

# Seek His Presence

An Editorial by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen

Beautiful and heart warming it is to see the number of communicants at Mass in which our faithful unite Sacrifice and Sacrament. The two go together in nature as well as in the Eucharist.

We eat vegetables and meat at some of our meals. But before the vegetable can be the 'sacrament' or can have communion with our human life, it must first be 'sacrificed', that is plucked up from the earth and die to its lower life. Before the animal can be the 'sacrament' to nourish our body it must shed its blood, submit to the knife and be 'sacrificed'. As the poet has put it, "we live by what we slay".

In the higher realm of faith we know that our sins crucified Christ and yet by His Resurrection in the Holy Eucharist we live by what we have slain.

The relation between the Cross and the Mass is most intimate. In the Mass Christ is socially present for the Mass is the act of the entire Church. On the cross, He was alone, but in the Mass we are with Him.

On the cross He potentially redeemed us; in the Mass we actualize that redemption by applying the fruits of His Sacrifice to ourselves at a definite point in space and a particular moment in time.

Out of the Mass or this Social Presence of Christ in the Church where we gather in His Name, there issues the Sacramental Presence of Christ in the tabernacle. It is only with this aspect we dwell because of a decline of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

There are various kinds of presences of persons; in fact we can be physically close to another as in a bus and still not be present in the sense of having communication. A husband and wife can be "alone together", even though they live in the same house for years.

On the other hand, a distant girl friend of a soldier in Vietnam can be very present to him by love.

So there are various Presences of the glorified Christ under the aspect of grace. He is present in the Church as His Body, in the worshipping community, in the priest, in the individual who loves Him, in the Gospel, and in this total context but in a very intense way He is present in the Eucharistic species.

This Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not the same as His Presence as He walked in Galilee. After His glorification His Presence can no longer be measured by space or time. It is not even the "presence" of a loved one though absent.

In the Transfiguration which was a preview of His glory, it was impossible for the disciples to describe His Presence except through the analogies of light and snow. Immediately after His Resurrection His disciples did not recognize Him at Emmaus, nor did Magdalen in the Garden, so beyond the law of physics was His Presence.

The "real presence" or the Sacramental Presence of Christ is the deepening of Christ's Real Presence in His Church, as the marital union of husband and wife is the most intense, personal presence of their enduring companionship through life.

# 'The Lord Is Here!'

Do not believe those who say there is no difference between the Presence of Christ in the flowers and the Presence of Christ in the Church and in the Eucharist, anymore than you would believe there was no difference between the presence of a designer in his rocket and that same designer with his wife. Is there not something in the human heart which, while admitting universal power, nevertheless wants to see it "localized", as it were.

Primitive religions localized divinities in the sun and stars and streams and on Mount Olympus. Though God's Presence was acknowledge as everywhere by Israel, God gave Moses instructions for building the ark and even for the "Bread of Presence". In the Promised Land a Temple was built where the glory of God would dwell. When Solomon built the Temple, he acknowledged the universal Presence of God in the universe but added in his dedicatory prayer: "When they pray from this place, hear Thou from heaven Thy dwelling place".

The Sacramental Presence of Christ demands our faith, but our faith does not create His Presence. It is not because we believe He is there that He becomes present; but because we believe in His Presence we open ourselves to that tete-a-tete love with Our Savior and Redeemer.

Everytime you visit the Blessed Sacrament you multiply this confrontation of two presences: your own and His Love. As the personal presence we have with friends is mediated through the body, so the encounter of our faith with His Presence is mediated through the sign of bread.

I have had many converts through the years who said they visited the Catholic Church because it seemed as if God was there. One convert, a scientist, had considerable difficulty in accepting the Divinity of Christ. I told her to visit the Blessed Sacrament and in that Presence in which she did not believe there would come an overwhelming sense that God was in man in the Person of Jesus. Then the grace came with such an illuminating influence that from that day on she lived and moved and had her being in the Lord.

As atomic radiation produces unseen effects at a distance, so the light of Truth and the heat of Love radiate to all who live near that "Mystery of Faith", for the Real Presence in the Eucharist is the intensification of the Real Presence of Christ in the Church.

May I beg you to be sensitive to the Eucharistic Presence. It is so easy for us to "become used" to love and to beauty. Never to take love for granted requires delicacy of attention. Remember how two of the Apostles at the beginning of the Public Life asked Our Lord: "Where do you live?" He answered, "Come and see", so they went and saw where He lived, and they stayed with Him all day, from about the tenth hour onwards.

Labor to recover your lost fervor. Stir up your first zeal. Shall we priests and the faithful say as the years go on that His Love is the same, but ours has changed?

One continuous hour a day spent by priests and religious in Eucharistic Encounter would change the whole tone of this diocese and make us more Christ-like in our dealings with the world.

