is help the walls of independence, individualism and a which separate us from one another can come tumbling down. We become a community.

Really Turn You On?

Much of what has been so far pertains to the process of the changing liturgical quality. When we come down to the manner in which the liturgy is actually performed, the underground voices resound the confusion of Babel. Differences of age, of ethnic and regional backgrounds, of musical tastes, are all critical factors.

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