

God's Holy Church Is But One Family

By BISHOP GEORGE W. BARRETT
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"The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

—T.S. Elliot

Many reasons are given for promoting the unity of the Churches.

Some of them are wrong, such as the hope that by combining weaknesses we can achieve strength. Others are incomplete, such as the worthy aim of saving money and manpower and avoiding the duplication of costly facilities. Seldom do we talk about the most basic reason of all: that it is the very nature of the Church itself to be one.

Our divisions are much more than wrong, they are ridiculous.

Like all animals, man is a social creature. We derive life from parents and we continue human only as we are related to other human beings. Speech, love, trade, art, and government underscore this fact. This is the way we are made and this must be the way God wants us to be. Few punishments could have been more terrible than being left marooned and alone on a desert island in the midst of endless seas.

What to Join?

Yet we belong not just to one group, but to many. Americans have been called a nation of joiners and the groups to which we belong can be classified into many types. Two will do for the purposes of this article.

One is the club, although it may also be known as a league, strange, gang, or political party.

A club is composed of people who have been drawn together by their interest in the same thing, or who desire the same thing, or who have had the same sort of experiences, such as going to the same school. Thus we have stamp-collecting clubs, baseball leagues, bowling teams, racing clubs, and associations made up of hardy mountain climbers.

Membership in clubs is voluntary. Once accepted you retain your membership as long as you choose and as long as you conform to the standards of the group. Whenever your interest wanes you may leave, resign honorably and freely. You may belong to as many clubs as you have the inclination to choose and to which you are welcome and for which you possess the necessary energy, time, and money.

There is no reason why there should not be as many clubs as there are people to promote them, nor is there anything wrong or unsuitable in one club competing with another for a cup, for new members, for success, and for prestige.

Members of a family

Far different from a club is a family. We are not admitted to a family by application or election. Either we are born into it or adopted by a legal equivalent of birth, or we establish a family by a solemn, life-long, commitment to a woman or man in marriage. Membership in a family has an irrevocable character. I cannot change my mother or my father. My

brother or sister, son or daughter, will never cease being related to me no matter how much we or hate each other, and regardless of whether we drift apart because of distance or passing of time. Even a divorce can never entirely destroy the relationship of a man and woman who have known each other as husband and wife.

The Church is not a club but a family and our attitude toward the Church is poisoned and distorted if we think of the Church as a club for people interested in religion, just as other people are interested in football, hunting, or dancing.

The distortion becomes worse when we think of the separate denominations as separate clubs composed of people who prefer to be Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, or Episcopalians. And our efforts toward unity will be diverted into blind alleys, they will lack the urgent motive, the committed determination, and the long patience that is required for success if we regard such efforts as the merging of religious clubs for reasons of economy, prestige, or even effectiveness. But if the Church is a family of people who acknowledge one God as Father and obey one Christ who prayed that his Father's family might be one, then unity is a fact to be realized more than a goal to be achieved.

In the Bible almost all the words and expressions describing the Church suggest family relationships rather than club membership.

People do not choose God. He chooses them and they are bound together because they have been chosen. The history of the Hebrew people begins with God's call to Abraham, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you and I will make of you a great nation. . . and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves." Abraham obeyed, taking his wife and family with him.

Moses was not a religious man at the beginning, simply a shepherd with a quick temper and a ready sense of justice, whom God commanded to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt. The prophets were called, often against their will, to speak words of warning and hope to an incredulous and disobedient nation.

The Jewish people became both a nation and a Church, not because they were religious geniuses, or because they had a strong interest in religion, but because God chose them as his family and that not for their own pleasure, or profit, or comfort, but to be the beginning of a family that would eventually include all people on earth. Israel thus derived her unity not by shrewd political calculation, or ecclesiastical manipulation, but because of what God had done in her history.

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First Meeting Of New Parish

Father John T. Walsh, pastor of new St. Paul's parish, Webster, will meet his parishioners for the first time at Holy Trinity school hall, Tuesday, May 16, at 8:30 p.m.

