

Pastoral Perspective

A Profile of the Church in Rochester

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

OUR UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

(This is the first in a series of four articles based on the work of the committee that prepared materials for the original draft of the study paper, 'The Mission of the Church of Rochester.' With the permission of the committee, the bishop has revised and edited the material and added his personal reflections.)

Bishop Maurice Dingman of the Diocese of Des Moines, Iowa, visited Rochester this past June to conduct our annual retreat for priests. To prepare to introduce the bishop to the priests before the opening conference, I spent some time in reading the statistical information about his diocese as recorded in the pages of the Catholic Directory. I was struck by the motto on the bishop's seal and wondered about its precise meaning. The motto reads: "Ecclesia

Agricultura." My first impression was that here was perhaps a farm boy who expected to spend his entire life amid amber waves of grain. I wondered what would happen to the validity of his coat of arms were he transplanted to the asphalt jungle of a metropolitan area? I had met Bishop Dingman before only for a few fleeting moments at our annual Fall Conferences in Washington and was impressed by his simplicity and his pastoral bearing. His presence among us proved to be a blessing to us of the Sinus Belt who, in a few short days developed an affinity for the Corn Belt of Iowa. I soon learned that the motto of the bishop could be applied to every portion of the Lord's earth, as he offered this translation: "The Church is a field to be cultivated."

Each diocese or portion of the Lord's earth offers a unique challenge to its bishop. While the acreage of Des Moines differs in composition from the soil of Rochester, the Master of the Harvest offers each of us the

same challenge — to till the soil to responsiveness to His planting.

In this and the following three columns, I want to tell you about the soil of Rochester and its unique qualities which challenge our talents for productivity. Renewal is the process of cultivation.

The twelve-county area which is the Church of Rochester, New York, has been blessed with singular opportunities for carrying out the mission of the Gospel.

Not the least of the strengths of the Church of "Rochester-in-America" (so named in the apostolic letter of official installment dated March 3, 1868) is the extent and diversity of its physical territory. Stretching from Lake Ontario on the north to the Pennsylvania border on the south, the Church covers 12 of the 62 counties of New York State — a total of 7,455 square miles. Accessibility, determined by topography and gradual industrial development, has given rise to three major areas of population distribution, the Northwest Sector, the Northeast Section, and the Southern Tier, with the greatest density occurring in the Rochester metropolitan sprawl. If not consciously resisted, here is an inherent temptation to believe, first, "All Rochester is divided into three parts," and second, "the Diocese ends at the Barge Canal." While such regional configurations are desirable and even needed, over-all unity must not be compromised in the process. In an organic structure, affirmation of the part is never at the expense of the whole (cf. Rm 12:4). Outreach to and support of the intervening areas will always be a test of our willingness to think beyond parochial and regional limits. Hence, the present concept of ten regions to remedy parochial myopia and to promote mutual aid and cooperation.

The physical features, ranging from the Great Lakes counties of the north through the inland, rural and Finger Lakes areas to the Allegheny foothill counties of the Southern Tier, highlight notable variations, especially in economic, educational, industrial, and cultural resources.

To cite some examples: the major in-

dustrial complexes of Monroe County create an economy quite different from the smaller industries of Cayuga or Chemung, while the tourist attractions of Schuyler and Ontario present a situation rather distinct from the potato-growing or fruit-picking of Steuben and Wayne, respectively.

By the same token, the educational institutions in the Rochester area (e.g., major private university, several four-year colleges, community and technical colleges, medical school, theological consortium) offer the broadest spectrum of academic options, a fact which does not preclude the valuable, if less extensive, academic resources elsewhere in the diocese. In Rochester and out, such academic institutions, in direct proportion to their community orientation, tend to enrich the cultural life and channel professional services into the broader community. Such factors not only shape the climate of a given area, but also bring specific advantages and responsibilities, thereby calling for special types of ministry by the Church as well as to the Church.

Perhaps most fundamental of all is the economic variance that obtains across the diocese. Being the basic fact of everyday life it is, economics places in sharpest focus the most glaring divergencies between parish and parish, county and county, area and area. The inner-city parish gasps for survival, while the suburban parish may worry about landscaping or air-conditioning. The big city parish caters to its white- and blue-collar fair-sharers, while the rural parish with its outlying missions strains the physical resources of its priest and the financial limitations of its people.

To believe all parishes are identical is to be blind to reality. To deny needy parishes the right to resources from other better situated parishes is to play games with Christian love, to reject a form of concern as old as Christianity itself. One of Paul's most effective ministries was to organize in the churches of Macedonia, Achaia and Antioch of Syria, a collection for the impoverished Christians of Jerusalem (1 Co 16:1ff, 2 Co 8:9; Rm 15:26-28; Ga 2:10; Ac 11:30, 28:17).

