

**PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE**

**The Chrism Mass and the Morning After**

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

I am at home this morning. It is still early and the little town of Victor is just beginning to awaken. I have a short time to spend with the Lord in my little chapel before I must drive to the Pastoral Office. I am not surprised that my meditation turns so easily this morning to the thrilling liturgy of last night's celebration of the Chrism Mass at St. Stephen's in Geneva. For the second year in a row, the Chrism Mass provided me with a truly joyful experience with all of my people. My mind helps me relive —

Coming down the aisle, I see so much (being tall has its advantages): each of the regions well represented by many faithful people even with such stormy weather. "We are here," they had said before Mass began — my brother bishops and the priest coordinators from the regions with me to concelebrate — and many priests scattered, as they should be, among their people — the deacons from St. Bernard's, whom I will ordain to the priesthood next year — the Sisters of St. Joseph singing in the sanctuary — Sister Judith of the Mercy Congregation in the procession representing her region — and high above us all, thanks to the tall Matthew Kawiak, towers the Cross of Christ

As I sprinkle the people, I realize how green the bough is, how clean the water. Baptism is life renewed. Springtime on a snowy night.

"You yourselves shall be named priests of the Lord. Ministers of God you shall be called. They will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise what has long lain waste." Rosalie Reinhardt reads from Second Isaiah. Thank you, Lord, for letting me experience you in this priestly people. My hope is renewed: "For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord God make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations."

As I called upon my fellow bishops and priests, Religious and laity to renew their commitment in ministry, I sensed a joy and love of Christ that was genuine and beautiful. "We are gathered together tonight from the ten regions of the Church of Rochester, all united by our baptism in Christ's priestly ministry. Each of us is given special gifts by the Holy Spirit, and a special call to carry out this service in His name. As your bishop, your leader in this ministry, I depend on your inspiration and your commitment. I call on each of you, therefore, to renew your personal dedication to Christ as participants in His priesthood, each according to the particular way you are called."

And now the people speak. The words that they say are so simple: "I am"

"I am ready to share in the priesthood of Christ and renew my commitment to the Church's healing ministry." What more support could a bishop hope for? Lord, send forth your Spirit and help us to carry out this commitment.

The Oils of the Sick, of the Catechumens and Sacred Chrism are brought forward in procession with the gifts for the Eucharistic celebration. The bread and wine will come back to us as the Body and Blood of Christ; the Oils will be used in all parts of our twelve-county Diocese of Rochester for healing and sanctifying ministries: anointing the sick, baptizing the newborn into the Faith, confirming our young people in their commitment to witness Christ, ordaining our Deacons in the priesthood of Jesus Christ as I pray that the Lord will keep them worthy of offering the sacrifice to God and sanctifying the Christian assembly. Barbara Pfenniger's dance says all of that. Her body movements are so unctuous and healing, so giving, so straining to grow. Lord help us to dance the dance of life in rhythm to Your Will.

Fed at the Lord's table and renewed by His Presence in His people, I recess from the Church singing: "Great is the Lord, worthy of praise, tell all the nations, God is King! Spread the good news of His love!" At this writing, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday are still ahead of us, but for me, in a real sense, Easter has come. Alleluia!

the Irish

**vatican news**

**Pope Asks for Money for Israeli Church**

By Father Robert A. Graham

Vatican City [RNS] — Why did Pope Paul VI publish a special appeal for aid to the Christians in Israel? A few days before Palm Sunday, the Vatican issued an "Apostolic Exhortation" which asked that money be collected in churches throughout the world.

"The Church in Jerusalem," said the Pope, "has a position of predilection in the concerns of the Holy See and the preoccupations of the whole Christian world." The collection would be taken up on an appropriate day, such as Good Friday, on which occasion also special prayers would be said for "our brethren of the Church of the Holy Land."

The initiative, said the Pope, had no scope other than "a religious and charitable one."

**'Witness to Christ,' Pontiff Asks Youth**

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul in a Palm Sunday sermon at St. Peter's Basilica called on Roman Catholic youth everywhere to give courageous "witness to Christ," shunning "individualism" and "indifference to good causes."

Recalling the events of Jesus' entry into the Holy City, Pope Paul, in his homily at the Mass, spoke directly to "young people and children listening to us" telling them:

"You must in some way bear witness to Christ — a new and victorious witness to Christ in our time. This is your task today, tomorrow it is to be your task as adults."