He asks that Catholics within the area of these boundaries attend the Tuesday meeting — Lake Ontario on the north, Ridge Road on the south, the village line to Wall Road east of Webster Road to the lake on the east, and Plank Road north to Klem Road and Van Alstyne Road to Herman Road and Pellett Road to the lake on the west.

Cayuga Parishes Pioneer in Press Ecumenism

If the Courier ever does go ecumenical on a permanent basis, we'll not be first in the field.

The clergy of southern Cayuga County launched such a publication this past spring.

It is, admittedly, modest in format — mimeographed — and only two pages, but its very existence is itself a fulfillment of its motto: "United Christian Witness."

Four Roman Catholic and ten Protestant churches use the newsletter to report church services and events to 1350 residents in their "larger parish" area.

Rev. Edward R. McCracken of the Aurora Episcopal Church is coordinator of the publication which is scheduled to have five editions this year.

Villages included in the southern Cayuga area are Aurora, King Ferry, Genoa, Venice Center, Scipio Center, Poplar Ridge and Levanna.

IF YOU MOVE . . .

let us know about it so we can keep your Courier coming to you on time. Phone or mail us notice of your change of address. Include your old address and new address and the name of your parish.

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Profound theology and ecumenical encounters can have their lighter moments too, as this picture indicates. Bishop Sheen and Dr. Gene E. Bartlett, president of Colgate Rochester Divinity School, had a light-hearted moment after the Bishop spoke at chapel service last Thursday.

Pentecost Prayers For Religious Unity

Pentecost in Jerusalem 20 centuries ago — a frightened, huddled group of the Lord's disciples . . . tongues of fire and God's Holy Spirit transforms weak humans to make them eloquent, life-giving apostles.

Pentecost in Rochester in 1967 — a city of churches . . . their congregations divided in more than a score of denominations . . . and in increasing numbers they are restless to bridge the gap that divides them.

As a prelude to the healing of these ancient wounds — and as a sign that the Holy Spirit is still at work in the hearts of the Lord's disciples today — hundreds will ponder and

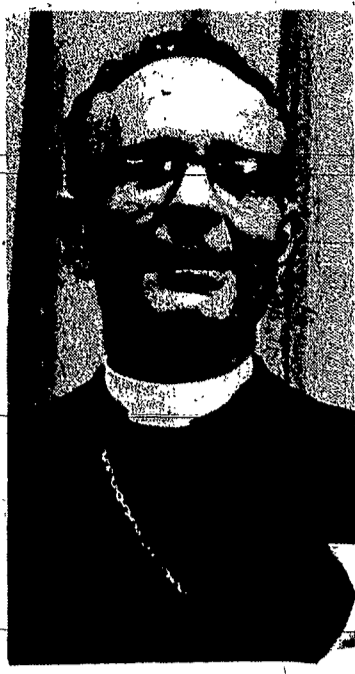
pray for religious unity in a special service at the Eastman Theatre, Sunday evening, May 14, Pentecost, at 8 p.m.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen of the Catholic Diocese of Rochester will be the speaker.

Bishop George W. Barrett of the Episcopal Diocese will give the final prayer and blessing.

Clergymen of other denominations will also participate in the rite — which is open free to the public.

The service will be broadcast by Rochester radio station WROC from 8 to 9 p.m. with Rev. Harold Clark of the Rochester Area Council of Churches as narrator.



BISHOP BARRETT

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Two Rochester Priests Meet Greek Patriarch See Page 4

Colgate Rochester and St. Bernard's to Start STIR

Two Local Seminaries Linked In Urban Training Program

Rochester's two historic seminaries — St. Bernard's and Colgate Rochester Divinity School — will pool their strengths to prepare their students for parish work in complex modern American cities.

This new venture is part of an increasing ecumenical collaboration on the part of the two Urban Ministry departments — of the Rochester Area Council of Churches and of the Catholic Diocese of Rochester.

Rev. Herbert D. White, director of the Council's Board for Urban Ministry, and Father P. David Finks, Bishop Sheen's Vicar for Urban Ministry, aided in working out details of the process.

The project will team up to 30 students from the two schools in a cooperative apostolate in several Catholic and Protestant parishes in Rochester beginning in the Fall.