And as for the laity, how often you have picked up friends and they have dropped you. But there is One Friend, Who never changes and Who will say to you as He did to Zachaeus, "Come Down! For I must abide in your house". An exchange of visits! You visit Him, and He will bring blessings to your home and office — we all learn again what Love really is!

# A Time for Faith

## 'The Irreplaceable Principle Of Christianity'

By PATRICK RILEY (NC News Service)

Vatican City — Pope Paul VI, observing that an act of faith is becoming more difficult in this "civilization of the image," complained that some remedies offered are as dangerous as the malady.

He also ascribed this difficulty to biblical research that is "deprived of the complement furnished by tradition and of the authoritative assistance of the ecclesiastical magisterium (the Church's teaching authority)."

He referred to the Credo of the People of God that he pronounced June 30 at the end of the Year of Faith. He described this as "a repetition, amplified with explicit references to some doctrinal points, of the Nicene Creed."

The Nicene Creed, he said, is a "brief synthesis of the principal truths believed by the Catholic Church," and has taken on "the solemnity of an official act of our faith."

He drew a careful distinction between objective faith, which consists in truths that are believed, and subjective faith, which is the virtuous act of assent to these truths.

Pope Paul said he was drawing the Church's attention to "this bivalent profession of faith" for two reasons:

1. "The plain fact is that the Christian is forbidden to conform to the spirit of the world," Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh told a meeting at Notre Dame seminary here.

"And yet the Christian has a commitment to the world, a vocation in it, and is responsible for it," Bishop Wright said.

Speaking on "The Attitude of the Church Toward the Social Problems of Today," Bishop Wright said the central orientation of the Church in confronting social problems is on the person.

"In Christian social attitudes, from the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of Christ to the encyclicals of the contemporary Popes, the supreme

norm is developing the person, the life of the person, the worth of the person, the common good of the social community as it is made up of persons and promoting the perfection of persons."

On the first point Pope Paul quoted the Council of Trent (1545-63): "Faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and the root of every justification, that is, of our regeneration in Christ, of our redemption and of our present and eternal salvation" (Session VI, C8).

He also quoted the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (11, 6).

For his own part he added: "Faith is the irreplaceable principle of Christianity. It is the source of charity. It is the center of unity. It is our religion's basic reason for existence."

Turning to his second reason for calling the Church's attention to the twofold aspect of faith, Pope Paul ascribed the difficulties modern man finds in making an act of faith to a doubt in the power of reason itself.

"If thought is no longer respected in its intrinsic rational requirements, so too faith itself suffers from it. We must well remember that faith requires reason. It transcends it, but it requires it. Faith is not fideism, that is, belief deprived of rational foundations. It is not merely a twilight search for some religious ex-



perience. It is possession of truth. It is certainty."

He observed that an act of faith has become more difficult psychologically as well.

"Today man knows principally by way of the senses. We speak of the civilization of the image. All knowledge is translated into figures and signs. Reality is measured by what is seen and heard. Yet faith requires the use of the mind, which addresses itself to a sphere of realities that flee sensible observation.

"And we say further that the difficulties arise also from the philological, exegetical, historical studies applied to that primary font of revealed truth which is Holy Writ. When deprived of the complement furnished by tradition and by the authoritative assistance of the ecclesiastical magisterium, even the study of the Bible is full of doubts and of problems which disconcert faith more than they strengthen it. When this

study is left to individual initiative, it generates such a pluralism of opinions as to shake the faith in its subjective certainty and to take away its social authoritative."

The remedies proposed for this crisis of faith are often fallacious, he said, citing the attempts to:

- Reduce the content of the faith to some basic propositions;
- Pick and choose among "the many truths taught by our Credo."
- Make the modern mentality "the method and the yardstick of religious thought."

On the other hand, he praised the attempt to express the truths of the faith "in terms accessible to the language and the mentality of our time." His objection in this field centered upon the "passing over in silence, softening or altering certain 'difficult dogmas.'"

# Christian Can't Conform to World's Spirit

New Orleans — (NC)—"The plain fact is that the Christian is forbidden to conform to the spirit of the world," Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh told a meeting at Notre Dame seminary here.

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norm is developing the person, the life of the person, the worth of the person, the common good of the social community as it is made up of persons and promoting the perfection of persons."

Bishop Wright stated that the Christian, like the Church, must commit himself to "problems of social justice, world peace, underdeveloped nations, political order, disenfranchised or underprivileged people . . . not in order to make the world think better of the Church, or to make the Church relevant to the world, but because otherwise the work of Christ is not done and the teaching of the Church becomes empty, pointless and a fraud.

"The scandal of the contrast between Catholic teaching and Catholic performance does in fact disappear from the world. But this is not why it is scandalous. It is scandalous because it defaults the command of Christ and the promises of the Church."

