

**Pastoral Perspective**

**By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan**

# The Family — Center of Learning and Growth

Leadership in the Church today is constantly being challenged to prioritize its goals. With so many requests coming from so many voices speaking with a sense of urgency, it is a worthy challenge that calls for a thoughtful budgeting of time and energies. An observer who did not have available a listing of a leader's priorities could make an accurate judgment of them by noting his calendar of appointments, the issues explored in speeches and writings, and the nods of approval given to groups promoting a particular phase of apostolic work.



I have stated publicly on many occasions that if I had but one choice of priestly ministry offered me I would devote my energies to the apostolate of family life. For I rest with a firm conviction that the family is the first and best school for human growth and is the key building block in the structure of a healthy society. Our Blessed Lord's earthly life seems to confirm this priority. For His distribution of time shows 30 out of 33 years spent doing His Father's will in the quiet of the home at Nazareth. And the value of His judgment on priorities is summed up in one Gospel passage: "And the Child grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and Man." Luke 2:52.

We focus our attention this Sunday on this human development of Jesus as we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family. The celebration began in the 18th Century, we are told, as the result of a judgment made by a Canadian bishop. He was anxious to promote priestly vocations to help him to fulfill the many pastoral needs of his people and he prepared a special liturgy to emphasize the importance of the family in spreading the saving influence of the Church in society. The celebration became a feast of the universal Church in 1921 at the direction of Pope Benedict XV. I believe the feast assumes greater importance today when so many influences have so eroded family life that many are speculating on the very survival of marriage and the family as appreciated in the Christian tradition.

Years of educational experience have served to convince me that the home is our first and best school. The tragedy of broken homes and fractured marriages leaves deep scars on the human personality. The sickness manifests itself even in the infancy of a child who is deprived of the love and affection and security that only good parents can offer as they show love and reverence for each other.

A baby senses this love long years before he understands it. Psychologists can argue over the relative influence of heredity or environment in the growth of a child. But the argument is of little practical value because we inherit of our life. I have yet to see any

educational agency capable of bringing a damaged personality to full health. And I include here even our Catholic schools dedicated to a mission of imparting spiritual values. I have stressed this theme often in my Confirmation homilies. The Holy Spirit offers His gifts to bring the spirit of a child to the fullness of his human potential. But even His work supposes the confirmation which comes from the teaching power of parental example. God's grace builds on, and perfects, natural virtue which is never inherited but is acquired by sacrifice, discipline and parental guidance.

We often speak today of a critical housing shortage. And it is a most valid concern to address ourselves to the degrading living conditions imposed on so many by the inequities of our society. But we have more houses than homes and that is an even more frightening situation. It is this condition that makes family life a matter of prime personal attention.

In fitting celebration of Holy Family Sunday, may parents and children reflect on their respective vocations of promoting a community of love, respect and obedience in which each member can grow in wisdom, age, and grace before God and man. May the Holy Family of Nazareth unite the families of our diocese in the strongest ties of love and affection. Jesus, Mary and Joseph bless our homes!

## Battle Flares over Public Defender Selection

By PAT PETRASKE

The battle to permit community representation in the selection of a county public defender paused last week as the screening committee established Dec. 11 by county legislature president Joseph Ferrari agreed to stop screening applicants for the position and to discuss a proposal made by the Monroe County Bar Association.

After members of the legislature refused to let outsiders become members of the selection

committee, Anthony Palermo, president of the Bar Association, said it wanted the public defender selected "on the basis of non-partisan merit procedures."

Palermo also announced at a press conference that the association's trustees had authorized the president to appoint members to name a non-partisan advisory selection committee "as he deems most appropriate to carry out . . . the merit selection of a new public defender."

Describing this advisory committee as one that is "not rigid," Palermo said it would include members from the various community groups, the judiciary, the bar association and the legislature. The bar association will be represented by Palermo himself, who in January steps down as president, Norman Palmiere and Robert Feldman.

Palermo hopes representatives from the judiciary will be from the "top echelon," including Harry Goldman, presiding justice of the Fourth Department of the

State Appellate Division. President-elect Charles Crimi interjected that "since the judges sit and watch the performances of an attorney" they should have a say in the selection of the public defender.

The group which may have the "most vital interest" would be the coalition of community organizations formed for the study of the public defender's office. The coalition is headed by the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries' Judicial Process Commission. "It is the majority of

the people whom they represent that will end up being clients of the public defender," Palermo observed.

He continued that the advisory board will be a "conduit" and to "exclude the legislators would be impractical and undesirable." Palermo stressed that the advisory board would not "usurp" the power of the legislature to select the public defender. The legislature would have the benefit, however, of the expertise of the three other groups.

