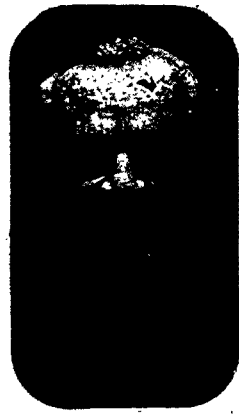


# A Thousand Days — A Million Thanks

I pen these words on Thanksgiving Eve — a thousand days after the 'yes' to the Lord's invitation to be your bishop. On this third anniversary of my ordination my heart is filled with gratitude for blessings unmerited and beyond human calculation.



The days of the reality of serious responsibility have not dimmed the joy that I experienced on that day of celebration. No memory of any subsequent days would prompt me to begin a litany of woes. For a man who believes in the Holy Spirit is blessed with a capacity for prayerful thanksgiving to Him Who alone is our way to say 'thank you' for everything and everyone.

From the depths of my being I repeat today what I said three years ago without retraction or alteration of a single word. This was and is my expression of faith and hope in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the willingness of my people to share my responsibilities. I repeat it on this anniversary with thanks to Him and to you who give me strength each day:

"Warmed by the fire of this new Pentacost of my life and renewed in every fibre of my being by the Holy Spirit, I joyously accept the office of Shepherd of my flock—assured by Him Who alone has replied to my admission of human inadequacy with the consoling words: 'Do not be afraid.'

"Rather, then, than being dismayed by the turbulence of our era, I rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit offered to me today with the same love with which He confirmed the first Bishops and the Infant Church on the first Pentecost. The history of the Church assures us of equally vehement turbulence in the past. St. Paul testifies to internal dissensions which harassed the early Christian communities; the Acts of the Apostles report serious strife and conflict in the infant Church. At other times, long years of darkness have obscured her destiny as the Light of Nations; schism and irresponsible leadership have brought moments of joy to the prophets of doom.

"The Church will continue to suffer this tension of vitality in every age. For, while holy in its divine dimensions and doctrine, it will remain throughout its pilgrimage to the Heavenly Jerusalem a body of sinful men ever tempted to alienation from God and ever in need of renewal in Christ. The pain of this hour will be the prelude to renewed life only if we accept it with faith, courage and love. We all need to be reminded that Discipleship in Christ is even now a Cross and moments on Calvary are the price we must pay for the Risen Christ.

"The days in which we live call immediately to mind a story told in the eighth chapter (22-25) of St. Luke's Gospel. Jesus and His disciples have begun to cross Lake Genesareth when a severe storm comes up on the sea. The disciples consider themselves in great danger and some even shout, 'We are going down.' These were

men who for the most part were sailors by profession and well-acquainted with the real perils they faced. They were not alarmists by any means. Yet the carpenter of Nazareth lay asleep in the stern. And when He awakes it is only to issue a rebuke: 'Where is your faith?' The storms of our times pose real dangers too. To many it seems as though the bark of Peter is going to sink in the sea of controversy and doubt. To many the task of the bishop and the priest and the Christian of today is an impossible one. Indeed it would be, were it to depend on human strength and ingenuity. But the word of Christ is ringing out to us just as clearly as it did to the Apostles, 'Where is your faith?'

"Therefore, on this solemn occasion of my ordination to the fullness of the priesthood and my installation as seventh bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, I must say before all else with the Apostles, 'Increase our faith,' (Lk. 17/5), or with the father of the demoniac, 'I do believe; help my unbelief.' (Mark 9/23). It is only on this foundation that God gives the increase — that any man could say 'yes' to the task which lies before me."

For the days to come may all of you continue to join me in this prayer:

Hallowed by Thy name, not mine  
Thy Kingdom come, not mine  
Thy will be done, not mine.  
Give us peace with Thee  
Peace with men  
Peace with ourselves  
And free us from all fear.

By Carmen Viglucci

## The Slot Man

# Hurrah for Volunteers!

Hurrah for volunteers! Father Peter Bayer, director of the Human Development Office flood recovery efforts in the Corning area, reports that unpaid workers have put in some 575,000 hours. This would cost, figuring \$2 an hour for unskilled workers (155,000 hours) and \$6 an hour for skilled workers (420,000 hours), more than \$2.8 million.



We at the Courier feel that Barbara Moynihan's story on the Monastery of Mary the Queen (Nov. 22 edition) was out of the ordinary — not only for the rarity of having a lay journalist stay overnight in the monastery but because it reveals the essential piety of the Sisters who live cloistered there.

Incidentally, it is always nice to hear

from Sister Mary Margaret, the monastery's sub-prioress. She always sends along samples of the work done at the monastery print shop and they are indeed well done.

I've been receiving so many holy cards in the mail that I've decided to start a collection. Anyone wishing to give it a push is invited to send holy cards to me at the Courier-Journal.

Blind answers to some letters:

Don't be critical of well-dressed people who stick a dollar into the collection. First you can't tell a person is well-off by their clothes. Second, be grateful they are in Church at all, much less contributing. Third, why are you gawking at what people are giving, anyway?

To the lady who launched a campaign against Bill Cosby for not knowing about Catholics: Write to his wife. She's one.

To the lady who objected to the use of such words as "abortion" and terms relating to pregnancy not only in sermons but even "in a front page article" in the Courier-Journal:

Trying to keep such words out of children's vocabularies is not only silly but possibly detrimental. In the case of abortion, we all should have been talking about it long before it suddenly became so permissible. Hopefully, our schools will begin including classes on this subject so that future Catholics will be more aware of its implications.

To the lady who wants to know how long are these "campaigns for human development going to continue" and "how many of these referred (sic) circles of poverty are necessary?":

Poverty will last as long as people play ostrich games. And remember there are more kinds of poverty than mere lack of goods.

## Editorial

# Shall We Keep Tinsel in Christmas?

U.S. Catholic, in its feature "Sounding Board," has added fuel to the annual verbal conflagrations over the commercialization of Christmas.

Entitled "Let's Keep the Tinsel in Christmas," a feature article, written by Richard Frisbie, claims that the "put Christ back into Christmas" movement wasted its time.

The magazine sent the article and a pre-publication survey to some of its readers to form the basis of a "Feedback" article published along with Frisbie's viewpoints in the December issue.

Well, sir, 76 per cent of those surveyed disagreed that the Christ in Christmas movement was unproductive. This could be expected, but some of the other sur-

vey findings were more interesting.

For instance, 57 per cent of those asked said they never send Christmas cards to people just because they receive cards from them. Not an overwhelming majority.

And only 51 per cent said they would put up Christmas lights around their homes even if no one else in town did so.

A statement in the survey said "the noise and busyness of Christmas make it easy for us to forget the poor and lonely." A stout 61 per cent disagree, and past records of the Courier-Journal Christmas Fund attest the same view.

Drawing the strongest reaction was the survey claim that "if it weren't for the merchants, Christmas would have

disappeared long ago." Only 5 per cent agreed; 87 per cent disagreed.

We agree with the U.S. Catholic reader who felt that the article was written tongue in cheek. Another surveyed apparently felt the same way and answered in a like vein, "A little bit of paganism brings out the best in all of us."

So, welcome back, holiday season. Let's sharpen up our arguments over the relative merits of sending Christmas cards, holding office parties, giving gifts, etc. Such diversion has almost become a familiar Christmas song and has become a part of the season. Nothing wrong with that, as long as we don't forget that Dec. 25 is the day we note Christ's birth and that we reflect on His life. Of course, no mature Catholic will forget that.