

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

The Energy Crisis—Time for Personal Assessment

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

It is 7:30 a.m. D.S.T. on the Feast of the Epiphany. All outside is darkness. And I reflect: "How symbolic of our need for a star in the East to guide us to Him Who is the Light of the World."



We have fallen upon dark days physically and spiritually. We can spend our energies in heaping accusations on those we think are responsible for our present crisis, or we can accept the situation as the Lord's invitation to draw closer to the light that has come to enlighten every man who comes into this world. The second option alone is productive of personal growth.

Wisdom is often found in the writings of those who may not perceive the full depth of the grace of crisis as a time for personal reflection. But, shortly before Christmas, I found much wisdom in these observations of Dr. Joel Dryid, a professor of psychology at the University of Chicago:

"The energy crisis may benefit Americans in the long run by forcing them to turn to their inner resources rather than relying on consumption for happiness. It is not the built-in obsolescence of our goods that is the problem. It is the obsolescence of our expectations. We have always said to people in this consumption-oriented society that if there is something wrong

with you, you can buy something for it — something that will make you feel better. But the energy crisis will force Americans to challenge these patterns and reexamine some of the almost unconscious assumptions that have led to ever expanding expectations about their standard of living."

And what does the psychologist see in his look into the future? He utters the prophecy that "all Americans will have to reduce their expectations and abandon their myth of progress for a new one. Perhaps something like World War II will happen when we are all forced to pull together. And, perhaps, we will see a turning inward, making something meaningful of our lives, an exploration of inner space." And he adds his observations that we cannot keep on driving a couple of hundred miles on the freeway to get rid of our tensions.

We Americans have grown accustomed to abundance. The present lowering of thermostats and speedometers marks a cut in our life style. I believe that we who are proud of our land of plenty need the humility to learn to do with less and thus gain a clearer insight into the daily plight of most of our human family who are forced each day to do with less — often less than they need for survival. And we need to slow down enough to become reflective about our maddening pace which is not exactly the tempo of a pilgrim's progress. For those of us caught up in the consumerism craze and in the hurried pace of modern life find little time or interest in accumulating heavenly treasures.

As Father Eugene Kennedy recently remarked: "You do not hear the word 'covet' very much any more, perhaps because something like coveting has become a way of life. We are led to believe that the economy would collapse without widespread cultural urges to covet goods of all kinds, useful and unuseful. . . . Never have so many people who have wanted so many things owed so much money for things they are not happy with after they get them."

I hope the energy crisis with its offer of a slower pace will make us more reflective people, and that the shortage of commodities will give us a deepening sense of the values that bring us joy and peace. As we begin to explore the inner space of our hearts, may we begin to find the personal resources of His gifts — faith, hope, love — and begin to treasure them and to sense our own emptiness apart from them.

When the Magi knelt in homage on the floor of the humble stable, they had left behind them their homes — the palace and the grandeur of the city; when all these possessions had lost their value and their impressiveness and their whole being was concentrated on the Christ Child in the act of adoration, their gesture of offering their gifts signified the achievement of their freedom and integrity.

May the present darkness accentuate the brightness of the Star in the East and lead us to Him, offering the gift of self — and set free from the mad pursuits that have enslaved us.

vatican news

Pope Asks Prayers For Peace Talks

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul, recalling his 1964 pilgrimage to the Holy Land,

Priest Resigns Role With Peace Unit

Vatican City [RNS] — Msgr. Joseph Gremillion, a Louisiana priest who has served as secretary of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace since its founding in 1967, will leave the "international jet set" of his own words to accept a "sabbatical year" fellowship at the University of Notre Dame.

Pope Paul has accepted his resignation, effective Jan. 15 but has named him a member of the commission. Msgr. Gremillion, 54, will continue to serve as co-chairman of the joint Catholic-World Council of Churches Committee on Society, Development and Peace (SODEPAX).

A priest of the Alexandria, La. diocese, he served as director of socio-economic development for Catholic Relief Services before his appointment as secretary of the new Vatican commission.

"I have now spent 15 years in the international jet set here and with Catholic Relief Services of the U. S. Bishops' Conference," he said in a statement to the press. "I now want some time to study, to meditate, to think, to write, to talk things over calmly with friends and collaborators."

"I feel a deep need of withdrawing for a while from the activist life and organizational responsibilities which have been mine these 15 years."

urged all men to pray that peace talks in Geneva would produce "just and wise" solutions to the Middle East conflict and bring about lasting peace in the area.

