

Text of Homily at St. Bernard's Jubilee Mass

Father Robert McNamara, professor at St. Bernard Seminary, preached at a jubilee Mass in Corpus Christi, Oct. 10, attended by more than 500 bishops and priests meeting in Rochester for the 75th anniversary of St. Bernard's Seminary. We print the homily's full text for the general public because its theme, the priesthood and the role of the seminary in serving the whole church, are so pertinent to the welfare of the Family of God in this diocese.—The Editor.

"This is to be a jubilee for you; each of you will return to his ancestral home." (Lev 25, 10)

In the book of Leviticus, God instructs Moses to have His people celebrate, at regular intervals, years of jubilee—years of rest, of rejoicing, of gratitude.

We are gathered today to observe a somewhat similar occasion. It is an occasion that brings us back to our ancestral home, to our Alma Mater, St. Bernard's Seminary, in a spirit of fraternal and joyful reunion.

In one sense I, who have been asked to deliver this homily, am not the best qualified person to deliver the diamond jubilee of St. Bernard's. I never had the privilege of preparing for the priesthood within its venerable walls. But this very fact may serve, in another sense, to qualify me as an objective observer. And from the point of view of the faculty, of the other side of the desk, nobody can take from me the proud distinction of having served as a professor at St. Bernard's for thirty happy years.

He who preaches on the diamond jubilee of a seminary can speak of it only in terms of the Catholic priesthood, for the seminary has no other purpose than to train future priests. The Catholic priesthood—that sacrament whose institution is so closely interwoven with the institution of the Holy Eucharist itself. "This is my body which is given for you. Do this as a remembrance of me." The Catholic priesthood, that office whose duties are so closely interwoven with the duty of suffering which Christ our high priest assumed in his passion and death.

Today's epistle declares of Christ, in mystical agony, "With loud cries and tears he offered prayers and supplications."

"And Son" though he was, "Paul continues, 'he learned obedience through suffering, and after he had been made perfect he became a source of eternal salvation.' The priest is called upon, even though in a lesser way, to do the same work that Christ did. So he, too, must learn obedience through suffering, in order to become an instrument of salvation to God's people.

Yes, in speaking of a seminary, we must speak of the priesthood. Today the Catholic priesthood is the object of hard scrutiny, of questioning, and even, among some, of downgrading. Many would say that the priesthood seems suddenly to have lost its glamour.

But was the priesthood, truly, ever glamorous, except in a purely incidental manner? Has the priesthood ever been anything but a difficult and painful vocation? The aware priest—and I am speaking to aware priests—the aware priest must always say with St. Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ, and I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me." The aware priest—and I am speaking to aware priests—must always say with St. Paul: "Here we are, fools for the sake of Christ."

And when a priest is tempted to unsholder the cross of his own crucifixion and doff the shining robe of his own divine folly, he stands face-to-face with a temptation to

forget or to disown an essential part of the role he has been called by God to play.

Let me assure you, the priesthood of Christ stands and will stand. The Second Vatican Council has reiterated this teaching. "By the power of the sacrament of orders, and in the image of Christ the eternal High Priest, they (priests) are consecrated to preach the gospel, shepherd the faithful, and celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament." (Lumen Gentium 28).

Let me assure you, let me

say this for your comfort, alumni of St. Bernard's, in a season of puzzlement and insecurity: Your Alma Mater is proud of you... proud of you. The Council warned priests to consider themselves as servants rather than as masters in Israel. But that, dear brothers in Christ, has always been your aim, held to all the more strongly as you grew in the grace and wisdom and generosity of your office.

It has always been your aim, and it was the aim of the founder of St. Bernard's

Seminary. Bishop McQuaid chose as his own motto: "The supreme law is the salvation of souls," and it was the same ideal, the service of souls, that he sought to communicate to his seminarians. Furthermore, he wanted them to be prepared to serve American souls in an American way.

A few weeks ago I reread the article, "Our American Seminarians," written by McQuaid for the 1897 volume of the American Ecclesiastical Review. It was an informal and rather breezy article. Some of its proposals are

outmoded today, others bring a little smile to the lips. But his basic principle has a perennial value: "The American seminarian must be prepared for the ministry in America." He must be prepared, in other words, to meet the needs of the people of his own land and his own time.

Will the priests of the future measure up? We are confident that they will. As long ago as 1892, Bishop McQuaid spoke the following wise words of caution: "Let there be no sneering criticism of the coming generation be-

cause they have new ideas, are not just as their fathers were." Like the priests of the past, the priests of the future will run, as St. Paul did, "intent on winning." It is just possible that they may run faster than we have run. It is just possible that they may run farther.

Today is therefore a true jubilee, in which we thank God for the past and pray God for the future. We offer our thanks especially through our patroness, Mary Immaculate, and through our patron, St. Bernard.

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Candida Pledge To School

Washington — (N) and Democratic pr dates this week pled, for federal aid to public schools.

Vice President E phrey advocated fe "to children in both public schools with tion" in a letter (O san) Superintenden schools holding an in Rochester.

Mr. Richard M. himself to a prograt assistance to ch schools in a statem (Oct. 20) in which he a tragedy of the if tax-supported stat drive private institi stance.

Nixon specified be distributed und plans for state-aid assistance to nonpu dren." He said: "I e a federal concern, a ity, a local function

Humphrey said: "a in the edu dren. It is necessa all the resources of the level of educati in our society."

He continued: "T educational crisis cotion requires the educational resour nonpublic. Assistan ted to children in nonpublic schools nation."

Nixon said he kn aid can mean to a to embark on his e without financial a have had the oppo law school, and so to such programs i a political commitm in this country."

Theology T Vital to Wo

St. Louis — (RN) all prophets of doo all the God-is-dead not afraid for theol Willebrands, secreta Secretariat for Chr here.

Addressing some and scholars attendi versity's "Theology Man" conference, B warned that "men world in such a wa look God suppress

"Much will dep theology can seize succeed in making lief in transcendent any way conflict wi bilities toward hum

In discussing the role, Bishop Wille "theology must pei tical function." He it must "become th poor and the oppre for the progress of always so apparent.

"The future has gloomy and oppre "even though it now The homo-inized threatening to beco world, a world that and ends up by de

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