

## For Holy Year Pilgrims

## The 'Gift' of a Plenary Indulgence

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The theme of the jubilee year 1974-1975 is "The pilgrimage of the People of God in renewal and reconciliation." So I have pointed out in two earlier articles in the Courier-Journal.

In the first article I discussed pilgrimage as a symbolic devotional act in all the great religions. You see, pilgrimages to one's own Cathedral or to a "substitute" church of pilgrimage during 1974, is the chief prescription of the "preliminary" Holy Year, and in the official Holy Year, 1975, each diocese in the world will send a pilgrimage to Rome to represent it. To have pilgrimages as the leading devotional act of the jubilee years is especially appropriate, for as Vatican II reminded us, we are members of a "pilgrim Church."

Today I want to say something about indulgences, because there is a special indulgence attached to the performance of Holy Year pilgrimages.

When Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the first Holy Year in 1300, he granted a "plenary" indulgence, under certain conditions, to those who made the jubilee journey.

Pope Paul VI will also grant what he appropriately calls the "gift" of a plenary indulgence to those who make jubilee pilgrimages in 1974 to their own diocesan pilgrimage churches, and to those who will come as pilgrims to Rome in 1975.

## Now, just what is an indulgence?

In past centuries, the quest of indulgences was very popular among Catholics. Today it has lost much of this popularity. Fortunately, it is easier now than it used to be to explain what the word "indulgence" means. Pope Paul VI, in Jan. 1, 1967, issued an "apostolic constitution" called "Indulgentiarum Doctrina," on just this subject. It is probably the best account ever written on the rise and the nature of indulgences. (The document is reproduced in translation, along with the radically reduced list of available indulgences, in: *Enchiridion of Indulgences, Norms and Grants*, New York Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1969.)

As the papal "constitution" states, the concept of indulgences is a product of what theologians call an "evolution of doctrine." Three Catholic dogmas form its basis. They are: 1. Even after sins have been forgiven, the sinner has to make amends for his misdeeds. 2. The Church has jurisdiction over the amends he makes. 3. There is a "communion of Saints" which binds together in love all the faithful, living and dead.

The first point: a sinner must make amends. Perhaps a story will help us to understand this. It is based on fact.

A few months ago an American walked out of prison after having served a term for a crime. Since he

was rather prominent, a reporter was at the gate to ask him how he felt about his release.

"I am glad to be out," the man answered. "I have always admitted I was guilty of the crime. I have regretted it from the moment I did it. I was justly punished. But now I have paid my debt to society, and hope to make a fresh start."

"I have paid my debt to society." Honestly and well put! I think we all appreciate that when a man has committed a crime, it is not enough for him to say he is sorry. Abraham Lincoln once wrote: "Even killing the dog will not cure the bite." A crime is not only a bad judgment. It also disturbs the public order of society. Corrective measures must therefore be taken against the criminal so that he will not repeat his crime; so that others will not try a similar trick; and so that an atonement may be made to the public peace which he has sharply disturbed.

If civil governments work on this general principle of exacting some satisfaction for crimes, God is surely not be criticized for imposing penalties on all men for their sins. He is far more interested than the state is in seeing us profit by our mistakes. Christ indeed forgave the Good Thief on Calvary. "Today you will be with me in paradise." But he by no means contradicted what the Good Thief had just said to his companion-in-crime: "We are only paying the price for what we've done." Nor did Jesus, in promising paradise, exempt the Good Thief from dying on his cross.

What is the sort of penalty we have to pay for our sins? St. Augustine says, "Every sin, whether small or great, must be punished either by man himself doing penance, or by God chastising him."

"Doing penance" can cover a number of good actions. First of all, there is the sacramental penance assigned us by our confessor in confession. It is especially valuable because it is given us in the name of the authority over sins which the Church possesses. Other penances we can assume ourselves, like fasting, abstaining from this or that pleasure, and undertaking various other forms of self-denial. Prayer also makes amends. Acts of charity to others are likewise acceptable to God in compensation.

God "chastises" us by allowing physical and mental suffering to befall us, and the final suffering, death ("It is those I love that I correct and chasten" Rev. 3:19). By loving acceptance of these trials we can make reparation. We know, furthermore, that these "temporal punishments" (temporal, or transient in that they are not eternal) must be discharged before we can enter heaven. Indeed, if our account with God is still "in the red" at death, we must tarry in purgatory "until we have paid the last penny" (Mt. 5:26). This is another dogma of our faith.

Now, in addition to being able to satisfy God by "whatever good we do or evil we endure," we can also take advantage of indulgences.

The idea of an indulgence is based not only on the Church's "power of the keys," but also on the dogma of the "Communion of Saints" that we proclaim in the Apostles' Creed. According to this doctrine, there is a wonderful loving, caring, solidarity between all the faithful: those of the "pilgrim" Church on earth; those of the suffering Church in purgatory; those of the victorious Church in heaven. St. Paul referred to this sharing when he said "Bear one another's burdens, and you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Christ had already told us that our salvation depends on our feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and so forth. We can even satisfy God for the sins of others by our own good deeds. In this household of the faith, "everything I have is yours."

Now, the thought of this "family" sharing prompts a further question. Surely, the saints in heaven, did far more while on earth to "satisfy" God's justice than their own few sins required. The Blessed Virgin "satisfied" more abundantly still, since she had no sins to expiate. And Christ's own actions, were they not infinitely atoning? Therefore, could not a portion of this great treasure of unused merits be shared with us, as we struggled to make reparation?

