

**Pastoral Perspective**

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

**A Profile of the Church of Rochester**

PART II

**Unity Amidst Diversity**

**THE ETHNIC CHALLENGE**

Next to economic differences, perhaps no other diversity in our ecclesial experience has caused such agony and anxiety as ethnic prejudice. Inflexibility in national and ethnic loyalties is a sure invitation to divisiveness. Our annals, mainly from the periods of immigration, painfully testify that both clergymen and congregations were not always able, indeed at times did not care to rise above ethnic and national particularism. In fact, across the United States in the Nineteenth Century alone, some 16,000,000 Catholics were lost to the institutional Church because of such narrow loyalties.

A similar narrowness of outlook now and again surfaces in our times, for the most part in a racial frame of reference. It is our eternal Christian shame if, ignoring history's verdict, ethnic and racial prejudice hampers a priest in his ministry to minority groups; if a parish is not Christian enough to open its arms to persons of different color, culture and economic condition; if we, priest and people, perpetuate the myth that Christ's blood was not all poured out for all men. If the mission of Christ was reconciliation, on what grounds can we claim to be Christian if we fail to bind the wounds inflicted by false loyalties?

Therefore, as the Body of Christ in the Church of Rochester, we cannot but invite all ethnic groups to expect and experience peace, equality and even cordiality in any and all of our parishes. Gratitude is due God for our opportunities to be of service to all

ethnic groups, of whatever generation, in our midst: French, Irish, Polish, Italians, Germans, Afro-Americans, Belgians, Puerto Ricans, Hollanders, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Asiatics. There is no reason to doubt that the future will confirm the experience of the past, namely, that the Church of Rochester enjoyed its finest hour when it unequivocally accepted the wisdom of Paul's insight: "There is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised or the uncircumcised, or between barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man." (Col 3:11).

**CONTRASTS IN LIFE-SETTINGS**

The people of our diocese live in surroundings that vary sharply. The basic events of human life are always the same. Babies are born and grow. Children run and play and slowly learn to assume the responsibilities for their own lives. Young men and women work at the endeavors that form our society. All fall in love and some will marry and create their own style of family living. We work, suffer and rejoice, pray and help one another. All will grow old with some hard-won wisdom and grace.

Thus, the events of human life may be similar, but the setting in which these events take place are sharply divergent. Some families live in shacks in Wayne County heated by kerosene space heaters. Others enjoy a life of stately elegance. For some, the yard is a street and the playground a lot littered with rubble. Others play Little League baseball on carefully marked fields. Housing is old and dilapidated for some rural families. It is new and heavily mortgaged for suburbanites. These surroundings deeply affect the spirit of the people who live there for better or for worse.

The house that a child lives in can provide a sense of warm security, be conducive to health, and be remembered forever. It can also be a place where paint

chips and wallpaper peels, heat comes only in bed at night and rats are a fearful reality. A neighborhood can be a place for leisurely socializing for older people or a land of terror which isolates. The country for some is a good place to raise children, while for others it is one of terrible isolation from doctors and other needed services. As Christians we cannot afford to let those who are oppressed and dying because of the setting of their lives remain invisible. We are called to be liberators and healers.

To one who has some familiarity with the history of the Church of Rochester, one of its most impressive manifestations has been a long and varied commitment to charitable causes. This memorable record should not be allowed to fade into insignificance. Such initiative and organization as gave rise to these effective programs, were impossible without a sensitivity to felt needs, a genuine spirit of sacrifice, an ability to lay hold of available opportunities.

While the customary stance today is to decry the aimlessness of our society, the man of faith must look for the divine purpose enmeshed in all of these complexities. The pattern of meaning must not be lost amid the fragments of reality. As in the past, so today, the Church of Rochester will regard it as its highest task to look for all and every opportunity for all persons to become more fully human, to seize occasions in which the free enterprise system will truly be effective, to create opportunities where none exist for those who, entrapped by the various oppressions of contemporary bureaucracy, arrogance or apathy, die many deaths before they breathe their last. Divergent opportunities face us in the Church of Rochester. Let our response to those opportunities be as divergently creative as we please, if only the outcome speaks clearly: "We have had our chance, we have done good to all" (Cf. Gal. 6:10).

