

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Pulpit Pabulum — Ersatz Verboten!!

Years ago, during Seminary days, a wise professor of preaching skills suggested that our best initial efforts from the pulpit should be devoted to the mission of arresting audience attention. "But, once captured," he warned, "keep our people alive with a solid diet. Nothing is more nourishing than the unction of Scripture that breathes with the life of the Holy Spirit."

Years of experience have proved his wisdom and have tempered the personal temptation to use the pulpit for self-promotion before a captive audience. And our people have kept us humble with their own insights that our best sermons are those that are filled with His words and not our own.

The new ritual of Ordination to the Priesthood reminds us that the pulpit is the symbol of a sacred duty of promoting Him and not ourselves:

"My sons, you are about to be promoted to the order of priest. You must apply your energies to your sacred duty of instruction in the Name of Christ who is the Chief Teacher. Share with all men that Word of God which you have received with joy. While you

meditate on the law of the Lord, see that you believe what you read, that you teach what you believe (a challenge to authenticity) and that you translate your teaching into action (a challenge to credibility which says: "Practice what you preach.") Let your instruction serve as a nourishing diet for the People of God (they cry for bread — dare not give them stones)." **Roman Pontifical p. 24.**

Hence the title of this article — words I used to arrest your attention — but with a message which says that the synthetic is a 'No - No' to a man who accepts the mission of preaching the Word of God to people who, thank God, still hunger for the Bread of Life.

This article is addressed to liturgists, to homilists and to all who dare to speak in His Name — and to all who wish to hear His Word fruitfully. For communication is a two-way avenue (cf. The Parable of the Sower and the Seed). For the seed best sown with greatest potential for growth can, at times, fall on barren soil, i.e. audiences that defy you to teach them anything.

I truly believe in the potential of the seed that is totally **Scriptural** — never to be adequately replaced even by the commentaries of an Augustine, an Aquinas — or, in modern days, of a Karl Rahner or a Dag Hammarskjöld. When I hear the Word of God, I want to say Amen, that is, I believe. I

can accept the words of commentators only as professions of their personal faith and the conclusions of their personal reflection.

Passages from Scripture may at times seem dry. It takes the faith of a priest to make them alive. Unconsecrated bread can never provoke an Amen from us — neither can the bread of God's Word until a priest has consecrated it by his meditation, reflection and offered it to the hungry and dare say to his people, "This is the Word of the Lord." Lest this sound like wild personal rambling, I offer the supportive statement of Vatican II:

"The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the Body of the Lord, since from the table of both the Word of God and the Body of Christ she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life, especially in the sacred liturgy." (Vatican II — Constitution on Divine Revelation, par. 21. Also, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, par. 51.)

During the Holy Season of Lent, let us all cry out from the desert of our pilgrimage for the Word of the Lord and for the Manna which is the Body of Christ. And may all of us ordained to be fathers in faith offer our people the authentic bread of nourishment to which they can say Amen — as a genuine profession of faith.

Pontiff Fondly Recalls Pope Pius XI

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul, reminiscing about his "great and good predecessor," Pius XI, praised the late pontiff's accomplishment in engineering the Lateran Agreements between the Vatican and the Italian state.

The occasion of Paul's remarks, which he made in an address to people gathered in St. Peter's Square for his weekly Sunday blessing, was the near coincidence of two dates: the death of Pope Pius XI on Feb. 10, 1939, and the signing of the Lateran Agreements on Feb. 11, 1929.

By the agreements, Italy renounced all claim to Vatican territory in Rome, and the Vatican became a sovereign state. They consisted of two documents. The first, the Lateran Treaty proper, regulated the

relations between the sovereign states, including the territorial arrangements by which the Vatican State came into being.

The second document, the Concordat, defined the rights of the two states in the realm of education and spiritual matters. Roman Catholicism was recognized as the state religion of Italy.

"We cannot forget the anniversary, today, of the death of our great and good predecessor, Pope Pius XI, of revered and immortal memory," Pope Paul said.

"It was 35 years ago. He was almost 82 and had been Pope for 17 years, that is, from Feb. 6, 1922. At the beginning of February, 1939, the feebleness of

age forced the tireless pontiff to slow down his normal work; but faithful and intrepid to the end, he convened in Rome for the first time in history all the Italian bishops to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the concordat with Italy."