Addressing a crowd in St. Peter's Square on the Feast of the Epiphany, the pontiff recalled that it was "exactly 10 years ago today" that he had celebrated the feast in the town of Bethlehem.

He said he had made the trip "as a humble pilgrim, but as a pilgrim exuberant in the knowledge of the importance and significance of such an event, to the place where Christ was born and where he began to manifest himself to the world."

Pope Paul's visit to the Holy Land in January 1964 marked the first time a Pope had traveled outside Italy since Pius VII (1800-1823) was forced to do so by Napoleon in 1812. During his three-day visit Pope Paul had two meetings with the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, spiritual leader of world Orthodoxy. It was the first time in more than five centuries that a Pope and an Eastern Ecumenical Patriarch had come face to face.

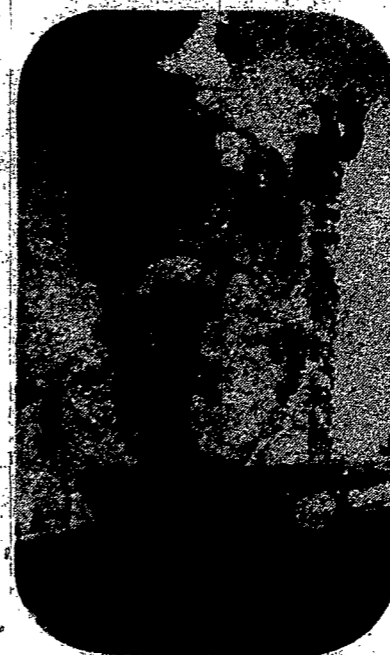
"We think again of the consoling experience of the visit to the Holy Land, said Pope Paul, "and we wish peace for everybody in that land."

"We invite all men to pray that problems still affecting the Holy Land can find just and wise solutions in the negotiations."

While the Pope was speaking, a group of youths distributed leaflets among the crowd in St. Peter's Square protesting a scheduled showing of the film "Jesus Christ Superstar" in Rome on Jan. 7. The leaflets denounced the film as blasphemous.



Pope Paul has named Cardinal Luigi Traglia, left, dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals. The 79-year-old prelate succeeds Cardinal Amleto Cicognani, who died Dec. 16. The new dean was ordained in 1917 and was made a cardinal



Churchmen in the News

in 1960. Archbishop Iakovos, center, primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, found himself with a surprise visitor during the annual Epiphany celebrations in Tarpon Springs, Fla. He



released a dove and it flew back to perch on top of his crown. Rumor has it Archbishop Michael Ramsey's retirement will be announced soon. The well-known ecumenist, right, is the Anglican Primate of England. [RNS]

Vatican Issues Church Statistics

Vatican City [RNS] — Vatican Radio has reported that in its most recent accounting (as of Dec. 31, 1971) the statistical yearbook of the Roman Catholic Church disclosed that Catholics make up 18.3 per cent of the total world population.

It also noted that the Americas — which have the highest proportion of Catholics per population (60 per cent) — also have the highest number of defections from the priesthood, where for every 1,000 priests 14.4 men have left the ministry.

The yearbook revealed that the total world population was 3,645,829,000 (Dec. 31, 1971) and that there were then 669 million Catholics. The 18.3 per cent

figure did not change in the course of a year.

The yearbook, published by the Central Statistical Office of the Vatican Secretariat of State, reported that there are 270,737 diocesan priests, 149,692 religious order priests, 78,350 religious who are not priests, 470 permanent deacons, and 1,014,971 Sisters.

The largest proportionate increase in the percentage of priests per people between 1970 and 1971 took place in Africa where the increase was 27.1 per cent; in Asia the increase was 17.7 per cent and in Oceania the increase was 7.5 per cent.

The yearbook also reported that in 1971 there were 155,513

candidates for the priesthood, although 19,737 abandoned their vocations. Also in 1971, there were 17,117,633 baptisms, 3,723,258 marriages between Catholics, and 269,271 marriages where one spouse was Catholic.

CANON LAWYER DIES

Paterson, N.J. — Father Callistus Smith, OFM, canon lawyer and co-author of the standard text, A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law, died of cancer at St. Joseph's Hospital on Jan. 3, 1974, after a short illness. He was 70 years old. Father Callistus spent many of his 44 years as a Franciscan priest in teaching and administration at Christ the King Seminary, St. Bonaventure University, Allegany, N.Y. He was buried there Jan. 9.