

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

A New Gift — Handle With Care

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

One week ago today, many of the parishes in our diocese had to undergo a painful experience. In those parishes where our Diocesan Personnel Board made its recommendations to me concerning new ministerial assignments, my priests have had to bid farewell to you as they accepted a new share in the ministry of service to the People of God in the Diocese of Rochester in new and challenging apostolates. Both priests and people, in some way, were sad to be losing the other and both knew the risks involved in the future: "What will my new assignment be like?" "What will the new priest assigned to our parish be like?"

Among the privileges a Bishop enjoys is the appointment of a newly ordained priest to his first assignment. But the joy of privilege is accompanied by the onus of responsibility because all priests are sensitive to the significance of first assignments which seem to leave lasting impressions. Prior to the effective date of appointments, I decided to invite to my home in Victor our ten new diocesan priests who were leaving their deacon internship assignments. Together, we concelebrated the Eucharist and enjoyed a picnic supper. During the Liturgy, I presented each new priest with his official letter of appointment to his first priestly assignment.

Pope Cites Vitality of Church in a Tense Age

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul, in a wide-ranging address to the Sacred College of Cardinals, expressed his admiration for the "vitality" of the Church at a "tension-filled moment" of history, and his deepening concern over the world's problems of hunger, drought, violence, and peace.

The occasion of the address was the Pope's annual meeting with the cardinals present in Rome held in honor of the pontiff's "name day," i.e., the Feast of St. John the Baptist (June 24). The Pope's baptismal name is Giovanni-Battista (Montini).

In his speech, an over-all appraisal of the general situation both within and outside the Church, the Pope touched on "internal" problems of the Church, including priests' search for "identity," crisis in vocations, and threats to "freedom" of the Church in some countries.

Casting a wider glance around the world, the pontiff spoke of the devastating drought in Africa, deplored the continuing tragedy of Northern Ireland, referred to the "new ray of hope" in the Middle East, and voiced his hopes for the future of Portugal's African territories.

He also urged world leaders to seek a solution to the problem of the Palestinians, and reiterated

Nixon, Pope May Meet

Milan [RNS] — According to a Milan newspaper, President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger will "probably" stop over in Rome, on their way back from Moscow, and meet with Pope Paul.

If Corriere della Sera said the purpose of such a meeting with the Pope would be to discuss the question of Jerusalem and its future status.

Mr. Nixon was slated to return to Washington on July 3.

For me, this was a particularly moving experience. In the Springtime, my auxiliary Bishops and I ordained these ten men to the service of the People of God in the diocese. Each new priest, during the ceremony of ordination, promised me and my successors obedience and respect. Now, under obedience, they have accepted the mission to the parishes I have asked them to serve. Since they are willing to be responsible to me, I know, too, that I am responsible, in a real way, to them. Every effort has been made to see that these new priests were given good assignments with competent and dedicated intern supervisors. And yet, all persons involved are so human. Once more, a human bishop has to rely on the grace of God and the goodness of His people.

There are those who wonder why a young and talented man would commit himself to a life of service as a priest. "The Church is dying," they would say. "Celibacy is outdated." "People in the Church are so passive and they get crushed by the power-structure." "Talents aren't used." "Who knows what it will be like ten years from now!" Even if these are overstatements, a young man could easily look at the confusions in the Church and wonder why he should add to it. A college senior in love with a fine young woman might really be "turned off" by the law of celibacy in a male-dominated church. And yet, year after year — thanks be to God! — young men come forward and say, "I am ready and willing" to serve God's people, to live for Christ in a

particular way, to speak His Word. Undoubtedly, the grace of God! How else do you explain it?

Then, there is the goodness of the People of God. If that is lacking, surely we will all fail. Sustaining our priests is not an easy task. Every man who comes to the altar is different. One needed only to attend the ten unique ordination ceremonies this Spring to know that fact. There is no single stereotyped caricature of a priest today. Each priest must be accepted as an individual and as a person with all the human limitations.

Perhaps Father Charles Mulligan, our Diocesan Director of Human Development, said it best at Father William Spilly's first Mass at St. Christopher's Church in North Chili when he commented, "No parishioners can expect their priest to be what they are unwilling to be. If they expect their priest to be a leader in prayer, they must be a people of prayer. If their priest is to be a man of service and compassion, they, too, must be a people willing to serve compassionately. No priest can form community where community is not wanted."

With this in mind then, I send you ten talented, energetic, prayerful men who are also very idealistic, unique and very human. Just as I have asked them to share in my responsibilities as bishop, so, too, they will ask you to share in their priesthood. Together, we accept this challenging task, realizing that God's grace is with us.

earlier pronouncements advocating a role for Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the future status of the city of Jerusalem.

In his opening remarks, Pope Paul recalled that June 21 marked the 11th anniversary of his election as Pope. He expressed his gratitude to God for the guidance given him in his "work as pontiff" in an era "which, notwithstanding everything, has signified and still signifies an epoch of extraordinary vitality for the Church."

