

**Pastoral Perspective**

By Joseph L. Hogan

# The Regional Conference

There is no single gathering of leadership in any area of the Diocese so wide-ranging, so in touch with the grass roots, and so full of goodwill as the people who come to the growing number of regional conferences being established around the Diocese. There is a message to be found in this.



When I called for the establishment of ten regions in the diocese, I was very much concerned with breaking down the narrow isolationism that has plagued the Church for so many years. I wanted to see Christian community built across parish lines as well as within the parish.

There are so many areas where cooperation and collaboration are becoming more and more necessary today: our schools, teacher training for CCD, training for liturgy committees, pre-Cana conferences, youth work and high school CCD, adult education (Watson Homestead has had excellent sessions for years through the Southern Tier Christian Formation Board), jail ministry, care for nursing homes, ongoing education for the priests, to mention only the more familiar ones.

What do I mean by a regional conference? It is a representative gathering of all God's people (clergy, sisters, and laity) from

all the parishes and institutions of the region, alive as a community, on fire with the missions of the Church, and sharing the personnel, resources, and ideas of everyone in the region; all this to build the Kingdom of God among our people, and to witness to God's generous love for all his people.

We are a people who live in hope. These are not ideals that can be reached overnight. They will take years to develop. Yet we have the reminder of the poet: "If our vision does not exceed our reach, then what is a heaven for?" Much prayer, many meetings and a lot of hard work stand between us and the achievement of ten living and vibrant regional conferences. But we have begun, and begun fairly well.

In my travels around the Diocese I have been to a number of regional assemblies or convocations. They have been a great personal inspiration as I witness the growth in the vision of the Mission of the Church of Rochester that cooperative efforts have produced.

I could not write an article on regional conferences without bringing up the subject of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. For it is at the diocesan level that we are most visibly Church — a community of communities under one leader. It is at this level that we can most effectively unite to solve common problems and to engage in our common mission to the larger world for which we are to be a sign of the kingdom.

But our effectiveness will depend to a

great extent on the kind of representation that we have on our Council, as well as the type of functional relationship that will exist between the diocesan departments and the Pastoral Council itself.

The Pastoral Council must build on a strong base of regionalism and regional conferences. Without that base we cannot go forward. The same can be said for the regions relative to parish councils. They have an interlocking and dynamic relationship inward and outward to one another.

In going this route, the makeup of the Pastoral Council will take on a membership that will differ from one regional delegation to another because these differences will reflect the actual, rather than the imagined or presumed situations in the regions.

This points to a great task which stands before each region: to become alive enough and sufficiently organized to allow the best leadership of the area to come to the surface, and to develop some means for identifying who the regional delegation will be on the Pastoral Council.

Let no one say that the Church of Rochester is not alive. We have challenges enough for everyone. By our one faith and one baptism we are united, by the Holy Spirit our hearts are enkindled, and by the example and mission of Jesus we know what the Father calls us to be — a united people of God working together to incarnate the Gospel imperatives.

## vatican news

### 'Renewal of Heart' Holy Year Theme

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul has called for an in-depth "renewal of heart" as the overriding goal of individual and collective observance of the 1975 Holy Year.

The renewal envisioned by the Holy Year, he said at his customary Wednesday general audience here (Nov. 7), must not be superficial or surface-level, "but should operate in depth in the innermost part of the human spirit."

Reflecting on the Biblical concept of man's "heart" as the

### Vatican Radio Upholds U.N. Role in Mideast

Vatican City [RNS] — In a call for strengthening the United Nations' peace-keeping role and intervention in the Middle East, Vatican Radio said that if "these modern organizations which are to promote and protect peace" fail in their roles "peace would be defeated and with it the progress of civilization."

Declaring that "peace is a difficult thing, sometimes so arduous as to dismay even the most convinced and generous souls," the broadcast said "this is being proved by what is happening in the Middle East."

"Notwithstanding the bitter events of the past and present," it said, "it is impossible to recognize the irrepressible right of every people to life and independence. It is possible to enact frank and honest treaties. It is possible to unravel the triangle of rancor, the intemperance of hatred, and the differences of race and nations which nourish the fury of war."

very source of his conscious, intelligent, and free personality, the place of his decisive choices, the pontiff observed:

"The heart is the interior well of human psychology, the source of man's thoughts and desires and actions, the source of everything in man that is good and bad.

"The 'eye of God,' as the Bible teaches us, sees everything that is in our heart, the secret hiding place of our moral reality."

Pope Paul stressed the need of having one's heart in tune with one's external behavior, pointing out that Jesus had no "indulgence" for "hypocrisy or pseudo-virtue."

"The Gospel," he said, "is full of the Lord's expressions of intolerance towards a pseudo-observance of religion, separated from inward truth and the sincerity of love."

The pontiff then alluded to what he called "the painful problem of pornography," which he said, posed a threat to the human heart.

"We cannot conceal our sorrowful amazement at the widespread publicity given to those things that contaminate the human spirit — pornography, immoral and licentious exhibitions.

"Where is moral ecology?" he asked rhetorically. "Much is spoken about cleanliness, order and respect for nature — and rightly so — but we have no respect for the greatest treasure that man possesses, his own heart."

The Pope concluded his address with a reiterated plea for a deep-seated "renewal of heart" as a lasting fruit of the Holy Year.



A child is lifted over the crowd to touch Pope Paul's hand during the pontiff's visit to the Roman cemetery of Verano.

### Pope Speaks on Death

Vatican City [RNS] — In a discourse keyed to All Souls' Day, Pope Paul reaffirmed the "Christian certainty" of immortality of the soul, the final resurrection of the body and the duty of all Christians to pray for the dead.

Mentioning his Nov. 2 visit to Verano cemetery in Rome, he said "we made this visit thinking of all the cemeteries which cover the earth. And what is the mother earth if not an immense field which collects the remains

#### 2 APPOINTMENTS

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul has named Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli and Umberto Mozzoni to membership in the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

of bodily and mortal humanity as its final refuge."

He said it reminded him of a July, 1943, visit to the same cemetery after the first World War II bombardment of Rome. "We thought together of all those who had fallen in war and stained the earth with blood."

Asking rhetorically whether the power of death is invincible, he responded: "No, my dear children, for as the Apostle teaches us the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death. For everything is to be put under His (God's) feet."

"The picture of the reality of our existence includes . . . the immortality of the soul and will include at the end our bodily resurrection, in the victory of the Resurrection of Christ."

He said that "on this point faith has a strong and powerful affirmation — we will rise again. Our God is not a God of the dead, but a God of the living."

Urging his listeners to think about death, the Pope said it would be "foolish to evade this sovereign thought. Our life does not end in time. This present life is given us as a function of that future life."

#### SUPPLIES FOR EGYPT

Cairo [RNS] — Cairo Radio, in announcing that "several countries" had sent medical aid to Egypt, said that "a special plane arrived here from Rome, Oct. 31, bringing 900 crates of medical supplies from the Vatican." Other deliveries, the broadcast said, came from Yugoslavia and from Spain.