

**Pastoral Perspective****Canandaigua — Catechumens, Comfort, Chrism**

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

I have chosen the Chrism Mass of next Tuesday evening as a special moment of renewal for the entire diocese. What had been hidden in the obscurity of a lengthy, formal and formidable liturgy of a solemn blessing of the oils which were always meant to be a sign of joy and consolation and of saving grace to our people will now, hopefully, be a proclamation of the unity and charity of God's people in the Diocese of Rochester.

St. Mary's of Canandaigua will be the scene of a convocation of priests, religious and laity who will gather in the temporary Cathedral of Rochester to give witness to the unity and fraternity of our priesthood, to the initial steps of young men who will publicly proclaim their desire to serve God's people forever, and to the common desire of those who will be joined together with one mind and heart in collective service for the promotion of His Kingdom.

Hopefully, the directors of liturgical committees throughout the diocese will sense the responsibility of their mission as they carry home to their regions the saving oils of salvation for those who will enter the Kingdom for the first time through Baptism, for those who will seek to be Confirmed in faith, for those who will need the strength for the final steps of the pilgrimage, and for those who are called to the responsibility of ordained leadership in His Kingdom.

The significance of the blessings of the oils is summed up in the final benediction of the Chrism which takes its name from the Christ, the anointed of the Father, in Whose name we all live and have our being. The prayer of blessing is a perfect expression of our hope for renewal.

"May this mixture of oil and perfume become for us a sign and source of Your blessing. Send the gifts of your Holy Spirit on our brothers and sisters who are anointed with this oil. Let the splendor of holiness shine on the world through every place and every thing that has been signed with this oil. Most of all, Father, through the mystery of this oil, make your Church strong in faith, hope, and love. May it grow until it reaches the fullness of life to which you are calling it: until all things reach fulfillment in You, Christ, our light and our life, for ever and ever. Amen."

Let me explain to you the symbolism of oil as a sign of, and as a challenge to, our personal renewal. During our Lord's days on earth, the olive plant from which oil is pressed was equated with every facet of life essential to human growth. The cultivated fruit adorned the table of the rich and the fruit of its wild plants provided daily sustenance for the poor. In other words, it was a blessing to all of God's people. Olive oil anointed kings and priests and prophets. It served to heal the wounds of the afflicted and it lighted and heated homes to dispel the darkness and cold which have always threatened human security.

The Church, following the example of Christ, chose this basic support of life to convey promises of life and light without

end. The oil which I will bless Tuesday evening is intended to touch the lives of rich and poor, healthy and sick, and of all without exception, to give warmth and security to our common pilgrimage. We celebrate the fact that the blessing is the Lord's gift, without distinction of persons, by inviting all without exception to the ceremony.

While the blessing of each oil (the Oil of Catechumens, of the sick, and Chrism) has a special significance, there is one common symbolism and message, and it is this:

All of us are called to one unifying mission, i.e. to serve the Church which is the living presence of Christ in the world: We, therefore, are all challenged to respond to three basic questions:

How willingly have we accepted our Christian vocation?

How well have we used the Lord's gifts?

How much have we relied on His strength?

Time, patience and the willingness to be bruised are the ingredients which brought the olive plant to productivity. The same ingredients are essential for us if we are to become for each other the oil of gladness which heals man's wounds, the food which nourishes our brother, with the words of eternal life, and the light which enlightens his path to the Father.

May our lives always be the Chrism of light, warmth and strength which our world of darkness, cold, and infirmity so desperately needs.

**vatican news****Pope Condemns Communist Repression of Church**

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul VI has reminded the world that there still is a part of the Church which he said "lives under the shadow of fear in suffocating and paralyzing obscurity."

"Pray for this suffering community," the pontiff told thousands of people gathered in

St. Peter's Square to hear his regular Sunday noon message.

In an obvious reference to members of the Catholic and other Churches in Communist nations today, the Pontiff said:

"Remember those who are not permitted the free practice of religion."

"There is still a Church whose existence is restricted and lives — or, rather, survives — under the shadow of fear, in suffocating and paralyzing obscurity."

Without naming the countries involved, the Pope described the Church in such areas as the "Silent Church, a Church of patience and agony, lacking

legitimate freedom of profession and expression."

The Pope called on those in the Silent Church to remain faithful and somehow carry on.