[To Be Continued]

Prelate Outlines U.S. Church World Role

Fort Wayne, Ind. [RNS] — Rich nations have an obligation toward poor nations that is "a duty of justice, not a work of charity," the general secretary of the U. S. Catholic Bishops Conference declared here last week.

Bishop James S. Rausch said this position was "rooted in the

Pope Defends Mission Work In Mozambique

Castelgandolfo [RNS] — Pope Paul VI declared here that no one can accuse Catholic missionaries, "and behind them, the Church," of "spilling blood or favoring the oppression of people."

"No one," he said, "can accuse Catholic missionaries of using power" to defend their right to preach the Gospel, "and no one can accuse them of not having deplored crimes against unarmed populations."

The pontiff spoke to hundreds of tourists and pilgrims from the balcony of his Summer residence at noon on July 22.

His remarks were seen by Vatican observers as referring to alleged atrocities by Portugal against segments of the black population in its African territory of Mozambique. Charges that some 400 black Africans in Mozambique's Tete Province were massacred by Portuguese troops last December have been made by missionary priests.

fundamental perspective of Catholic teaching on international morality, the affirmation of the solidarity which binds all men into one human family, and the assertion that the goods of the earth are destined for the benefit of all."

Bishop Rausch, who also heads the U.S. Catholic Conference in Washington, D.C., addressed a general chapter of the Crosier Fathers.

U.S. Catholics, he said, must become a community "properly informed by a teaching Church, motivated by the preaching and worshipping church and mobilized as members of the servant Church."

Such a community, he continued, "could provide the critical margin of difference in the American body-politic — the margin between forgetting the developing nations by insulating our consciences and isolating our affluence, or following the drastically different course of fostering their development by a program of extensive cooperation on aid, trade and technical assistance."

The prelate of the Church in the social order is to keep alive "the human dimension of issues." He added that today the human plight of the developing nations is in danger of becoming a "forgotten factor of international affairs."

In addition to aid and trade, areas specifically cited by Pope Paul as requiring the attention of the developed nations, Bishop

Rausch included the forthcoming United Nations Population Year as an area where "Catholics should be visible, audible and intelligent participants."

"We should commit out time, talent and energy with other men of good will to the conception and implementation of a just global population policy, which sees population as one element of a total development policy, aimed at increasing the living standards of people through programs of social justice and protecting the personal rights and interests of individuals on the level of political justice," he said.

"The Church cannot simply be one more institution following a dominant trend. The American Church should take as a priority item the task of informing, mobilizing and motivating its own constituency and other men of good will regarding the plight of the developing world and the U.S. relationship to this question."

Describing his theme of "Justice in the World" as "perhaps the predominant ethical issue facing the Christian conscience," Bishop Rausch noted that the declaration issued by the 1971 World Synod of Catholic bishops in Rome pointed out that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel."

"The synodical statement means that, in a very real sense, it is no less important for the

Church to be doing the work of social justice every day that it is for us to provide for the celebration of the Eucharist or to preach the Gospel," the prelate said.

The challenge thus confronting American Catholics, he noted, is particularly significant because of this nation's "posture and position in the world."

"To be the American Church," he observed, "standing in the face of present inequities of international economies — often brought about by the politics of our nation — and bound in conscience by Catholic teaching of the rights of every man and woman to the conditions for decent human development, is to face an awesome challenge."

He said the Church's specific task is to help make the nation aware of a "significant human

problem" and evoke from it "A self-sacrificial response."

"This is how the Church, universal or national, relates to the development question: not through technical expertise or massive financial resources but through its capacity to shape a community with a conscience."

DROUGHT AID

Valley Forge, Pa. [RNS] — The World Relief Commission of the National Association of Evangelicals announced a fund-raising drive here to aid the victims of drought and famine in six African nations. The proceeds will also assist the impoverished, hungry people of north-east India. According to the agency, the situation is "urgent" in areas of India and in the African countries of Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger and Chad.

Pontiff Splits German Church

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul VI has named three East German bishops as "Apostolic Administrators" in church districts in East Germany that had been nominally under the jurisdiction of the West German Catholic Church.

The move severs jurisdictional ties between these East German districts and the West German Church.

The papal action, announced by the Vatican's press office, was seen as part of Pope Paul's effort for Vatican detente with East European Communist regimes.

In accord with the papal ap-

pointments, Bishop Hugo Aufderbach, who is auxiliary bishop and vicar general of the Diocese of Fulda, becomes administrator of Erfurt and Meiningen; Bishop Heinrich Theissing, of Schwerin, and Bishop Johannes C. Braun, of Magdeburg. Hitherto, the three prelates had operated as "commissioners" of the West German hierarchy in the districts. As Apostolic Administrators, they become jurisdictionally independent of West German bishops and directly answerable to the Holy See.

According to the Vatican, Catholics in the three areas total 722,000.