

St. Bernard's Alumni Hear Bishop Sheen

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen addressed about 500 alumni priests and bishops at the jubilee luncheon marking the 75th anniversary of St. Bernard's Seminary on Oct. 10 at the dining hall of the Masonic Temple. The full text of the Bishop's address follows:

A legend recounts that after his conversion, Zachaeus would daily leave his house with a pail of water. His wife, curious about the daily routine, followed him and found that he poured it out at the foot of a tree. She said: "Why do you care so much about this tree?" "Because," he answered, "This is where I first met Jesus."

On this 75th anniversary of St. Bernard's, we return with grateful hearts to the seminary where we first encountered spiritual discipline, Christ, our High Priest.

Two reflections upsurge in this celebration: thanks and hope.

THANKSGIVING

We priests are the "spoiled children" of God. We are under a special Providence, for "Nolite tangere Christos meos." (1 Chrn. 16/22; Ps. 105/15). (Touch not my anointed ones.) Though we say in the Creed, "He sits at the right hand of God," nevertheless when Stephen was stoned, Our Lord "stood." (Acts 7/55) as if militantly aggressive against those who stoned us.

In the Garden, when He found His priests sleeping and indifferent to His agony, He said to the soldiers: "Take Me, but let them go." (John 18/18) He thought more of our safety than His peril.

He exposed Himself and excused us, even though our faith was weak and our spirits were low. Like the ram offered instead of Isaac, He offered Himself for us.

When Joshua, the high

priest, stood with filthy garments at the altar, Satan stood alongside of him to accuse him of his sins. But the Lord came to the defense of Joshua, rebuked Satan, and said, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?" (Zech 3/2) Whatever is objected against God's priests, God foresaw; He knew it when He chose us. He did not choose us because we were good, but because He is. He knew the worst in us when He called. He is so fond of His anointed one that He finds excuse while others accuse.

The reason for this great love of us is that the Heavenly Father does not see us directly. — He sees us through Christ. When we look at the sun through a prism, it is made more beautiful by reflecting the seven rays. And from the day we entered the seminary until now, the Father sees us through "rose-colored glasses" — better than we are, holier than we are, because He is The Spoler and we the spoiled.

HOPE

We look to the past in thanksgiving, but we look to the future in hope.

I wonder if we have adequately reflected on how much the world and the present crisis of the Church forces us to dwell on hope. Is not the world today full of hope? The Secular hope expresses itself in planning.

Business makes projections for the future; governments plan for peace and for war; computers shorten our calculations about the impending, the very violence which would destroy society is the content of the present, but with a radical impotency to fill a hole after one has dug it. The security of anything depends upon it being engraven on the future by intention.

Not only in the scientific,

industrial and educational areas, but in realm of thought, hope is the theme. Gabriel Marcel thought himself into the Church by considering HOMO VIATOR, or man on pilgrimage. Shall we forget the optimism of Teilhard de Chardin?

The world forces us to think of hope. But how does hope differ from planning? In two ways:

Planning looks to the future through man's projections; Hope looks to the future through man's projections;

In planning, man does everything, God does nothing. In hope, man is reliant on the Divine. — "I can do all things in Him Who strengthens." (Phil. 4/13) So Abraham is told to leave the land of Ur to go into a country to which God will lead Him. And on the strength of the Divine Promises, he retained hope that he would have a seed as multitudinous as the stars of heaven.

A second difference is: Planning is directed to action, e.g. flight to the moon, food from the sea, planned genetics. Hope is geared less to action than to passion; it is inseparable from trial, testing, crisis, in a word, suffering.

Planning regards self as outside the pale of testing; hope, on the contrary, admits that the self, like gold, is tried by fire. This is where Scripture always places hope.

As Paul says: "We stand in happy certainty of the glorious things God has for us in the future." This does not mean we have only a hope of future joys — we can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles. "Let us exult in our present sufferings, because we know that suffering trains us to endure,

and endurance brings proof that we have stood the test, and that prayer is the ground of hope." (Rom 5/25)

Is not this a time of testing? Not the "wet-test" or the shedding of blood in martyrdom, but the "dry-test" of not succumbing to worldliness. Some disciples find the sayings "hard" and walk no more with Christ. There are others who, like Demas "go back to the world." But this is good! God is testing us!

We used to live in a Christian atmosphere where the world at least shared our morals if it did not share our dogmas; today, the air is polluted, for the atmosphere of the world shares neither our dogmas nor our morals. We are being asked to stand up and be counted!

More and more the Church appears before us as a "sign to the world." It forces us in moments of testing either to run to the press to be publicized, or to run to the Cross to be crucified.

Our trials are not unlike what happened to Father Tchang in China and Father Teilhard de Chardin in France. Father Tchang was told he would be spared death, if he would deny the Pope. He answered: "Today you ask me to deny the Pope.

If I do, tomorrow you will ask me to deny Christ. The two go together. I shall go to death for the sake of Christ and His Church."

Father Teilhard, on the other hand, was criticized by his superiors, ignored by his brethren, and exiled for his ideas which at times tortured his soul. Though he suffered little from the "perils of the sea," he did feel that worst agony of "false brethren" in the Church.

But what was his answer? "I now feel more indissolubly bound to the hierarchical Church and to the Gospel than

ever before in my life... The Church is the Christic pole of the earth and its axis is in Rome."

These are wonderful days in which to be alive!

The Church is being tested; so is the Seminary. God is sweeping house. We have labor pains, but joy is ahead. He will reduce our amies, as He did the Army of Gideon, for we were too many, and we trusted more in ourselves than in Him. A mu-

tation in our species is taking place. Like the Jews, we eat bitter herbs at our Passover, but the deliverance is near, as we live in thanksgiving and on hope.

Stendal's hero, Julien Sorel, says at the end of his novel, "The Red and the Black":—"Oh if I could find a priest, a real priest!"

Look around: There they are! True and loyal graduates of St. Bernard!

3 Seminars On Housing

Three "neighborhood seminars" on race relations and housing integration are slated on successive Tuesdays at 8 p.m. in Sacred Heart Cathedral hall, beginning Oct. 22.

Sponsoring the meetings is the Northwest Housing Task Force, an ecumenical group dedicated to "open housing for all, while maintaining existing standards of the neighborhood."

Last week the group placed advertisements in a weeklies containing the names and addresses of 250 persons who endorsed the following statement:

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