

The Year of Renewal — No Gimmick

With sadness I heard from a beloved brother priest just last week that some of his close friends viewed the Year of Renewal as a gimmick that I had devised for reasons unknown to them. They suggested that, though it might result in much activity throughout the diocese, it would in the end be unproductive — just sound and fury signifying nothing. And surely it will be just that if such an attitude prevails, especially among our leadership.

Let me restate the seriousness of my intent as announced on Sept. 10 at the Cathedral when I inaugurated the program and expressed my hopes for a renewed Church in our Diocese:

- The Year of Renewal is not a gimmick. It is a grace — an invitation directed to personal renewal, a deepening of our prayer life, of our understanding of the Mission of the Church, and of the personal demands of the Gospel.

- The idea did not originate in the Diocese of Rochester. It is simply our response to the challenges of the II Vatican.

- The Principal Author of renewal will always be the Holy Spirit. Yet, we should bend our efforts as if all depended on our own strength.

- A year is not 365 days but a period of intensified effort to focus our attention on the meaning of our baptismal vocation, and on the demands it will make on each of us each day until we reach the Heavenly Kingdom.

Why does the Church need renewal? Simply, because it is, in part, a human organization. And every human operation and society, if it wants to stay alive and healthy, must ask itself constantly: Why am I here? How do I justify my existence? Am I cluttering the earth like the barren fig tree in the Gospel? Am I fulfilling my mission to be God's outreach to the world?

Our authenticity is being challenged today by voices that are far from friendly. The Year of Renewal should help us to listen to them and change our hearts. What today's world and some of the younger within our own membership are telling us is brutally simple: "The Church has failed. You have not convinced us that your primary product is service. You have not persuaded us that as an institution you sense the pain of our agonizing monosyllables: What it really means to hate, to love, to

starve, to bleed, to die; what it feels like to be poor, to be black, to be sick." As Father Avery Dulles expressed it so well:

"A cry to all the Churches rises up from the heart of modern man: Come to us where we are. Help us make the passage into the coming technocratic age without falling into the despair and brutality of a new paganism . . . If the charity of the Good Samaritan burns in your hearts, show that you share our desires and aspirations. In our struggle to build the city of man, we need the support which your faith and hope alone can give. If you remain comfortably in your churches and cloisters, we are much afraid that God will become a stranger to modern life. Christianity, secluded in a world of its own, will turn into a mere relic to be cherished by a few pious souls." — Catholic Mind - May 1966.

Already there are many encouraging signs that the prophets of doom who would discredit the seriousness of my intent and dim my fondest hopes for a renewed Church of Rochester will not prevail. I did not choose to be the superintendent of a reliquary when I was ordained bishop three years ago. I did choose to preside in charity over an assembly of God's people called each day to growth in an awareness of its Mission to renew the face of this earth. May His Kingdom come among us!

The Slot Man

By Carmen Viglucci

Ever Hear of Ageism?

Ageism. Ever hear that word?

I did for the first time last week at a seminar on elderly citizens sponsored by Marine Midland Bank.



Mary Anne Ramer, director of the Volunteer Action Center of the Citizens Planning Council used "ageism" to describe the subtle, but nonetheless oppressive, prejudice that society has toward older citizens.

"We have, by stereotyping the image of our older people as helpless, miserable, pitiable, created a false reality."

What she and other speakers at the seminar were stressing is that there are plenty of old people very capable of doing all kinds of work — both remunerative and voluntary.

And the surprising thing is that employers are looking for the kind of help elder citizens can provide. For instance, Helen D'Amanda of GROW says that since her group began in mid-August, they have had calls from 208 employers looking for workers 55 and older.

Russell McCarthy, former head of the Industrial Management Council and himself a sprightly 75, says that the wishes of the retiree can be put in two categories — those who want to work to make money and those who perhaps don't need money but want to do purposeful work.

McCarthy briefly listed job opportunities for oldsters under such headings as self-employed (repair, lamps, dishes, handyman work), sales (insurance, etc.), accounting and bookkeeping (many small companies will subcontract such work), consulting services, landscaping, retail

stores, manufacturing (many companies with mandatory retirement ages will re-hire retirees), art institutions.

McCarthy told the more than 100 at the seminar that older persons looking for work could start by reading want ads, could make personal calls on employers, develop their own ads or brochures for self-employment and mail them to prospective employers, visit the State Employment Office (540 East Main for office-type and 155 West Main for industrial-type), contact the Rochester Machine Industries Placement Service or GROW.

Obviously there is a wealth of talent and, judging from those at the meeting, dynamism in the ranks of our senior citizens. There also seem to be suitable jobs. The problem is matching the two.

Such seminars as the one sponsored by Marine Midland are steps in that direction.

Editorial

Time for British to Leave Ulster

The parallels between the American role in Indochina and the British one in Ulster have been touched upon here before. The similarities, however, continue to grow as both countries remain on the spot.

Now a Roman Catholic nun just back from a fact-finding tour of Northern Ireland has told Religious News Service she feels that British officials would like to throw the whole mess back to the people of Ulster.

"They just don't know how to go about turning the government back to the Irish and extricating themselves," says Sister Margaret Traxler, executive director of the National Conference on Interracial Justice.

Sister Traxler also indicated that the Tommy has grown jaded with his role in Ulster, "baiting and antagonizing the people, especially youngsters."

Not only have two of the greatest nations of the world hamstringing themselves to the point of helplessness but to compound the irony, the British feel that the United States cannot be critical of their role in Ulster as long as Americans maintain their presence in Vietnam. And they have a point, devilish as it is.

It is, to use understatement, disappointing that the ray of hope cast by the British when they entered Ulster has dimmed and their presence no longer

bodes well for peace; is indeed even adding to the tension. The fact is that the slaughter in Northern Ireland has climbed to 600.

It has become obvious that the intervention of British troops has not ended the violence and in all likelihood will not. Either Britain must see to it that a representative government is established or it must remove its troops and let someone else try — perhaps the United Nations.

Difficult as this problem is, it is only an acorn beside the oak tree of the dilemma of how to erase the prejudice and bigotry that led to the bloodshed in the first place.