The papal mention of religious liberty came in the wake of a Vatican Radio criticism of Communist Albania's treatment of the Church, its clergymen and its faithful there.

Vatican Radio's network conceded in a special program that the rulers of Albania have made tragically big strides in their drive to eliminate the Church from that Communist country.

In an unusually hard-hitting commentary, Vatican Radio said the atheist leadership of the country has managed to bring about "the total elimination of the Roman Catholic hierarchy" there.

The network program, beamed to Albania as well as to other Communist and non-Communist nations throughout the world, noted that in 1967 the Balkan country had proclaimed itself as "the first atheist state in the world."

Under the title "Hope to the Bitter End," the broadcast disclosed that only a few Catholic priests are left in Albania.

"The Church in Albania," said the Vatican report, "is a portion of the Church of Christ to which is reserved the silence of the tomb."

The radio and the papal criticism of Communist anti-Church activities comes at a ticklish time when the Vatican has been making new, significant, break-throughs in relations with such Communist governments as those in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland.

**Pontiff's Holy Week Plans****No Concessions to His Age**

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul apparently intends to make no concessions to his advancing years in the schedule of formal activities he will follow during Holy Week.

The 75-year-old spiritual leader of the world's more than 630 million Catholics plans to follow the same gruelling Easter Week schedule he set for himself 10 years ago during his first year as Pope.

The Pontiff's health is reported to be good for a man his age, but in a recent public appearance at the unveiling of Michelangelo's restored Pietà, he looked weary.

During that brief ceremony, the Pope's eyes appeared tired and his face was wan. His once spry step had become almost a shuffle and his voice was more than usually hoarse and even weak when he spoke.

"I think the Holy Father looks about average for a man who will be 76 in a few months," commented one close associate. "But I must say that he does look every bit of his years now."

"Up to just recently, he looked to me most times to be much younger than his years. Suddenly, now he looks to be more what he is — a man of three quarters of a century in age."

**CARDINAL DIES**

Bourges, France [RNS] — Cardinal Joseph Lefebvre, former Archbishop of Bourges, died here April 2. He was 81 years old. His death reduces the Sacred College of Cardinals to 142. Both as a bishop and as a cardinal, the prelate was famed throughout France as an outspoken advocate of social justice for the nation's workers.

The papal week will open on Palm Sunday, April 15, with his blessing of the olive branches during a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, commemorating Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

The Pope's next public appearance will be on Holy Thursday, April 20, when he will preside over a liturgical rite in the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

across the city of Rome from his Vatican apartment.

On the next day, Good Friday, he will preside over ceremonies in St. Peter's Basilica and in the evening lead a procession along the Way of the Cross among the ruins of the ancient pagan temples near the Colosseum.

Every year the present pontiff has led this traditional outdoor procession, it has rained, all or part of the time. On numerous Good Fridays the Pope stood in downpours, rain dripping off his bare head as he recited prayers and preached a sermon.

On Holy Saturday, the Pope will celebrate the rites of the "Holy Fire" and offer a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica in the evening.

On Easter morning, the Christian anniversary of the day Christ arose from the dead, the Pope will offer a private Mass in his chapel in the early morning.

He will then celebrate a solemn High Mass at a special altar set up outside the Basilica, followed by his Easter Sunday address to the people of Rome and the world.

**'Peronist' Sees Pope**

Vatican City [RNS] — President-elect Hector Campora of Argentina met in private audience with Pope Paul in what he termed the "role of an Argentine citizen and as a future ruler."

Vatican officials pictured the meeting strictly as a private family audience for the Campora family.

The newly-elected president, who was hand-picked by former dictator Juan Peron, said Pope Paul inquired about the economic and other situations in Argentina.

He said the pontiff was particularly interested in the living conditions of the Argentine people and that the Pope had

promised to pray for peaceful development of the nation. The Vatican said nothing.

Mr. Campora did not accompany Mr. Peron to the Vatican; instead, he remained in his Rome hotel. The former dictator who had been living in exile in Spain for the last 16 years, has been in Rome for several days for meetings with the president-elect.

Mr. Peron passed through Rome some months ago en route to Argentina. He asked, at the time, for an audience with the pontiff but his request was turned down. The Vatican, it was said, felt it would be placing its election campaign if received the former dic-