[To Be Continued]

**Behind the Famine**

**Drought-Hit Countries Share Political History**

The six northwest African nations caught in drought and famine are all former French colonies that gained independence around 1960.

Each is poor. Per capita income in the best of conditions is below any poverty line. Life expectancy is low. Most governments are relatively weak.

Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger and Chad stretch across two-thirds of Africa just under the tier of nations that touch the Mediterranean Sea. Senegal and Mauritania have Atlantic shorelines. The others are landlocked.

Questions have been raised as to why the governments of the six states did not alert the world earlier to the threats of drought and famine. While there is no easy answer, it appears that the rulers did not know the extent of the threat until nomads from the North started moving South in late 1972 and early 1973.

The herdsman tribes of the north follow the nomadic ways they have known for centuries. National boundaries mean little to them, and contact between the agricultural sections of the South and the desert expanses of the north is minimal.

The northern borders of all but Senegal and Upper Volta are far into the Sahara Desert. Much of the population is nomadic. All except Upper Volta, whose people follow tribal religions, are predominantly Muslim.

Ten per cent of Senegal's 4 million people are Christian, and there are smaller Christian communities in the other

countries. Per capita incomes range from \$50 annually in Upper Volta to \$155 in Mauritania. Life expectancy in Upper Volta is 32 years. The figure is 50 years in Mali, 40 in Mauritania, 35 in Chad and 37 in Niger and Senegal.

Numerous black tribes and Arabic groups reside in the region. French is the official language in each of the six nations, although many tribal languages and dialects are spoken.

Total population of the six countries is about 22 million. Upper Volta is the most populous, with 5.4 million people. Mauritania is the smallest, with 1.2 million.

Senegal became the center of French West Africa in the 19th century. Gradually the French influence moved East and North. Chad, furthest West, became a French territory in 1910; Mauritania, the northernmost country became a protectorate in 1903.

In the late 1950s virtually all of the French colonies in Africa became autonomous republics related to the French Community. Around 1960, the six drought-stricken lands gained political independence. The course of their independence has been stormy, with Mauritania, headed by President Moktar Ould Daddah since 1960, experiencing the least "upheaval."

In Chad, President Francois Tombalbaye was elected to a second seven-year term in 1969. He has overcome several attempts to oust him by military

force. A long civil conflict pitted the forces of President Tombalbaye, aided by French troops, against Arab guerrillas in the northern section that is today almost entirely a desert.

Soon after independence, Mali and Senegal joined in the short-lived Mali Federation. Today, Senegal is governed by President Leopold Sedar Senghor, Prime Minister Abdou Diouf and an 80 member National Assembly virtually hand-picked by the President.

President Senghor came to power in 1962 when he ousted the Prime Minister. In the late 1960s austerity measures led to extensive domestic unrest and strikes.

Mali was launched on a Socialist course by President Modibo Keita in 1960. However, military leaders overthrew the Keita government in 1960. Moussa Traore now heads the National Liberation Committee and currently rules by decree.

Since 1960, Niger has been headed by President Hamani Diori. A 50-member National Assembly is made up of representatives of the Nigerian Progressive Party. Rebel activities in the mid-1960s were put down.

Upper Volta's first President was Maurice Yameogo, who was dismissed in 1966 following a coup led by Lieut. Col. Sangoule Lamizana. Military rule continued until 1970 when a new constitution was adopted and, Miye Lamizana was elected President. A 57-member Assembly is chosen by universal suffrage.



**Welcome Relief**

A young Hutu tribe refugee from Burundi drinks deep from a bowl at a refugee camp in Ulyankulu, Tanzania, as a companion watches. Both display swollen bellies — characteristic of children in the advance stages of malnutrition. They are among the estimated 30,000 people who have fled Burundi for neighboring Tanzania to escape the bloody civil war in their country. Last year, determined to uphold a centuries-old feudal rule over 3 million Hutu tribesmen, the Tutsi tribe which controls Burundi, although it has only about 600,000 members, unleashed a violent pogrom in which tens of thousands of Hutus were killed. Thousands more fled across Burundi's borders to Zaire, Rwanda and Tanzania. From there they make periodic raids against the Tutsis, keeping the strife in Burundi alive. [RNS]