"Our Lord," he said, "has given all of us grace to live in a wonderful hour in the history of salvation. It is up to us to see to it that this hour of grace does not pass in vain."

Alluding to the present time of the Church as "a moment which is inspiring but filled with tension," the pontiff emphasized that the Church — "in accordance with her religious and human character" — is at the service "of all mankind without distinction of mentality, race, religion, or culture."

Glancing over the post-conciliar Church, he said he could not refrain from expressing his admiration "for the vitality which she demonstrates — for the numerous and authentic manifestations of evangelical renewal, for the deep fidelity of the vast majority of diocesan, parochial, and religious communities, for the abnegation with which bishops and priests carry on in a ministry which has become so difficult in many countries, for the testimony of very many consecrated people dedicated entirely to God and the good of souls in heavily populated cities, as well as in the solitude of the cloister, in mission lands, and in growing suburban areas, and for the slow and patient progress toward the unity of all Christians."

At the same time, Pope Paul noted some of the problems still plaguing the Church.

Speaking of priests, he said: "We know that in their efforts to

find their proper place in the community, some priests have confused their particular mandate with demands of a social, political, and pragmatic nature. (They) have been induced to imitate the world and to immerse themselves in secularism.

"We would like to say to all priests, as an encouragement to the fervent and as a caution to the restless, that the only identity for us is that which we have with Christ. He is our model. He Who was poor and humble, and Who lived and died only for the glory of the Father and the salvation of souls."

On the crisis in priestly vocations and vocations to the religious life, which he attributed to "widespread secularism," and "certain theological approaches," the pontiff said:

"It is therefore necessary to counteract the situation with the serene reaffirmation of those things that make the priestly and the religious vocation great, beautiful, and indispensable in the Church.

"It is for the Church to ensure that the seeds of vocations do not die through a lack of the interior nourishment of piety, and of adequate training, both human and supernatural."

The Pope then alluded to "the sufferings, the limitations, and the pressures" brought to bear on the Church "in various parts of the world."

"For our part," he said, "we continue to keep this suffering Church close to our heart as the especially beloved part of the great Christian family to which there goes all our affection and to which we devote our humble but faithful service."

Presumably in reference to his efforts to reach detente with eastern European Communist countries, the Pope said, "We shall not grow weary in making all possible effort to help the Church and alleviate her difficulties."

Passing then to the general world situation, the Pope spoke of the drought "which continues to lay waste a large part of the African continent, from Mauritania to Ethiopia, making a new and urgent appeal" to the charity of all Christians, and "to all men, for a renewed and combined effort to provide adequate and timely assistance."

"And how could we not call to mind," he went on, "the continuing tragedy and outbreaks of violence in Northern Ireland, as well as the many other still painful points of dispute in the world?"

"Thus," he said, "we do not wish to be silent about the new ray of hope for peace in the Middle East, which has been kindled by the intense activity and the converging efforts of men in high posts of responsibility."

He was alluding to President Nixon's recent tour of four Arab countries and Israel and to the earlier negotiating efforts of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

"For our part," said the Pope, "We would not wish to fail to encourage all the responsible parties not to omit any effort of goodwill and political wisdom in the search for a just and becoming means of unravelling the problem, so difficult and so sad, concerning the destiny of the Palestinian people."

"We are, animated by sentiments of sincere friendship towards all the peoples of that glorious and tormented region. We are equally sensitive to the rights and legitimate aspirations of each of them."

"We share without distinction in the sorrow of one side and of the other, when they are struck by violence which creates victims among the innocent and the defenseless."

"We cannot but lift up our voice once again as an echo of mankind's conscience and man's need for justice on behalf of so many human beings who are also

hoping for peace and the end to a situation of neglect and of suffering that has been going on for so long."

The pontiff, adding "a word about Jerusalem," reaffirmed his hope that the "Holy City" may become "a sign of peace and concord" for "the three great spiritual families (Jews, Muslims, Christians)" who look to the city "as the center of religious perfection."

Toward the close of his address, the Pope expressed his hopes regarding Portugal's African territories of Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, and the Cape Verde Islands, in the aftermath of the coup of last April that overthrew the authoritarian regime of Premier Marcello Caetano.

"Our position as regards the problems which have arisen in these territories," said the Pope, "is to encourage a free and responsible evangelization and at the same time civil development" there.

He said he wished that "goodwill, the sense of justice and of the historical exigencies of the moment, and the understanding of the rights of the peoples of the territories in question and of legitimate common and higher interests may lead to that longed-for and satisfying solution that seems to be present in the desires and proposals of those responsible."

ROCHESTERIAN NAMED

Louisville [RNS] — Mrs. Virginia Davidson of Rochester, N.Y., was appointed vice moderator of the United Presbyterian Church at the denomination's annual General Assembly here. She was named by the Rev. Robert C. Lamar of Albany, N.Y., the elected moderator for the next year. Mrs. Davidson is a lay member of the Church's Support Agency.