"A mood flows from the fundamental tension between the Church and the world, a tension upon which Christ insisted, against which St. Paul warned, and which reveals itself at the moment in the ambiguous sense given to the words 'involvement,' 'commitment,' 'relevant,' and 'real.'"

"As a result of this ambiguity, or more exactly, ambivalence, the Christian attitude toward the world involves what might be called a love and hate relationship. The Christian is called to love the world as did God, who so loved it as to give His only

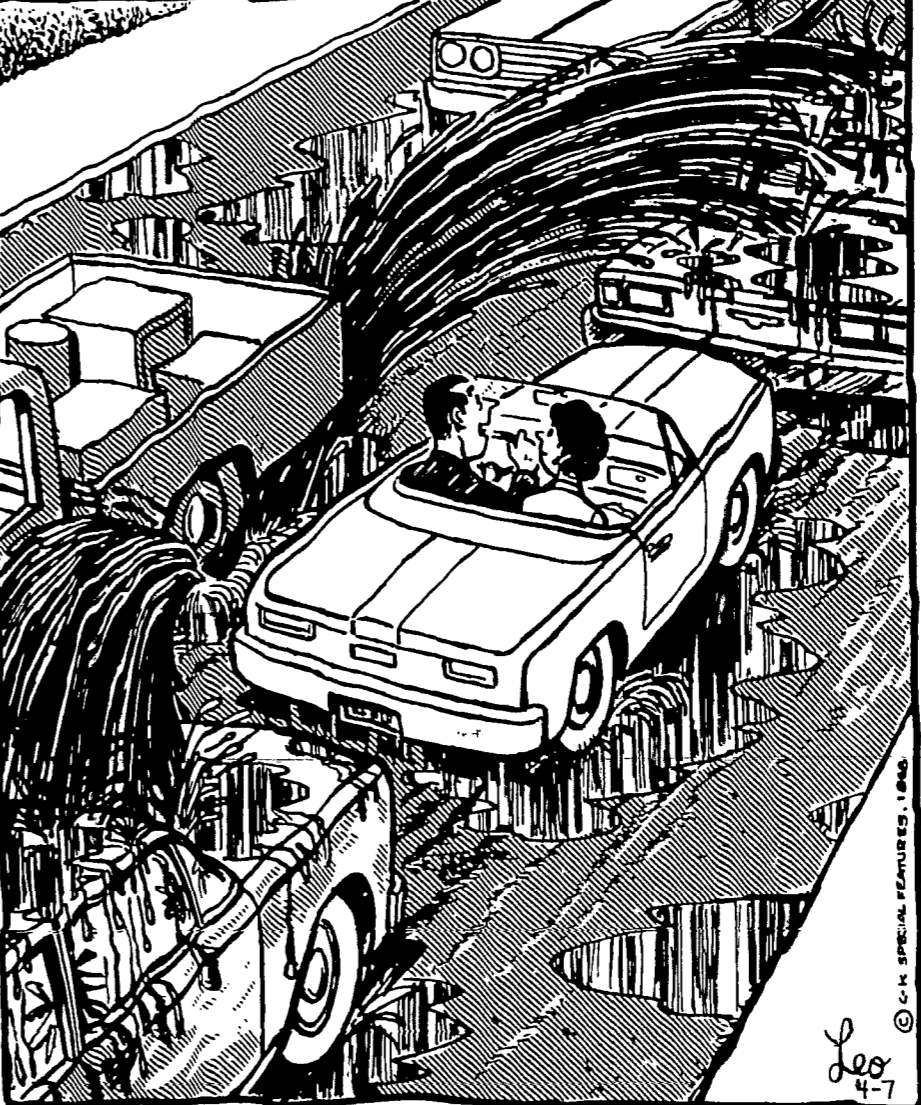
begotten Son in its behalf. But he must hold the world at arm's length, somehow keep himself apart from the world . . ."

"Christians must be much more honest with their secular neighbors, and consistent with their own values in all this question of the desire to be accepted as relevant to the world. The plain fact is that the Christian Gospel cannot be relevant at all costs and at all times. Certainly it cannot be relevant on all terms. It cannot mesh comfortably and harmoniously with the machinery of our times, its civilization, and its progress."



Bishop Wright cycles of the contemporary Popes, the supreme

## CHURCH HUMOR



"You can't tell me the St. Christopher medal in our car is just superstition!"

## Letters to the Editor

Editor: Like every newspaper, the Courier-Journal is entitled to its editorial opinion. However, when a diocesan paper, whose very affiliation is a claim to objectivity, engages in "news management," it does a great disservice to its readers.

I refer to the November 1st issue, which relegated to page 12 a very brief article on an important Catholic event in this diocese: viz, the first general meeting of the Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen, attended by nearly 400 persons. This is particularly surprising since the meeting was covered by the newly appointed associate editor (announcement of appointment on page 8).