The project blazes a trail of down-to-earth ecumenical collaboration in training for urban ministry, believed to be unequalled anywhere else in the world.

It has been given the name STIR — Strategy Training in Renewal.

Purpose of STIR, according to an announcement made by the project's officials, "is to equip future Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy to be agents for the renewal of the Church in accord with the new mood of the post-Vatican II era."

Rev. William R. Nelson, Ph.D., of Lake Avenue Baptist Church heads STIR's Joint Coordinating Committee and will lead an Urban Workshop which will bring the total group together every other week for discus-



Dr. William R. Nelson of Lake Avenue Baptist Church will instruct students of both Colgate Rochester Divinity School and St. Bernard's Seminary in first-of-its-kind venture to prepare future clergy for complex modern city-parish work.

sions of "Ecumenical Strategy for Renewal" at the Lake Avenue Baptist Church.

He will continue as lecturer in field education at Colgate Divinity School and will join St. Bernard's Seminary faculty in a similar capacity this coming autumn.

Prior to the formal launching of the program in September, there will be a trial run on the new concept of ecumenical learning for urban ministry during the summer.

This first team of seminarians will include three students from St. Bernard's — James



The rectors of two seminaries — Dr. Gene E. Bartlett of Colgate Rochester and Father Joseph P. Brennan of St. Bernard's — have launched their two schools onto a new course of cooperative study and on-the-spot training for future clergy in urban parishes.

Schwartz, Charles Latus and Michael Donnelly, and two from Colgate Rochester — William Lincoln and Stapley Skinner.

They will do their summer apostolic work in the parish "cluster" of the northwest section of Rochester — with a priest and minister to super-

wise them in their new-style mission work.

Rev. Robert L. Booher, pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church, and Father James S. Russell, curate at St. Anthony's Church, will supervise the summer project.

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Unity—A Gift from God

By DR. JOHN SKOGLUND
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The ecumenical movement from the beginning has been seeking Christian unity. It has sought by work, prayer and structure to express that unity.

The most definitive statement of unity came from the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, made up of representatives from Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican traditions, meeting at New Delhi, India late in 1961.

The New Delhi Statement on Unity said: "We believe that the unity which is both God's will and His gift to His church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord and Savior are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places in all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires

for the task to which God calls His people."

Some may be shocked to find Protestants joining others to speak of unity in such strong and striking terms. For it is easy to conclude from the history which followed the nailing of the "Ninety-five Theses" to the church door at Wittenburg that Protestants were out to break the church in pieces. Some have even concluded that the true Protestant principle is divisiveness. Yet a study in depth of the Reformation makes it clear that the reformers affirmed the reality of the one holy catholic church.

The reformers for the most part sought the renewal, not the fragmentation, of the church and they hoped and prayed for its eventual reunion. Men of the Reformation accepted the ecumenical creeds. The debate between Rome and the reformers did not center upon the doctrines affirmed in the ancient symbols. The Lutheran Book of Concord begins with the Apostle's Nicene and Athanasian Creeds under the caption: "Three Catholic or Ecumenical Creeds." Here for the first time "ecumenical" is applied to the creeds as distinct from the councils.

Calvin accepted the term "catholic" as expressive of the

church's unity. He wrote of the church: "Therefore it is called 'catholic' or universal since we are to think not of two or three churches, lest Christ be divided — which cannot happen. (Institutes, IV, 1, 2-3).

Luther stated "I believe that there is upon earth a holy congregation in communion of pure saints ruled under one head, Christ, called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, in the same mind and understanding, furnished with multiple gifts yet one in love and in all respects harmonious, with out sects or schisms." (Larger Catechism).

Zwingli affirmed that all who are in Christ constitute "the Church or communion of saints, the bride of Christ, The Catholic Church" (First Zurich Disputation, VII, 11).

In the Geneva Catechism the word "catholic" or universal, means "that as there is but one head of all believers, so they must all be united into one body, that the church diffused through the whole world may be one and not more."

We tend to read the purple words spoken between Luther and the Pope and instinctively feel that the schism between Protestants and Catholics was

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