

New Priests: New Challenges, Timeless Demands

It was my personal privilege and a source of great joy to concelebrate the Eucharist liturgy with our newly ordained priests last week and to ask God's blessings on their priesthood. Within a few days they will be sent on their first priestly mission. They need and deserve all the prayerful support we can give them.



The new rite of priestly ordination is an inspiring ceremony. Unlike the ritual of the past when the assembled faithful were forced to give most of their attention to a reading of a translation of the ceremony, all eyes are free now to focus on the ceremony itself and all ears can be attentive to the instructions and exhortations to the candidates.

Despite the demands on time involved in individual ordinations, I shall never grow tired of presiding at the ceremonies. Each one is a personal grace of renewal of my own commitment to the service of the High Priest, Jesus Christ, which I freely and publicly made thirty years ago in our Cathedral sanctuary.

Today's ceremony is a community celebration — a joyous occasion prepared for and planned by the parish. Public approval of the candidate is often expressed by the pastor, by the chairman of the parish coun-

cil and by the thunderous applause of the congregation. This moment is especially inspiring to me, for it says to me: "Bishop, here is a man known by us and approved by us. We ask you now to ordain him priest."

We all are aware, however, of how quickly applause subsides. This moment of approval can never of itself sustain a man in the years of challenging reality that lie ahead. The support must be continuous to encourage the new priest in the inevitable frustrations he will suffer in his ministry.

What does it mean to be a priest today? Much has changed since I was ordained. Then, a young man "left the world" to become a priest. Our seminary training emphasized such isolation. Now, he is called to embrace the world, to be where the action is — without being overcome by the widened exposure to human problems. Then, the priest was near the top of a pyramid with the laity at its base — looking up to him; now, we stress the Church as the whole people of God with the priest in the center — organizing and inspiring a faith community. Then, every priest had status and father's word carried weight; now, his word has as much weight as his person and his argumentation. A priest today has to work hard to earn respect. Then, what the people expected of their priests responded to the priest's own expectations; now, people and priests can easily find themselves at odds, and countless priests

suffer inner agony over who they are and what they should do. Then, prayer was highly personal, with the emphasis on petition, penance and reparation; now, he must be a leader of prayer that stresses thankful praise and community. Then, the priest could be faceless as the objective value of the Mass was given primacy; now, the liturgy requires creative ability to reach every age, especially the young.

Today's priest must be incredibly open to new ideas and to fresh ways of doing things, and open to a wider world. He must be uncommonly courageous as he faces up to and lives with his deep doubts, his sense of inadequacy, his feeling that he is not free, his lower status in a community.

Besides these new demands, there are timeless demands people have a right to make on their priests: that he be a disciple of Our Master, that he preach Christ and not himself, that he reflect the life of his Crucified Lord, that he be an apostle always, that he spend himself for his people, that he fashion a community of love within the Church — faithful to her teachings; that he preside at the Eucharist whence his whole work derives its strength.

Little wonder that a great priest of vast talents, Father John Courtney Murray, used to say: "Courage! It's far more important than intelligence."

Join with me, then, in daily prayer for our new priests that such courage be their constant companion.

The Slot Man

Dick Dougherty of the Gannett Newspapers, who cycles into work daily from his Brighton home, may hate me for saying so but plenty needs to be done before bicycles make inroads on the auto as the main means of our routine traveling.

First must come safe bicycle routes leading into the city and to other work centers. A stress on safety education and rules of the road also is needed and there must be some new regulations, such as luminous clothing designs for cyclists.

The ecology involved is important but first safety must be guaranteed — as well as other details. For instance, how many bike racks exist in downtown Rochester?

Let's Not Put the Wheel Before the Course

By Carmen Viglucci

A Rosary procession and benediction scheduled June 25 at Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Youngstown, N.Y., will have added significance this year. The anniversary of the death of Father Charles M. Barlassina also will be commemorated. Father Barlassina, former director of the shrine, has always played a leading role in the annual procession but last year was murdered in Chicago.

The "everyday hell" of a woman who had an abortion is described in a full-page ad in the Washington Post, placed by "Women for the Unborn", a pro-life group.

The woman is unnamed but says she is

willing to come forth and help in any way to point up the necessity of alternatives to abortion.

She describes her "everyday hell" as "never hearing a baby cry without crying within yourself; counting days to see how old your baby would have been; wondering what contributions my baby could have made to our desperate society; wondering if you'll have another chance at motherhood."

She says "there are too many girls unwilling — embarrassed or ashamed — to speak to a counselor concerning an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy" and recommends Birthright to such girls. The Birthright number in Rochester is 328-8700.

Editorial

Crisis Calls for Calm Reasoning

The state's inability in the face of federal court decisions to come to the aid of the parochial school system has long caused problems and heartaches for Church leaders, school officials and parents battling to keep their schools alive.

It was inevitable that the pressure pot created within the Church establishment by the confluence of active campaigns to secure aid and opposition to it, from the granting of assistance and then its withdrawal and from the emotionalism inherent in the school question should eventually boil over into the public arena.

This happened in the diocese recently when the Council of Inner City Parishes, denied its budget requests, took its case to the media. The CICIP wants \$350,000, some \$150,000 more than in last year's budget; the diocese could see fit to grant \$250,000, still \$50,000 more than last year.

That the CICIP is highly motivated is beyond question; its members are men of integrity. But that it should, in its zeal, imply that Bishop Hogan is not duly concerned with the poor is a reprehensi-

ble mistake.

Without fanfare or attempts at public relations strategy, the Bishop has proven his love and attention for the impoverished through his support of the Office for Human Development, the Missions Office, Catholic Charities. His personal trips to Selma, Ala., and to South America not only showed his own interest in the needy but also served to reassure our Sisters and priests serving far from home.

When consecrated, Bishop Hogan said he was not afraid of challenge and he took the recent ones in stride, reacting calmly and without rancor, causing one newsmen at a press conference to remark that he was surprised and impressed by the Bishop's equanimity.

It's almost cliché to point out again that the financial picture is cloudy all over, and not only as regards schools.

Replenishing state aid would be one answer, but that seems unlikely, at least when it would count. Still we must try.

Regionalization, whereby the plus factors of some parishes can be blended

with the minus factors of others, may be another answer. It will be tried.

The recent positive responses in the way of aid to the Bishop's own challenge to all diocesans to assist the poor are laudatory and reflect proper spirit. Hopefully enough more will respond to keep the inner city schools going.

To be frank, however, it must be noted that the problem will return next year.

Instead of internal bickering and strife we should all offer the Bishop our moral and spiritual support. He is charged with finding the answers not only for the Rochester inner city schools but also for the poor in other urban communities as well as the rural areas. He must come up with solutions that fit the complete mission of the Church in the diocese.

As individuals we should realize that the Bishop's challenge to help the poor was meant for each and every one of us.

With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, hope in the future, faith in ourselves and our fellow man, and charity, both in thought and deed, the present crisis, as Bishop Hogan has pointed out, may be a blessing in disguise.