

**Pastoral Perspective**

**Peace: God's Blessing, Our Responsibility**

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

In years past, before the advent of ecumenism, we were making issue even about the words of greeting, and best wishes exchanged at Christmas. If the message of the Angels read: "Peace on earth, good will to men" it surely was a Protestant blessing. To be Catholic it had to read, "to men of good will." Thanks to cooperative Biblical scholarship, we have a translation now which clearly presents the theology of peace as a divine blessing and a human challenge. It reads: "Peace on earth to those on whom His favor rests."

Since 1967 Pope Paul VI has designated the beginning of a New Year as a World Day of Peace, and has urged all of us to spend the months ahead praying for Peace and working for it. The theme this year is a restatement of the Message of the first Christmas: "Peace depends on you too." It is tragic, indeed, that his urgent call has to be issued each year. But who of us can recall a Christmas, the birthday of the Prince of Peace, free from living in the midst of wars or threats of violence? If we have relative peace at this hour, it is an uneasy one built on shaky truces and mutual distrust — a cessation of hostilities rather than a strengthening of the common bonds which should so unite the members of one family that we become worthy of the Lord's favor.

A consistent theme of peace as a personal

responsibility runs throughout the Old and New Testaments. The Hebrew word "Shalom" which we translate "Peace" is a greeting of rich content. These Scriptural passages are offered for your New Year's reflection.

In Judges 6:24 we read that Gideon's altar had the title "Yahweh-Shalom," that is, Yahweh is peace. The state of human integrity is identified as the condition for peace. When one possesses integrity, one is assured communication with Yahweh.

Yahweh desires the peace of those who serve Him. Psalm 122:6-8

Yahweh "speaks peace upon His people." His words effect peace, and righteousness and peace are joined where His peace is to be found. Psalm 85:9-11

Peace stands in sharp contrast to blood vengeance which brings His curse. 1 Kgs. 2:33

False prophets in the days of Jeremiah announced peace when there was none. God's spokesman reminded his people that it is only genuine where there is justice and righteousness, and to say otherwise is to try to heal with falsehood (Jeremiah 6:14; 8-11) or as Ezekiel observed, "to whitewash a collapsing wall." (Ezk. 13:10)

And Isaiah assures us that obedience to God's commands will be like the blessings of a flowing river and prosperity will abound when a nation is established in righteousness.

(Is. 54:13) and God will allot peace when men deserve it. (45:7)

In the New Testament we are reminded that peace is:

\* Good order and harmony. 1 Cor. 14:33

\* the intended fruit of the preaching of the Gospel. Eph. 6:15

\* the gift of Jesus which cannot be effected by human ingenuity. Phil. 4:7

\* a state of inner calm and harmonious community relations and a duty born of our Christian vocation. Roman 14:17

Perhaps the present energy crisis will give us the grace to be more reflective about our personal involvement in making our easily uttered greeting of "Peace" an authentic desire to assure its becoming a reality. It has to be rooted, first of all, in our own hearts and spread from there to the greater community. And, perhaps, the same crisis will allow us to reflect on our personal sharing of our possessions. If we are caught up in an American life style that consumes 40 per cent of the world's raw material to satisfy 6 per cent of the world's population, we are surely not promoting the justice and righteousness that create the nation on which "His favor rests." Or, as Ezekiel would exhort us, "Let's not continue whitewashing a collapsing wall."

May His Peace be upon all of you this New Year as we work to deserve His blessing.

**Bishop's Final Statement On Farah Controversy**

"On February 24, 1973 after five months of careful research, I issued a statement in support of an economic boycott of Farah slacks. On December 12, 1973 I reaffirmed my original statement with even greater conviction because of the additional investigation conducted by the Department of Social Development and World Peace of the United States Catholic Conference.

"It has been brought to my attention recently that my original statement of February 24 has been used by various groups within our community to support the boycott of local stores and the harassment of local merchants. This was not my intention. My letter contained no word of support for such a boycott and expressly stated, 'This witness could be marred by any attempt on the part of the parties in this dispute to use my position to harass local retailers and consumers.'"

**Pope's Year-End Report Notes Mid-East Crises**

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul, in his regular year-end report to the College of Cardinals, Dec. 21, expressed "special preoccupation" with aspects of the Middle East problem, including the situation of Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem.

He also voiced grave concern over other trouble spots of the world, including Vietnam, Northern Ireland, Africa and Latin America.

