

# Splashdown 1971: Priests Are Earth-People

by Bishop Hogan

Two hundred seventy-one American priests completed a mission launched four years ago to test their qualifications as supermen capable of remaining forever and a day in orbit above the gravitational pull of Earth. Mission Control, under the guidance of Maryknoll psychologist Father Eugene Kennedy and Dr. Victor J. Heckler, directed the operation from Loyola University in Chicago. The decision to abort the mission came after their watchful eyes and those of their fellow scientists at Control Center detected danger signs that the ids, egos, and superegos of most aboard could no longer tolerate the rarified atmosphere into which they had been launched.

Splashdown took place in the Detroit River—of all places. Nearby were assembled

Guest Columnist

## Mary's Pilgrimage to Victory and Peace

The title, "Lady of Victory" was the name of the feast instituted by Pope Pius V to commemorate the successful repulsion of the Turks at the naval battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571 by the Christian princes.



Because the prayer of the rosary had been employed with particular effectiveness at the time of this battle, Pope Gregory XIII changed the title of the feast to that of the Most Holy Rosary. In the most recent revision of the Roman calendar it is listed as a memorial under the title of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary and is still observed on October seventh.

Over the centuries, Catholics have venerated Mary under various titles, each of which has particular significance for those by whom Our Lady is invoked, and the Second Vatican Council has sanctioned this provided these observances harmonize with the liturgical seasons and are related to them.

The Easter season or Paschal time is the literal renewal of Christ's passage from death to life whereby He became for us a life-giving spirit through whom we may accomplish our transition from death to life.

the American bishops anxiously awaiting the official reports on the value of the experiment which they had launched. The project directors were called in to give their appraisal of the mission. They had this to say:

1. You Americans have expected too much of your American priests.
2. They are not only a 'little less than the angels'—the fact is they are 'much less' than the spirits that are always in the rarified atmosphere of God's presence.
3. They are 'earth-people'—at home on American soil—with physical, mental and emotional constitutions conditioned by and adjusted to its pressures.
4. They will never merit the wings of Cherubim, Seraphim, Virtues, Dominations, Thrones, Powers and the rest of the angelic hosts.
5. They are rather like the rest of Amer-

ican manhood divided into the four choirs of humanity: Delevoped (that rare and select group of the upper echelon), developing (sizeable group capable of orbit with some hope), underdeveloped (risky for flight—malfunction most probable) and maldeveloped (never will make it off the launching pad).

For full details of the flight, consult your Catholic newspapers and periodicals. Be assured that the majority of us are striving to reach our lofty ideal and look upward longingly to the heavens. We do have problems which are aggravated by our inadequacies but we are trying to move beyond the limited orbit of self.

The project will hopefully teach all of us to be more careful in selecting candidates for the priesthood, for we want no one to suffer the frustration of 'mission impossible'. And when we seek your support in prayers be assured that our request is honest and sincere and confirmed by scientific analysis.

By Fr. Paul J. Gibbons

Father Gibbons is the pastor of Our Lady of Victory Church

The first one to make this passage with and through her Divine Son was Mary. She shared His triumph and victory in advance by her Immaculate Conception.

In her complete acceptance of the Father's will for her, she became the first and pre-eminent pilgrim of that pilgrim Church which advances ever onward to the final victory wherein her Son will deliver us into our Father's arms.

There is a difference between a pilgrimage and a triumphal procession. The former is composed of those who walk erect, those who proceed with halting gait, those who stumble and fall and those who hobble on crutches or are supported by others. The latter is made up of those who march in ordered array, garbed in rich vesture and confident of their own excellence and abilities.

Because we are members of a pilgrim Church, we rely on Christ and are sustained in our prayers by Mary. With her ever before our eyes, we advance with humble confidence in imitation of her own unflagging devotion.

If we become weary and are tempted to surrender, she reminds us that her journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem and from Bethlehem to Calvary was no triumphal progress, but a weary, toilsome journey which proved to be a pathway to the glory of the Father.

She is ever for us a Lady of Victory pointing the pathway traversed first and foremost by her own victorious and triumphant Son.

At Our Lady of Victory Church in Rochester, as well as in the churches throughout the diocese, the concept of the pilgrim church is dramatized daily. At Our Lady of Victory, day after day, we see many who approach the altar conscious that their pilgrimage is nearing a successful conclusion.

For many years they have come to this century-old church to be unburdened of their sins and to be fortified by the living and life-giving Bread of the Eucharist. Beneath the venerable image of the Victorious Lady and her Divine Son, they prepare to make their final passage to eternal life.

Even as their steps falter somewhat and their eyesight dims, their confidence grows and they know that Our Lady will bring them to the fullness of that victory which her Son proclaimed when He sundered the tomb on Easter day and greeted His disciples with the words, "Peace be to you."

Editorial

## Peace Demonstration Was Not Instructive

Last week Rochester experienced the antiwar protest and confrontation which Washington has so frequently had to endure. About 3,000 people tied up two sections of downtown Rochester for a total of about three hours hoping that by stopping downtown life in this city they would signify the urgency of stopping the Vietnam War.

The demonstrators did not gather to be heard: they used no PA system to instruct the thousands of onlookers, their leaders made no intelligent effort to explain the goals or hopes of the gatherings. They sought confrontation, not collaboration. They came to clog the streets, intending to disrupt the placid tenor of downtown business, force their cries and placards on the eyes of noon-time pedestrians, and defy the law in the process. After an hour of patient toleration of disobedience in each area the police used force to move the demonstrators. And those manhandled and tossed

into police cars became useful martyrs because the TV and press cameras magnified the street-clearing entirely out of proportion.

As a spectator I found no wise message nor compelling appeal in these demonstrations. They were irritating and pathetic, rather than instructive and impressive. The massive outcry of 200,000 marchers in Washington the previous weekend was judged by participants and observers to be an expression of the "anguish of the nation", a manifestation of the democratic mind. And we rightly base our faith in democracy on the belief in some deep, largely unorganized "wisdom of the common people."

But the Rochester performance was so empty of reasonable intelligence, so vulgar and crude, so dangerously extended beyond making its point, that even sympathizers with war protest were embarrassed and frightened by its immature spirit.

Bishop Hogan's words to a gathering last weekend can be applied to the shabby demonstration: "A mature person has the ability to strike a balance between principle, laws and obedience to authority on one side, and to freedom, spontaneity and initiative on the other side. Immature people resolve the complexity in favor of one side only."

Law and order stand in fragile balance in any community: they depend upon one another. When order is threatened by tensions built up in a gathering which challenges the law, the message of the crowd is negated by the vast majority of reasonable people. It will be tragic if all the demonstrators for peace in this community have lost hopes to speak to Rochester because the obscene chants and traffic paralysis and street scuffles of last week have built a wall of contempt against future rallies.

—Father Richard Tormey