

**Pastoral Perspective**

**Holy Spirit's Gifts: Discoveries in Discipleship**

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

**PIETY**

[The third in a series of eight meditations for the Resurrection-Pentecost season.]

Last week our reflections centered on Reverence for the Lord, more commonly known as Fear of the Lord. Such "fear," biblically speaking, as we pointed out, marks "the beginning of wisdom," effects an uplifting of the heart, and, from the standpoint of discipleship, calls for a commitment to self-donation, self-realization, and self-consecration. This week our thoughts turn to the gift of Piety.



Dictionary-makers chart the downtrend of piety when they define it as: self-conscious devotion, bogus devoutness, solemn hypocrisy. Obviously, piety as a word has become a catchall: from true devotion to rank insincerity. Like Humpty Dumpty, the quality of piety has had a great fall!

At one time piety was considered a prime value, characterized by **fidelity, reliability, integrity.** In its natural sense it related to those responsibilities which linked parents and children in closely knit family ties. Piety addressed what parents should expect from their children, and how children should respond to parents. Thus Aeneas, the founder of Rome, carrying his blind father from burning Troy, is called "the pious one par excellence." The mother pelican, giving her lifeblood to feed her starving fledglings, is described as being "in her piety." Old Testament Tobit is glowingly praised as a pious man because of his many deeds of concern for his brothers and countrymen in a foreign land. Abraham becomes the father of all believers because his fidelity (piety) to God's promise never wavers. In a word, piety is truly a refined "noblesse oblige," a graceful "for otherness."

As the Spirit's gift, piety builds authentic community: between father and son, between brother and brother. Thus Piety is the root principle which shapes and strengthens the family of God. Piety is response to the divine grace that has called us to be, and indeed made us adoptive sons of God.

St. Paul writes: "the spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves, bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of sons, and it makes us cry out, 'Abba, Father!'" (Romans 8:15). John exclaims: "Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are." (1 John 3:1).

Piety leads us prodigals to the open arms of a Father's forgiving love, and thus leads us to fraternity with all men. It is this effect of the Spirit which calls for a breakdown of all divisions between ourselves and God, between ourselves and other men, so that the unifying fatherly love of the Lord God, the unbounded love of Christ Jesus can bring about oneness. If God is our Father, piety reasons, then all men are our brothers.

But beyond its unitive power, Piety is also to be seen as an internal power which makes us savor the things of God. The gift of Piety creates in us an inclination towards, and a deep appreciation for the realities above our sense-bound world. Piety is ultimately meant to create a **taste for the Lord.** In the words of the Psalmist: "Taste and see how sweet is the Lord!" (Psalm 33:9).

To what discoveries in discipleship does Piety lead?

By the gift of Piety the Spirit calls upon us to realize **who we are, whose we are, and what we should be about.**

**Who we are,** can be succinctly stated. We are a community based on faith-fulness, a fidelity to God, to one another, and to the covenant that binds us together. We are sons of the Father, brothers to the Word-in-the-flesh, disciples in the school of the Spirit.

Even before Piety tells us what **to do,** it tells us what we are **to be:** a holy people (see 1 Peter 1:15, 2:9). Piety reminds us that man is more than what he does, for what he does is spiritually a minimum of what he is. We are, then, the People of the Good News. In our discipleship to the Spirit, we are witnesses to the divine compassion calling us from sinfulness. We are beneficiaries of His love, receiving it and offering it in turn to others.

**Whose we are,** is ratified by recognizing our moral strength, our spiritual origins, our ultimate concern. Our relish for the things of God must find expression in our concern for the needs of others, our desire **to become** ever more effectively what **we are** — in a word, by the fruits of our **reliability and loyalty.** We are what we do, we do according to whose we are. If we are not effective signs of God's power in our lives, our Christian vocation is not proving to be authentic.

**What we are about,** is evidenced primarily by our **integrity.** Piety relates to how we integrate the fullness of Gospel values. Piety gives meaning and movement to our sense of mission. Piety is concerned about how deeply God's word has penetrated our lives, and transformed our actions and our motivations. The theological dynamism of faith, hope and charity is assisted by a deep-rooted piety, and in turn all three virtues give heightened meaning to this gift of the Spirit.