## At St. Lawrence Parish Council Utilizes Unique Planning System

By JOHN DASH

St. Lawrence Parish Council is revving up to get the show on the road. The show, however, is an organizing technique that ends up with a five-year plan of meeting parish needs.

It seems that last September the council had a modified DELPHI conference, a controlled debate that was originally developed for technological forecasting, but in this instance was used to draft a five-year plan for the parish.

The technique worked so well that Norb Jagodzinski, council president, thinks it's marketable, and before long he expects to offer it to other councils for their own use.

To make the DELPHI technique work, the council identified a number of parish needs from various surveys, and a form was prepared for each council member to complete. After a review, redistribution and reconsiderations, the council came up with a list and classification of parish needs; a foundation to develop goals and objectives; and a better understanding of a position or attitude towards a need.

In October, according to Jagodzinski, who is also one of the chief council architects, the council developed long and short range goals and a plan of action to get at those aims.

The council is working with a preliminary five-year plan and subsequent annual parish council meetings will be used to update it.

The council itself is notable for its highly involved structure. While the council is only six months old, its steering committee has already developed a complete constitution and set of by-laws.

Jagodzinski says that he considers the most important article of the constitution, the Article of Faith which is the Nicene Creed. "It is a requirement," he says, "for every prospective council member that the candidate is a member of St. Lawrence parish, and the candidate accepts the Articles of Faith."

The constitution also urges council members to attend to public and private prayer, and be contributing members of the church.

"The outstanding features in the by-laws," Jagodzinski notes, "are the concepts of checks and balances."

They're quite proud of their work at St. Lawrence and they think they can be of help both to established and fledgling councils. For more information on their program, contact: St. Lawrence Parish Council, 1013 North Greece Rd., Rochester, 14626.

## Social Justice Pope's Theme

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul told a group of 300 young European agricultural workers that he heartily supported their intentions to promote social justice among the rural populations of the world, especially the Third World, urging them to adopt an "attitude of authentic service towards one's brothers."

Citing Pope John XXIII's encyclical, Mater et Magistra, and his own encyclical, Populorum Progressio, the pontiff said that in these and other Vatican statements "you can find irrefutable witness of the Church's intense interest in this (rural) sector."

The young agricultural workers came together at the Rome headquarters of the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organization.

Pope Paul told the participants that their aim of studying ways to justly develop the world agricultural situation is "indispensable to the vitality of the European nations" and necessary if real solidarity with the rural areas of the Third World is to be accomplished.

Declaring that the young agricultural workers are "on the right road" in endeavoring to "sensitize their co-nationals" to support international policies of agricultural development, the Pope said it is urgent that programs be developed to assist the underdeveloped nations of the world.

## 'Tragic Anniversary' To Be Noted Jan. 22

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — The U.S. Catholic Church is preparing to mark "a tragic anniversary" on Jan. 22, the first anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on abortion. It will launch new efforts to reverse the legalization of abortion, it was disclosed here.

Bishop James S. Rausch, general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference said the conference is developing materials and program suggestions for dioceses and parishes, including a "model" pastoral message for national distribution.

"This will be a tragic anniversary," the prelate declared, because "events of the past year have borne out all too well the prediction that the court's action would open the door to an unprecedented slaughter of innocent, unborn human life."

In expressing the determination of anti-abortion forces "to counter this vicious trend," the bishop called on the "pro-life movement" in this country to "exert every effort to reverse the abortion decisions, both in the law of the land and in the minds and hearts of the American people."

Speaking during a meeting of directors of the USCC in Washington, Bishop Rausch said that in addition to the model pastoral message the conference is preparing suggestions for public observances and for informational and educational

activities concerning abortion and the implications of the Supreme Court rulings.

"As a result of the Supreme Court's decisions," he noted, "hundreds of thousands of human lives are being snuffed out each year in the United States. This is a fact the American conscience cannot be allowed to ignore or forget."

## Roses for Hope

Red roses as an expression of hope for the unborn will be delivered to congressional offices in Washington on Jan. 22, the first anniversary of the Supreme Court's abortion decision.

The Rochester Area Right to Life Committee asks local people to contribute money for this demonstration. Checks or money orders for \$2 per rose should be written to the Rose Committee and mailed by Dec. 28 to the committee at 520 Augusta St., Washington, D.C. 20016. The donor's name and address and the names of his representatives in Congress should be included. The Rochester group said its own anniversary demonstration would be detailed soon.

## BRILLE CALENDAR

The Xavier Society for the Blind has issued a 1974 Catholic calendar in Braille. It may be obtained free of charge from the society's office at 154 East 23rd St., New York, N.Y. 10010.