Most Catholic gatherings of this size and significance rate first page coverage. However, page one was reserved for a coincidental announcement by the Bishop that a Council of Laity is to be established, comprising a few selected groups who "have fought the good fight," but not including many others, e.g., the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Interracial Council, who must be surprised to learn they are not among the "battle-scarred servicemen" referred to by the Bishop.

— John C. Schottmiller 38 Alberta Dr., Penfield

ing students; a continuous inter-faith commitment with the Protestant and Jewish women; the recent contribution of new layette items by council affiliates for the secular mission, and the direct donation by the council to the secular mission of \$1,000 which helped them set up day nursery and clinics. I wish to quote the Courier of Oct. 25, page 9, with its report on "The Rural Slums":

"Perkinsville's clinic, which treated more than 50 migrant laborers and their families a week, during harvest time, will continue in operation. Presently five registered nurses and doctors voluntarily staff this well-equipped medical center for two evenings a week. To continue also in Perkinsville is the clothing distribution center, which provides donated garments at a minimal cost."

Are these community affairs really outmoded?

Mrs. Eugene Fuers 105 Simpson Rd. Vicepresident, North East District, Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

## Word for Sunday

### Keeping 'In Touch' with Christ

By Father Albert Sharnon

Sunday's Gospel may be titled: "Touches." Two miracles occur one after the other — through touches. A woman suffering from a bleeding cancer touched the tassel of Christ's cloak and was made well. Christ touched the hand of Jairus' daughter "and the little girl got up" from the sleep of death.

Faith, you see, needs sensible things. Both Jairus and the ailing woman felt that visible contact with Jesus was necessary. "Lay your hand on her." "If only I can touch his cloak." Faith is as simple a thing as an act, like going to a doctor; or an act, like the touch of the hand.

That is simply what the sacraments and the sacramentals are all about — they are the way "to get in touch" with Christ. Both are signs. But like different signs, they say different things. Sacraments say, "Christ is acting here"; the sacramentals say, "The Church is acting here."

The difference is well illustrated by the two miracles in Sunday's Gospel. In Jairus' case, it was Jesus who acted. He took the initiative. He touched the little girl. He said, "I order you: 'Get up!'" Jesus' action there contrasted sharply with that attending the woman's cure. It was the suffering woman herself who

acted. She took the initiative. She touched Jesus, not He her.

Because the sacraments are the actions of Christ, all the other sacraments are satellites of the Eucharist, where Christ is really and truly present. Because the sacramentals are the action of the Church to make Christ present among us, she takes persons and things and brings them into contact with Christ by blessing them with the sign of the cross; and formerly

she did this within the Mass itself — "through Him you give us these things . . . you bless them and make them holy." The sacramentals are the touch of Christ's hands: His actions. The sacramentals are the hem of His garment: His presence.

In them divinity has further emptied itself. Once God hid behind man. This He did to evoke the faith that saves: the faith that saved a little girl and a grown woman.



# 'We N

"There is a more positive need. Catholic schools today than the reasons which brought them into existence 100 years ago," according Monsignor William M. Roche, diocesan superintendent of schools.

Msgr. Roche made the statement following his re-election as president of the Department of School Superintendents, National Catholic Education Association, at its recent annual convention in Rochester.

He warned, however, that the need for Catholic schools will not be met unless bishops, religious superior school superintendents, and parents cooperate in solving the problem facing them.

"Superintendents have not spoken out on the big issues," Msgr. Roche said.



100 Pages — for 100

Watch for 'K' 'The Next 10

The Courier-Journal edition contains:

1) a 100-page supplement, 10 decades of Catholicism in our Rochester Diocese — with some . . .

2) a cover photo, in color, by expert photographers of Eastern framing.

Among contributors are Bill Casey, Monsignors William Shafer, Duffy, Joseph L. Hogan, F. J. Ehmman, and John Whitehead. Milliken, RSM, Mary Thad RSM.



A computer center for St. Joseph's of its kind in Rochester is left are Mesdames Horace and John A. Garnish, on the 13th annual Seton Ball. The Hill

## Centenn

### Rochester Resolution

WHEREAS, the Roman C the one hundredth anniversary

WHEREAS, the Diocese national, social and cultural life

WHEREAS, the contribution citizens of all faiths recognize cessors,

NOW, THEREFORE, Be it

RESOLVED, that this Cou of Rochester; to the Most Rev. to his Auxiliaries; to the priest sincere congratulations on the

BE IT FURTHER RESOL operate with the Roman Cathol interest, aall for the betterment Adopted unanimously.



Fifty-year members of Catholic week. They are (seated left) Wittman, flanking Msgr. the Rochester Kolping B. (left), Rochester president, Kolping. Drawing of F

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