"At that time," Paul went on, "I was the substitute secretary of state. The weekly audience of Thursday, Feb. 9, had been suspended, and we did not know whether the bishops who were to arrive in Rome the next day would be received by Pope Pius or not."

"At four a.m. on Feb. 10, a telephone call from Msgr. — now Cardinal — Carlo Confalonieri, who together with Msgr. Velini was the private chamberlain of the Pope, awoke us.

"The end had come, and we had the filial privilege of being the first person to arrive in the sick room. Other more important people arrived later. The Pope passed away at 5:31 a.m. It devolved on us to announce the Pope's death to the bishops."

After the personal remarks, Pope Paul then reflected on the significance of the life and accomplishments of Pius XI.

"The question regarding the immense spiritual heritage of this distinguished successor of St. Peter arises," he said. "It is still difficult to make an inventory of the religious, moral, and ecclesial heritage left by Pope Pius XI — the Church after Vatican II, as indeed before, can benefit from this heritage."

"But, for us," Paul emphasized, "an obligatory point of reference for evaluation is 'the Concordat between the Holy See and Italy.'"

Recalling that "religious peace" and "autonomy of ecclesial and national responsibility" were "ratified" by the concordat, Paul urged renewal of "spiritual concord" and "collaboration" between Italy and the Holy See.

Pope Praises Rotary Work

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul, praising the work of the Rotary Club, encouraged its members to continue their efforts in fostering the "common good of the human family."

The occasion of the special papal audience on Feb. 16 was the 50th anniversary of the founding in Milan of the first Italian Rotary Club.

Noting that the organization, which originated in Chicago in 1905, is devoted to 'service to the community and to the advance of world peace, Pope Paul remarked:

"This service today requires the moral, upright, and willing forces of charity, an open and constructive mind, and a commitment and readiness to make sacrifices . . . for the tremendous material and spiritual needs of the human family."

Prior to Vatican II, Rotary was viewed with some misgivings by the Church. In January 1951, the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) issued a decree, approved by Pope Pius XII, barring all priests from membership in Rotary Clubs.

In 1965, however, Pope Paul gave approval to Rotary International when he received 1,500 Rotarians at a special audience. He indicated that the attitude of the Church had changed and expressed interest in the activities and aims of Rotary, which "leads to group together men of different confessions and ideas for the common good."

The Bishop's Public Appointments



March

- 1—Priesthood Ordination, St. Margaret Mary Church, Rochester — 7:30 p.m.
- 3—Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Catholic Community of the U. of R. — 9:15 and 11 a.m.
- 5—Priests' Council, Becket Hall — 10:30 a.m.
- 6-7—National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, Chicago, Ill.
- 8—Clergy Relief Society Executive Board Meeting — 11 a.m.
- 10—Confirmation, Catholic Community of R.I.T. — 10:30 a.m.
- 11—Priests' Council Agenda Meeting — 10:30 a.m.
- 12—Regional Coordinators' Meeting, St. Mary's, Canandaigua — 2 p.m.
- 12—Pastoral Council Formation Committee Meeting, St. Stephen's, Geneva — 7:30 p.m.
- 14—Administrative Advisors' Meeting — 9 a.m.
- 18—Clergy Conference, Monroe County Jail — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- 19—Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, Patronal Feast, Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily — 4:30 p.m.

- 21—Administrative Advisors' Meeting — 9 a.m.
- 21—Lenten Celebration of Eucharist and Homily, St. Luke's Episcopal Church — 12:05 p.m.
- 22—Priesthood Ordination, St. Andrew's Church, Rochester — 7:30 p.m.
- 23—Radio Message, Family Rosary Network — 7 p.m.
- 24—Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily for Spanish-speaking People, Holy Redeemer Church — 7:30 p.m.
- 25—Confirmation, St. Patrick's Church, Owego, 7:45 p.m.
- 26—Confirmation, St. James Church, Rochester — 7:45 p.m.
- 27—Priesthood Ordination, Holy Ghost Church, Coldwater — 7:30 p.m.
- 28—Administrative Advisors' Meeting — 9 a.m.
- 28—Confirmation, St. Anne's Church, Rochester — 7:45 p.m.
- 29—Priesthood Ordination, Holy Redeemer Church — 7 p.m.
- 30—Knights of Columbus Banquet, Towne House Motor Inn — 7:30 p.m.
- 31—Confirmation, School of the Holy Childhood — 10:30 a.m.