The pontiff told the assembled prelates that the Vatican had "the duty, even more than the right, to insure that any possible solution touching the status of Jerusalem and the Holy Places there should take into account the exigencies of the special character of that city, unique in all the world."

Any solution, he added, should take into consideration "the rights and legitimate aspirations" of the three great monotheistic religions — Judaic, Christian and Muslim — that have shrines in the Holy Land.

Alluding to the "courteous interest" that, he said, had already been manifested "in many quarters" on the Vatican's position regarding the status of Jerusalem and its shrines, the Pope said he had been shown "deference" by Israeli authorities in their assurances of the possibility of having "our voice" duly heard when "these questions are eventually submitted for concrete discussion."

In a reference to the plight of Arab refugees in Palestine, Pope Paul said he was especially concerned about "the condition and lot of those who have suffered the most and are still suffering because of events that have taken place from 1947 (U.N. partition of Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states) until the present day."

"Hundreds of thousands of

refugees," he said, "have been reduced to desperate living conditions or frustrated in other ways in their legitimate aspirations."

"At times," he went on, "their cause is brought to the attention of the world and even compromised by acts which are repugnant to the civilized conscience of peoples and which, in no case, are justified."

Citing a recent "tragic example" of such acts, the Pope mentioned the Dec. 17 Arab guerrilla massacre at Rome's Fiumicino Airport, which left 31 persons dead.

Turning to other trouble areas, Pope Paul expressed his fervent hope that large-scale hostilities would not break out again in South Vietnam, and that the people of Northern Ireland would eventually reach "a true reconciliation of minds."

He then recalled that the United Nations had recently observed the 25th anniversary of its "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (Dec. 10).

"We must raise our voice in solemn warning to remind the world of the need for justice and love," he said, "for justice, which imposes on everyone — individuals and leaders and peoples — respect for the rights of each person; for love, which promotes, gives life to, and completes the work of justice."

Commenting on "situations of conflict which remain or have recently occurred in Africa and in Latin America," the pontiff said, "Yes, as long as the rights of all peoples, among them the right to self-determination and independence, are not duly recognized and honored, there cannot be true and lasting peace — even though the abusive power of arms may for a time prevail over the reactions of those opposed to it."

Some Vatican observers saw in the references to "Africa and Latin America" oblique allusions to on-going situations in such southern African countries as South Africa, Namibia, Rhodesia, and Mozambique, and to Chile, where last September a military coup overthrew the democratically-elected government of the late President Salvador Allende Gossens.

Pope Paul ended his discourse with the observation that "the world has need of courage, decision, and energetic wisdom in order not to lose hope in a peace, which, although more than ever urgent today by reason of the destructive power of new armaments, can seem to be an almost unattainable goal, a Utopian dream."

**Toronto Backs Lettuce Boycott**

Toronto, Ont. (RNS) — Representatives of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United and Canadian Council of Churches led 60 persons in an ecumenical service in support of California grape and lettuce boycotts.

After the brief service outside Queen's Park, seat of the Ontario provincial government, demonstrators and clergymen picketed 18 Metro Toronto Dominion stores as part of a 10-day joint effort to stop sales before the New Year.

The action is in response to Caesar Chavez' United Farm Workers' call for a continent-wide ban on lettuce and grapes in support of his union's organizing activity on California farms.

**DEADLINE**

The deadline for submitting notices to the Courier-Journal of parish events is the Thursday noon preceding publication.

**The Bishop's Public Appointments**

January, 1974

- 3—Administrative Advisors' Meeting — 9 a.m.
- 8—Priests' Council Meeting, St. Bernard's Seminary — 10:30 a.m.
- 10-11-12—Diocesan Leadership Training Lab, Abbey of the Genesee, Piffard.
- 13—Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Rochester — 11 a.m.
- 14—Priests' Council Agenda Meeting — 10:30 a.m.
- 14—Women's Eucharistic Holy Hour, Mercy Motherhouse — 7:30 p.m.
- 15—Clergy Conference, Becket Hall — 10 a.m.
- 16—Clergy Conference, St. Casimir School, Elmira — 10 a.m.
- 19—Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Annual Report of the Parish Council, St. Rita Church, West Webster — 7:30 p.m.
- 22—Diocesan Religious Education Coordinators' Workshop, Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua — 5:30 p.m.
- 24-25-26—Annual Retreat, Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua.