The Church listened, and answered yes. In the late middle ages, the popes began granting indulgences.

A "plenary indulgence" means this: Using her authority over penalties for sin, the Church attaches to some specific devotional act (like a pilgrimage) that additional amount of "satisfying" value necessary to cancel completely the penalty required of a particular repentant sinner. This added value is drawn from the heavenly "treasury" of the merits of Christ and the saints.

Surely, Christ and Mary and the saints are happy to have us thus "share and share alike" in their available spiritual assets.

We do not have to utilize indulgences. All the Council of Trent defined about them is that they are "useful." But it is good to know that in addition to other means of making amends to God and neighbor we have this further method.

The jubilee indulgence, by the way, can also be offered to God with the request that he apply it, if he sees fit, to some soul in purgatory. As Pope Paul VI observed, this act of offering is still another worthy act of charity between members of the "household of the faith."

In connection with the jubilee of 1974-1975, the Holy Father has been careful not to overstress the jubilee indulgence. The act of pilgrimage is the important, the significant thing. But what better souvenir could we receive of our "journey in renewal and reconciliation" than this "gift" presented us by the Church in the name of our brothers, all the saints in heaven?

## Father Antinarelli Ordination Slated

Father Ronald Anthony Antinarelli, son of Mr. and Mrs. I. Raymond Antinarelli of 193 Wahl Road, Irondequoit, will be ordained to the priesthood at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 20 at Blessed Sacrament Church, where he is presently serving as deacon.

The ordaining prelate is Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey.

Father Antinarelli will offer his first solemn Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, on Sunday, April 21, at 3 p.m.

The following week, April 28, he will celebrate Mass at his

home parish, St. Cecilia's, at 12:15 p.m.

Father Antinarelli is a graduate of Aquinas Institute and St. John Fisher College, holding a B.A. in Philosophy. He attended St. Bernard's Seminary and has a Bachelor of Divinity degree.

As a deacon, he was assigned to St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Irondequoit, and on graduation from the seminary, he was assigned to Blessed Sacrament, where he works with Father John P. Norris, pastor and supervisor, and Father Charles Latus, associate pastor.



FATHER ANTINARELLI

## Mary O'Connell Will Benefits Seminary

St. Bernard's Seminary has announced the receipt of a bequest of 1,000 shares of Eastman Kodak stock from the estate of Miss Mary O'Connell. An additional number of shares will be forthcoming at a later date.

Miss O'Connell was the retired treasurer of Hammer Lithograph Corp. of Rochester and a member of Blessed Sacrament Church. She died April 29, 1973. Her directions for the disbursement of her estate reflected a deep concern for church-related organizations and especially those working with the training or retirement of priests.

St. Bernard's, the seminary for the Catholic Diocese of Rochester, is a member of the

Rochester Center for Theological Studies. It was begun in 1953 by the first bishop, Bernard J. McQuaid. In its 21-year history, it has trained nearly 4,000 priests for dioceses throughout the eastern United States. In recent years, the seminary has begun to equip itself for training not only priests, but also Sisters and laymen. In so doing, they hope to meet the needs of the post-Vatican II Church.

In acknowledging Miss O'Connell's gift, Father Joseph P. Brennan, rector of the seminary, noted that "such a generous contribution allows us to continue our program of expansion and growth and will help to insure that we can offer effective training for those wishing to meet the theological challenges of the modern world."

## NFPC Urges Impeachment, Amnesty

San Francisco [RNS] — Calls for impeachment of President Nixon, unconditional amnesty for war resisters, a theological study of homosexuality and a "new involvement" by priests in government activities, were among 40 resolutions passed by delegates at the annual convention of the House of Delegates of the National Federation of Priests' Councils (NFPC).

The 200-plus NFPC delegates called on the House Judiciary Committee to vote a bill of impeachment and the House of Representatives to impeach the President.

Participants, during the five-day gathering, also urged President Nixon and the Congress to "grant an immediate universal and unconditional amnesty on the basis of neither commendation nor condemnation for war resisters or war makers, but basically because we value the need for reconciliation and because we value the need for healing wounds."

In another resolution the NFPC's Ministry and Priestly Life Committee was mandated to set up a task force of theologians to "formulate a critical and con-

temporary Catholic theological analysis of homosexuality." Another resolution opposed "all civil laws which make consensual homosexual acts between adults a crime" and urged repeal of those laws.

A controversy over homosexuality arose the first day of the convention when it was disclosed that the NFPC executive board had rejected a "model" for ministering to homosexuals. The board's action was protested by members of the Gay Liberation Movement, including several former priests and ministers.

## Cathedral Holy Week

In preparation for the solemn liturgies of Holy Week, a communal penance service will be held at 7:15 this evening in Sacred Heart Cathedral. Confessions will be heard afterward.

Bishop John E. McCafferty and the cathedral priests will celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:30 p.m. tomorrow, Holy Thursday, with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until midnight.

Good Friday ceremonies will begin at noon with the Seven Last Words. The solemn liturgy of the Lord's Passion will follow at 2 p.m.

The Easter Vigil Mass of the Resurrection will begin at 7:30 Holy Saturday evening.

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will be principal concelebrant and homilist at the Easter Sunday Mass of the Resurrection, at 11:15 a.m. Other Easter Masses at the cathedral are scheduled for 7:30, 8:30 and 10 a.m., 12:30 and 5 p.m.

The cathedral priests will hear confessions each day, Wednesday through Saturday, from 4 until 5:15 p.m., and on Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. until noon.