To sum up, Piety is the **fidelity** which enables us to believe in, pray and live out the Lord's Prayer. Piety is the **reliability** that urges us to shape our actions and attitudes by the thoroughly Christian values found in the prayer Jesus Himself taught us. Piety is the **integrity** that urges us on to achieve the wholeness that is holiness, because only the inner prompting of the Spirit can show us the deeds of holiness and the holiness of deeds. In short, Piety transforms us into a People that lives and loves a way of life so admirably summed up in the most beautiful prayer ever prayed: "Our Father, who are in heaven . . ."

**vatican news**

**Pontiff, Patriarch Embrace, 15 Centuries of Separation Believed Coming to End**

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul VI and His Holiness Amba Shenouda III, Coptic Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt, embraced in St. Peter's Basilica before a High Mass marking the 1,600th anniversary of the death of St. Athanasius, church Father and Bishop of Alexandria from 328-373.

Coptic Orthodox Church, Patriarch Shenouda remarked:

"As for our differences, we are undoubtedly much closer to agreement than our ancestors in the fifth and sixth centuries."

"Relations between us," he pointed out, "have become friendly, stronger, and more expansive in this generation."

In turn, Pope Paul agreed that "God has truly called us to great

things, and wishes us to give the world the evidence of His grace of reconciliation and peace."

The pontiff also emphasized "the points of doctrine" which the two Churches "have in common," while alluding to "what still had to be done to overcome centuries-old misunderstandings" that divide the Churches.

"We share with your Holiness," said the Pope, "the desire to take advantage of the favorable time God has granted us, knowing full well that there are still obstacles

of a theological, psychological, and institutional order to be overcome."

"While not denying the existence of these obstacles, we refuse to be frightened by them. We shall strive in Christ to overcome them, so that once more our Churches may bear a common witness to the world which has such a profound need of Christ."

Pope Paul gave Patriarch Shenouda among other gifts what is believed to be one of the fingers of St. Athanasius, who is revered by both Churches.

**Uganda Ambassador Quits in Protest**

London [RNS] — Uganda's Ambassador to the Vatican, Prince John Patrick Barigye, said here he had submitted his resignation to President Idi Amin because of the "tyranny and oppression that exists in Uganda."

In an interview, the 33-year-old son of the King of Ankole and a professional diplomat, said he will go into voluntary exile "somewhere in Africa" rather than accept Gen. Amin's recall of all his ambassadors.

Uganda has been without a cabinet since "Big Daddy" Amin sent his ministers on a 60-day forced leave, after two of them had resigned, including his brother-in-law Wanume Kibedi, the former Foreign Minister who is now in voluntary exile in Somalia.

Prince Barigye, who is also Uganda's Ambassador to West

Germany, quoted from the letter of resignation he had sent to Gen. Amin, indicating what he called a continuing "reign of terror."

"The reign of terror that has been established in our beloved country has shocked the conscience of all men of good will throughout the world."

"While innocent people continue to be brutally and savagely eliminated, your regime has failed to bring to justice the perpetrators of these crimes."

"Indeed, eyewitness reports and circumstantial evidence tend to implicate you and your henchmen in these barbarous acts, which show complete disregard and contempt for human life."

One of Prince Barigye's brothers, Patrick Ruhinda, a lawyer, was murdered in Uganda last December.



The gesture was symbolic of a mutual desire to heal 15 centuries of separation between the Church of Rome and the Coptic Orthodox Church.

The spiritual leader of the world's 22 million Coptic Christians sat by the Roman Pontiff during a two-hour service and joined the Pope in blessing the congregation.

In an address, Patriarch Shenouda said that God had arranged the meeting between the Pope and himself "so that we may step forward in strengthening relations between our two Churches."

"We have the responsibility," he went on, "to work for unity not only between ourselves but also among all Christians the world over."

Stressing that there are "many points of agreement" between the Church of Rome and the