

THE CHURCH 1974

Father Andrew Greeley

Few Catholics realize that 1975 will be a Holy or Jubilee Year. Among those who do know it, the notion probably stirs up nothing more than a "ho-hum." Some of the more progressive Catholics are doubtless ready to write off the Jubilee Year as one more relic of an archaic past.

In fact, the idea of a Jubilee is an extraordinarily exciting one. Far from being old-fashioned, it represents an attempt to sacralize time, to re-establish harmony between human life and the rhythms of nature that the most advanced historians of religion, religious sociologists, and psychologists can only vigorously applaud. In a world suddenly conscious of the environment and the ecological cycles, the Jubilee takes on a richness and an importance that is almost incalculable.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, the national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, has prepared a fascinating paper on the Jewish origins of the Jubilee ("Yubel" means "exult" and refers to the sounding of the shofar — the ram's horn — on the Day of Atonement, which announces the inauguration of the Jubilee Year.)

Rabbi Tanenbaum's comments are most interesting. "The Jubilee had for its aim the emancipation of the individual from the shackles of poverty, and the elimination of the various economic inequalities in the Jewish Commonwealth in accordance with the demands of Social Justice."

The Jubilee then is a year of liberation — spiritual liberation primarily, but a spiritual liberation which set four preconditions of liberation in the actual life of the people. In Rabbi Tanenbaum's words: "a) Human — liberation of the slaves; b) Economic — the moralization of the use of property and material goods; c) Ecological — liberation of the land; d) Educational — the creation of a spiritual democracy by devoting the Jubilee Year to intensive education of all men, women, children and 'resident aliens' in the teachings of the Torah."

The possibilities that could be found in those four kinds of liberation as a theme for Holy Year 1975 are immense. It could indeed become one of the most remarkable experiences in twentieth-century Catholicism — a time of study, prayer, reflection, planning, and (as the pope has made clear in his theme) reconciliation. We could pause, catch our breath from all the frantic confusion of the past decade and a half, get to know each other better, bury old conflicts and marshal our resources for a great revival in the final quarter of the century.

Of course, this isn't going to happen. We will have prayers, sermons, devotion, pilgrimages, pastoral letters — and nothing will change at all. We will go through rituals of reflection, rededication, and reconciliation, but nothing will happen. As Marc Tanenbaum notes, "Isaiah scores the hypocrisy and worthlessness of ritual without righteousness." Well, Isaiah, get ready, because that's what we are going to embark on.

Take the principal theme of reconciliation. Our leaders will

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harangue us about our obligation of reconciliation with them. They mean, of course, that reconciliation implies that we give in and go along with them on everything. It does not imply, perish the thought, that they re-examine themselves, do penance for their mistakes and failures and become reconciled to the rest of us. And of course if the leaders do not frankly reappraise their own behavior and admit their own mistakes, how can we expect the followers to do the same thing?

Become reconciled to those who have left the priesthood? Or to those who have been pushed to the fringes because they dared to express themselves? Become reconciled to the hollow and powerless priests' senates and personnel boards? Become reconciled to the religious women who continue to be treated like second-class citizens? Be reconciled to the scholars and intellectuals who for all practical purposes have been drummed out of the Church? Be reconciled to the laity who think that the Church's hardness of heart on marital sexuality has betrayed them? Be reconciled to the lay newspaper editors who have been fired or to the clerical editors who have been dismissed? Be reconciled to due process, to democratic participation in the choice of bishops, to pastoral councils with real power, to experimentation with married clergy — to all those things that the overwhelming majority of the clergy endorsed in the study the bishops themselves paid for? Be reconciled with the black and Latino Catholics who are excluded for all practical purposes from the power structure? Be reconciled with the young people who think that obsession with ecclesiastical organization is a foolish waste of time?

Don't be silly, friend. That's now what the Jubilee is about. It's about all those people crawling back to us and doing penance for having the sinful pride to disagree with us.

Reconciliation absolutely demands that we have the sensitivity to put ourselves into another's position and sympathetically understand where he is. Such a change of heart may occur during 1975, but it will be one of the Holy Spirit's great accomplishments of the last 2,000 years if it does.

Retirees Needed

Chicago — A call was issued this week to retired priests all over the country to consider volunteering for limited service in the American Home Missions. The call is part of a new national plan to help alleviate the shortage of priests in the home missions, according to Father Joseph A. Cusack, president of the Catholic Church Extension Society.

(While welcoming the Extension invitation, a top diocesan spokesman told the Courier-Journal that all of the retired clergymen in the area are "right on the firing line," and still pursuing active ministries, even though they have relinquished administrative positions. The spokesman also noted there would be no problem if retired priests accepted the challenge.)

Called "Operation Resident," the extension plan will make use of the talents and energies of retired priests who wish to maintain a level of apostolic work.

The mission assignments can be set up for two weeks, two months, two years or longer. They can be limited in scope, to whatever duties the volunteer priest wishes. All details of the assignment are worked out between the retired priest and the bishop of the mission diocese.

Retired priests wishing to donate their services to the home missions may write Operation Resident, The Catholic Church Extension Society, 1307 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60605.

FREE CONCERT

The Greece Symphony Orchestra will perform at Arcadia High School, 120 Island Cottage Rd., at 8 p.m. Friday, July 19. Dr. David Fetter will conduct with Oscar Hauser as concert master.

The program will include Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 and Greg's Piano Concerto in A Minor, Opus 16. Featured soloist for the concerto will be 18-year-old Fredrica Prior. There will be no admission charge.

Two Pastors Elected To Personnel Board

Fathers Raymond Wahl and John S. Whalen have been elected to the Diocesan Personnel Board, the Pastoral Office announced this week. Each will serve a three-year term.

Father Wahl is pastor of Auburn's Sacred Heart parish, which he established in 1956. Father Whalen became pastor of St. Patrick Mt. Morris in June,

after 15 years as pastor of Our Lady of Mercy, Greece.

The personnel board, which handles clerical assignments, consists of two pastors, two associate pastors and two priests who are not in parish work. Their terms are staggered. Candidates are nominated by the pastors of the diocese and elected in a poll of all the priests.

Provincial Named

The appointment of Sister Annette Mattie as Provincial of the Northwest Province of the Sisters of the Cenacle was recently announced by Mother Rita Foy, Superior General in Rome. Sister Annette is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Mattie, 351 Clover St.

A graduate of Our Lady of Mercy High School and Notre Dame College in Baltimore, Sister Annette received her Masters degree in religious education at Manhattanville, Purchase, N.Y. The Cenacle is a retreat house which offers various retreat programs and individual spiritual counseling.

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