

Bishop Hogan Discusses Lenten Season

My dear People:

We approach the Lenten Season of 1972 in a time of change, transition and even confusion. At such a time it is more necessary than ever that we reassert the essential message of the Gospel: that our Lord Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father and to unite us to one another as God's people. If we are to understand this work of reconciliation accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ, we must deepen our awareness of the meaning of sin, our need for forgiveness and the value of penance in the Christian life. Therefore, I feel it my responsibility, as your Bishop and

in conjunction with the priests of the diocese, to speak to you on these topics.

The existence of war, injustice, prejudice is enough to convince us that sin is a reality in today's world. We are surrounded by sin and susceptible to it — yet we often fail to recognize it within ourselves. Whenever we personally contribute to violence or injustice or show our prejudice, we weaken or distort our baptismal orientation toward God; we are sinners and make the power of evil stronger in our world. Our sins separate us from God, set us against our fellowman and gradually cause our own destruction as well as the dis-

ruption of the community around us.

At the beginning of the Lenten Season, when we accept ashes as a sign of our need and desire for conversion and a change of heart, we urge all believers to reflect in their lives what these ashes mean and do penance for sin. Jesus in the Gospels, constantly draws sinners to himself — the sinful woman, Mary Magdalene, the repentant Peter. For the Christian, penance is a lifelong process, an abiding attitude. The Lenten Season highlights this process; Lenten readings recall, encourage and motivate it; Lenten worship celebrates it.

(Continued from Page 1)



Bishops Hickey, Hogan and McCafferty

Bishops, Priests to Discuss Council

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and his two auxiliaries will talk with the clergy of the diocese during the next three weeks on plans for general spiritual renewal and other matters of pastoral concern.

Though appearing separately, they will speak as with one mind, a spokesman stressed.

Fourteen regional meetings are scheduled for Feb. 17 through March 10. Bishop Hogan will have five, Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, three, and Bishop John E. McCafferty, six. Each will be accompanied by a priest who will serve as chairman.

"The bishops are looking forward to their dialogue with the priests," according to Msgr. Donald Mulcahy, executive secretary of the Pastoral Council Formation Committee. "They see it as an opportunity to share mutual concerns for the diocese.

"All three definitely will be of one mind. It is a sort of three-in-one approach."

Accompanying Bishop Hogan on his tour will be Father William M. Hart, pastor of Holy Trinity, Webster. Father John S. Whalen, pastor of Our Lady of Mercy parish in Greece, will go with Bishop Hickey. Father Robert J. Downs, new pastor of St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport, will be Bishop McCafferty's presiding officer.

The priests of each region will list their major concerns on the agenda for each meeting.

The unusual procedure of conducting "dialogue" sessions throughout the diocese was explained by Msgr. Mulcahy by a quotation from the document on the priesthood issued by the Bishop's Synod last fall.

"Both the difficult service of authority, and the practice of an obedience which is not merely passive must be carried on in a spirit of faith, in mutual charity, in friendly confidence, and through constant and patient dialogue," the document says.

"Thus the collaboration and the responsible cooperation of priests with the bishop can be sincere, human and at the same time supernatural."

The schedule of meetings follows:

Bishop Hogan — Feb. 17 - Sacred Heart Cathedral - 10 a.m.; Feb. 22 - Holy Family, Auburn - 10 a.m.; Feb. 25 - St. Joseph Hospital, Elmira - 1:30 p.m.; Feb. 28 - St. Mary, Canandaigua - 10 a.m.; Feb. 29 - St. Ambrose, Rochester - 10 a.m.

Bishop Hickey — Feb. 18 - St. Monica, Rochester - 10 a.m.; Feb. 23 - Our Lady of Lourdes, Rochester - 10 a.m.; Mar. 1 - St. Rose, Lima - 10 a.m.

Bishop McCafferty — St. Charles, Rochester - 10 a.m.; Feb. 23 - Corpus Christi, Rochester - 10 a.m.; Feb. 25 - St. Joseph Hospital, Elmira - 1:30 p.m.; Feb. 28 - St. Margaret Mary, Rochester - 10 a.m.; Mar. 9 - St. Mary, Bath - 3:30 p.m.; Mar. 10 - Immaculate Conception, Ithaca - 11 a.m.

3-Year Study Warm to Catholic NCC Membership

New York — (RNS) — After a three-year study, a joint committee has issued a report that strongly favors the entrance of the Roman Catholic Church into the National Council of Churches.

The Study Committee on the Relationship of the NCC and the RCC, which included prominent representatives of both, decided not to make a recommendation. But it concluded that Catholic membership in the council would bring several advantages, and that there are no obstacles that would prevent the move.

"The kind of corporate ecclesial existence implied by entrance into the NCC would appear to be in harmony with the ecclesiological and ecumenical principles of the RCC as expressed by its most authoritative documents," the report states. "Members in bodies such as the NCC would help to carry out the common witness, worship and service appropriate to the actual ecclesial situation as understood both by the RCC and by the present member Churches of the NCC."

The report was issued simultaneously by the NCC here and the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Catholic Church has a membership of about 48 million. The 33 member Churches of the NCC have a combined membership of some 42 million.

A comparison of the NCC's goals with Vatican II documents expressing a Catholic commitment to ecumenism, the committee concluded, "suggests the likelihood that the RCC in the

United States might appropriately seek to become a member of the NCC and that it might be welcomed in this capacity."

Though the Catholic Church does not have a national organization equivalent to those of Protestant denominations, the committee agreed that the NCCB, with Vatican approval, was competent to make a decision regarding membership in the NCC. The report advises, however, that the move should not be made without grass roots support.

In an interview, Dr. Edwin Espy, general secretary of the NCC and a committee member, said it was a "foregone conclusion" that the Catholic Church would be accepted if it applied for membership.

The Catholic co-chairman of the committee was Bishop Charles H. Helmsing of the Kansas City-St. Joseph diocese who is also chairman of the Bishop's Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

Other Catholic members were Bishop William W. Baum of the Springfield-Cape Girardeau diocese, Bishop Joseph L. Bernardin, general secretary of the NCCB and the U.S. Catholic Conference; Father Avery Dulles, SJ, professor at Woodstock College in New York City; Father Richard McCotmick, SJ, professor at Bellarmine School of Theology in Chicago; Father Frederick McManus, executive secretary of the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy; and Father Edwin B. Neill, assistant general secretary of the NCCB.

The NCC co-chairman was Dr. (Continued on Page 2)

Features

Letters	4
Editorial	3
Tab	14
Movies	15
Vatican	18
World	21
Local	7

Columnists

Shamon	4
Cuddy	5
Atwell	5
Lyons	6
Costa	15
Child	23
Doser	17

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Ulster Roundup...Page 21