

The Heart of Renewal — a Renewal of Heart

Last Sunday, through taped and written message and through homilies preached from every pulpit, I issued to all of us of the



Diocese of Rochester a call to conversion — the same summons the Lord made to all who wished to be numbered among His disciples. It is with a sense of privilege and responsibility that I have inaugurated our program of renewal, a process of growth which cannot be confined to a period of time but which must begin with great effort at some point in our life.

Our Meditation on the meaning of renewal has been prepared by a committee of thoughtful and prayerful people. It focuses on the image of the Church as Kingdom — a valid sign of the challenge of our common Christian vocation. The Lord Himself made the same proclamation and even His Apostles misunderstood Him, thinking of the Kingdom as something splendid, filled with glory and freed of all suffering. Yet He Who came as the suffering servant had made it sufficiently clear for all who had ears to hear and eyes to see that His King-

The Slot Man



At first thought it may seem befuddling that stories about drunks and drinking are often thought to be funny. But when you

realize that cruelty may be the basis for all humor it becomes clear.

For instance, what's funny about a guy slipping and falling on a banana peel?

Where's the humor in the practical joker who pulls a chair from under someone about to sit down?

How did the expression "funny as a crutch" gain prominence?

Why are ethnic jokes popular?

Where's the humor in "dirty" jokes?

So, many things considered, there is at least a reason for the fact that drunks

dom was for sinful men who would learn to turn from evil, corruption, and cruelty to live a life dedicated to building up a kingdom in this world worthy of the inheritance of the kingdom in a world to come.

Christ challenges each of us to transform our lives — to grow in union with the kingdom. To refuse to enter the kingdom is to refuse to grow in love and unity with others. This refusal isolates us in our own world of alienation, loneliness, selfishness and frustration. And all of this is hell on earth.

Wherever there is good in the world, there the Kingdom of God is found. Any value that brings happiness, that helps men grow, also helps the growth of the kingdom. And if the kingdom is already here, as the Lord has assured us, then we must enter it here or not at all. Saving my soul for the next world never meant to Jesus avoiding the responsibilities, the challenges, and the potential for the growth in this world. Christ offers us the future kingdom of glory, but only on the condition that we work in the present. Our daily prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come" is futile unless its signs of peace, justice and love abound now in our daily living.

This kingdom come among us during our

days of pilgrimage is meant to be the Sacrament of Christ — a living sign of His abiding presence — giving daily witness to His Mission to "bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind, new sight, to set the down-trodden free." Luke 4 - 18; 19

That this diocese offers no exception to the axiom that the "Church is in constant need of reform" should be obvious to all of us. There are areas of our individual lives and of our community living which could never be interpreted as signs that His Kingdom has already come among us.

A year of renewal is a grace offered to you and me to re-examine the authenticity and sincerity of our Christianity — to ask ourselves whether we have been going through the motions of worshipping God, honoring Him with our lips while our hearts are far from Him — or whether our commitment is a conscious Christianity. May this year be one of study and prayer to find out where our hearts and treasures really are.

Let us ask each day that the Holy Spirit, the Author of all renewal, will lead us to the truth and, having heard His voice, we will not harden our hearts. May the Lord's Kingdom come among us!

By Carmen Viglucci

So What's Funny About Being Drunk?

somehow seem funny to us. The tragic underside of the coin somehow produces the surface humor. Anyone who suffers from alcoholism or who lives with an alcoholic knows in reality there is little room for laughter.

Now the government is readying an ad campaign to point up the necessity of doing something about alcoholism. Sitting over our beer, or whatever, we will see on our televisions ads showing the folly of drinking, such as that it is not really very manly at all. Also traffic death statistics showing the enormous percentage of drinkers involved in accidents are shaped to produce a scare.

But, as with smoking and other hazardous pursuits, it is safe to predict that little will happen. Sociologists explain that our society accepts drinking as a normal pursuit and thus those prone to alcoholism will always find the degree of acceptance that puts another drink in their hand.

The Women's Christian Temperance

Union, that forerunner of women's lib, has come up with some interesting figures. According to Religious News Service, the number of bars and sellers of alcoholic beverages in the United States has been reduced in recent years but still exceeds the number of churches by 83,000 in the United States.

The WCTU claims that there are 432,000 bars in the United States as opposed to 328,000 churches. In a society where it is easier to drink than go to church it seems safe that alcoholism will always be a problem.

We realize that not everyone who drinks is an alcoholic and anyone who knows me realizes that alcohol and I are no strangers. Still it is about time we started to reflect very seriously on alcoholism as a social problem — think of it the next time you see a drunk performing, especially in a car.

And when was the last time you heard alcoholism treated as the subject of a Sunday morning homily?

Editorial

Olympics Make You Feel Better?

Ask yourself this: Do you think the world is really better off after the 1972 Olympics than it was before the games?

Of course, the 17 people slain should not be considered the fault of the Olympics but the fact that the International Olympic Committee afterwards took its usual "back to the sandbox" attitude, as characterized by the New York Times' Red Smith, is one of the ponderables spawned by the games.

Earlier, black athletes, particularly from Africa, made it clear through a threatened boycott that they would not countenance socializing with representatives of a government that decrees bigotry. An octogenarian Olympics leader showed how out of touch he is with the modern world by using the gauche term "blackmail" to describe the boycott.

This same man, Avery Brundage, astonished many listeners after the kidnappings and murders by equating the threatened boycott with such barbarism.

When two American blacks refused to stand at attention during the playing of the National Anthem they left themselves open to charges of boorishness but the lightning quick reaction of the International Olympic Committee in banning them from the games for life is in strange contrast to the same approbation of competition by teams from Russia, for instance, who are "amateur" only in that Moscow says so. It was a bizarre counterpoint that had one of these so-called amateur teams, the Russian hockey squad, outplaying the cream-of-the-crop professionals of the National Hockey League as the Olympics proceeded.

These officials are the same men who feel pangs of worry when a Mark Spitz carries a pair of shoes onto a winner's stand because he may be violating the simon-purism of the Olympics by perhaps publicizing a brand name.

Just quickly remember the clipping of the U.S. basketball team, the way Bob Seagren was treated in the pole vault, charges of rigged judging in diving and boxing, the withdrawal of a gold medal from Rick Demont.

Is the world really a better place because of the 1972 Olympics?

Or is it that those who extol the Olympics as contributing to world harmony are concentrating on the ideal and ignoring the reality?