The pontiff suggested three "short steps" the youth might take to express "positive loyalty to Christ" — courageous Christian witness in the face of criticism, fidelity to the Church,

even if he could not omit to refer again to the "special importance" of the question of Jerusalem and of the Holy Places.

For several years Church leaders both in Israel and in the Vatican have been greatly concerned over the predicament in which the small Christian Arab community finds itself in Israel. The Christians were always a minority, even under the Moslems. But they were able to maintain themselves — with strong help from the outside, including the intervention of governments.

The pontifical letter alluded to these difficulties of past times and the internal divisions or outside pressures that aggravated them. But a new crisis has arisen through the notable emigration of many of the most talented

young Christians who have moved to Lebanon or even to Latin America.

While in many cases this emigration was simply due to the attraction of better possibilities abroad, some Christians in Israel claim they are undergoing subtle and even sometimes open pressure from the Israeli authorities to leave the country. They cite, for instance, alleged systematic confiscation or requisitioning of Christian population centers on the grounds of "military security," property or areas not later restored to the former population.

The Pope wrote in connection with the new crisis: "For some time now, emigration has weakened the community, which is now no longer self-sustaining and therefore has greater need of our understanding and of our moral and material help."

Vatican-released statistics show the small percentage of Christians now living in the region. There are in Israel, the occupied territories and in Jordan only 220,000 Christians in union with Rome, of which half are of the Latin Rite. The rest are mainly Melkites, with smaller numbers belonging to the Maronite, Syrian, Armenian, Chaldean and Coptic Rites. In addition there are 90,000 Greek Orthodox, 6,000 Armenian Orthodox, with 14,000 of other rites.

Naturally, for each community there exists a network of schools, hospitals, various welfare institutions and a press. These are all in crisis because of the uncertainties of the times and the resulting low morale of the Christians. Without their living presence, the Pope remarked, the Holy Places would become "museums."

In his letter the Pope also urged, as a measure of moral support as well as an aid to

mutual understanding among peoples who find in Jerusalem so much to unite them, the promotion of pilgrimages. He alluded, it is noted here with particular interest, to the case of the Hospice of Notre Dame which was the object of litigation a few years ago. The hospice, constructed at the end of the last century, situated just outside the Old City, was sold by its owners, the Assumptionist Fathers of Paris, to an Israeli organization. The Holy See thereupon instituted a law suit in the Israeli courts for annulment of the sale, on the grounds that it had not been authorized according to the prescriptions of canon law. The District Court of Jerusalem found in favor of the Holy See and the deal was cancelled.

In his exhortation, the Pope stated that in order to encourage pilgrimages, he would like to see the hospice reopened and remodelled, especially as a center for retreats for priests from all parts of the world.

The letter referred at one point to the broad question of the status of Jerusalem. Some attention was apparently drawn to a reference to Christians as "citizens," with the Moslems and Jews of the Holy City. The official Latin text published in the Osservatore Romano refers at this point to the papal allocution to the cardinals on December 22, 1972. The entire sentence appearing in the recent exhortation is lifted verbatim from the address of a year and a half ago.

That this long quotation was taken without change from an old statement supports the assurance by Vatican spokesmen, who explained the new document, that the apostolic exhortation introduces nothing new as regards Vatican policy on the internationalization of Jerusalem.

Among various Catholic agencies which contribute assistance to Christians in Israel and Jordan, a Vatican

background document cites the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, the Catholic Relief Services and the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, all of New York. Also the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and the Pontifical Work of the Holy Child.

Archbishop Casaroli, who is secretary of the Vatican's Council for Public Affairs, of the Church, was the first top Vatican official to visit Communist Cuba since Castro took power in 1959.

Paying tribute to what he called the "huge efforts" made by the Cuban government in the field of education, the archbishop said he had brought up the issue of religious instruction of Cuban children.

**CARDINAL DIES**

Litomerice [RNS] — Cardinal Stepan Trochta, bishop of Litomerice, Czechoslovakia's only cardinal, died here April 6 at 69. According to Vatican sources, the prelate's health had been undermined by his years of incarceration in Nazi concentration camps and, later, in Czech Communist jails. His death reduces the College of Cardinals to 133.

Rome [RNS] — Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, Pope Paul's foreign affairs aide, returning April 7 from an eight-day visit to Cuba, said he had conferred with Premier Fidel Castro in a 90-minute talk.

**Casaroli Meets With Castro**

The archbishop told newsmen that the Cuban leader had paid him a surprise call at the papal diplomatic mission in Havana on the night of April 5.

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