

Leisure—Onus or Bonus, Part III

The life of Christ teaches us that leisure is a gift of God to be enjoyed. Our Lord did the works which His Father gave him to do. But he also observed periods of leisure. When fondling little children, attending social gatherings, resting, or sleeping in the boat while His disciples toiled, he was not being lazy, neglectful, or slothful.



The Gospels report His retreats to mountains and isolated places for undisturbed rest. His life exemplified the propriety of setting aside time for prayer, reflection, and re-creation of inner life. He gave an explicit charge to his disciples: "Come you apart into a desert place, and rest awhile."

We who walk this earth bearing the name of Christ through baptism and who live

with awareness of our Christian vocation can find in His teaching and example meaning, purpose and joy in our work and a divine blessing in our leisure. For both stand under His benediction. Leisure is a liability for those who do not know who they are, whose they are and why they are in this world. Free time adds up to burden, boredom, barrenness for "hollow men." For "full men" who know the love of Christ and walk in the fulness of His spirit, leisure equals blessings, benefits, bonuses.

For leisure is a form of silence so necessary for the apprehension of reality — a contemplative attitude of mind which gives us the occasion and capacity to steep ourselves in the whole of creation, to grow in awareness of what holds the world together.

It bids us look back, not merely upon the day's work but upon its joys and sorrows, its friends and foes, its here and theres; and then to sigh a sincere "thanks!" irrespective of how much has been done or left undone. Leisure bids us look forward, not just to more

work but to the freshness and excitement of a new day, to the mystery and wonder of new experiences and to glimpses of "the God ahead."

A theology of leisure is summed up in St. Paul's first letter to his beloved Timothy (I Tim 6:17) — in this passage he bids his co-worker to urge the rich to cease trusting in uncertain riches and the transitory power of wealth and to put their confidence in the living God who gives us everything for our enjoyment. This all-inclusiveness of God's blessings leaves leisure as no exception to his total giving. May we embrace it in its fullness according to the will of the donor — as a gift for personal renewal and as a partial experience of the joy of eternity.

May these welcome days of summer bring all of us the divine blessing uttered by the psalmist:

"Have leisure and know that I am God"
Psalm 65:11.

Guest Columnist

Taking Inspiration from the Past

In these days of discouragement and disillusionment about the Church, about parochial schools, about the moral tone of the world today, perhaps we should gain courage and inspiration from the story of another era, a story of faith and determination.



During the mid 60s — we are referring to the 19th century — a group of German immigrants settled in an area of Gates known as Coldwater, because of the creek that wound through the territory. These men and women were Catholic, and they were concerned for the Catholic training and education of their children. The first thing they did was to establish a school in the year 1865. Ten years later the parish of the Holy Ghost was formally organized with

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the help of the Redemptorist Fathers at St. Joseph's Church, Rochester.

Holy Ghost School operated from 1865 until 1918 staffed entirely by lay teachers — first a school master, later both a school master and a lady teacher. It was in 1918 that the School Sisters of Notre Dame came to staff the school.

The first resident pastor, Father Peter Erras, was appointed in 1908. Up until that time the priest at St. John's Greece, took care of Holy Ghost Parish. A small group of people — 60 families by 1900 — built a school, a church for 360 persons, a convent and a rectory. Who can measure the sacrifice of time and money on the part of so few that made these facilities possible, facilities that we enjoy today and take for granted?

By Father Edward E. Steinkirchner

The story of Holy Ghost Parish has been repeated over and over again in many of the parishes of our city and our diocese and our country. We Catholics of the 1970's should be proud of the heritage that we have received.

Let us be determined, in the spirit of faith and sacrifice of our predecessors, to pass this heritage on to succeeding generations, better for having been a part of it.

On one occasion, it is reported, that Pope John XXIII prayed there might be a new Pentecost in our day. Out of the confusion and bewilderment of that first Pentecost, the church made a strong beginning. May we in our day proceed to the work at hand, filled with gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit who is at work among us. This has been the story of the Church from the Apostles up to this very day!

Editorial

New 'Open Door' Policy a Cause for Hope

Viewed in its potential for changing fearsome world trends, President Nixon's visit to Peking could easily be the major event since the end of World War II.

Presidents have been assassinated, new wars have spotted the earth's face, the moon has been reached as men learn more about space, and Popes have changed but a United States President in Peking has importance for the future that boggles the mind.

True there is ample cause to be wary; Red China has a more inflexible brand of communism than even Moscow. And it was not too long ago that Peking was bemoaning the Soviet Union's own rapprochement with the West.

There also is reason to sympathize with Nationalist China. This undoubtedly moves Communist China closer to the United Nations, if indeed it wants to be there. It also puts the venerable Chiang-Kai-Shek in an extremely difficult position, perhaps forcing him to break relations with old ally United States.

And it also means consternation for those who would rather not deal with a Communist nation, no matter what.

But all those worries and doubts must be put aside, for what might be gained is a way for inhabitants of this small planet to live together in peace.

Pope Paul alluded to the impact of the visit when he said:

"Something new and great is being accomplished and being prepared which could change not a little the face of the earth."

The pontiff implied he would have more to say at a later date, wisely deciding to see how the meeting itself shapes up but he left no doubt where his heart is — "We will have something, some hope to express."

Indeed there can be no cause for rejoicing in the streets yet but this new "open door" policy between two of the world's powers can be only be viewed as at least a glimmer of hope for a much better world.