

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

The U.S.A. — Close to Hell

A THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION PART V

The eminent social philosopher and psychologist, Erich Fromm, came to our "land of the free" some forty years ago, hopefully to



breathe the vibrant air of a country unpolluted by the breath of a Hitler. Today, forty years later, this liberated man feels that we are not entirely in hell but very close to it because of our unrestrained industrialism.

When we began this series of articles on reconciliation, did it enter your mind that ecology might be a topic for our prayerful meditation? Did you think for a moment about the responsibility of our stewardship of the Lord's gifts to us?

Until recently, we have taken the gifts of nature for granted. There they were — air and ocean, coal and natural gas, aluminum and oil, steer and salmon, wheat and milk and eggs, cars and boats and planes, drugs and electric lights — all were there, in their natural state or the products of our American genius, at our disposal now and forever. Nothing that we wanted could ever resist our American ingenuity. Some religious leaders even boasted that our material prosperity

was a sign of divine election — that we were a chosen people before whom all else would fall in the presence of blessed might.

But suddenly reality challenged us. Each day a new headline kept us humble. Last Pocket of Clear Air in United States Disappears; World Oxygen Level Threatened by Pesticides; Air Pollution will require Breathing Helmets by 1985; Chemical Fertilizers Called Threat to Water Resources; Experts Say Human Race May Have Only 35 Years Left." (Cf. Karl Menninger, Whatever Became of Sin p. 121)

And a sensitive theologian (Richard McCormick, SJ) observes the passing scene with this perception: "Every year Americans junk 7 million cars, 48 billion cans, 20 million tons of paper. Our industries pour out 165 million tons of waste and belch 172 million tons of smoke and fumes into the sky. We provide 50 per cent of the world's industrial pollution. An average of 3,000 acres of oxygen-producing earth per day (1,000,000 a year) fall beneath concrete and blacktop. The average American puts 1,500 pounds of pollutants into the atmosphere each year." (Richard A. McCormick, SJ, Notes on Moral Theology — 1970 — Theological Studies)

The frightening fact is that we have enlarged the enmity between us and the earth over which we have been assigned responsible stewardship. And the rupture cries for reconciliation. We Americans tend

to look on the world as a bottomless cookie jar. The world is a commodity and we are the consumers. "Since this life is either all there is or a vale of tears while we wait for a better life, it makes sense to raid the cookie jar. And so we profit, we pleasure, we pollute." (Cf. J. Barrie Shepherd, 'Theology for Ecology' — Catholic World 211, 1970, 172-75)

What has all of this to say about a Holy Year of Reconciliation? Simply this — God has given us not unrestricted power to do with the earth whatever we want, but **responsible stewardship** — and that means a careful management of what belongs to another. A steward **cares**, is concerned — he may never plunder or waste; he is responsible, can be called to account for his stewardship. ("The Earth is the Lord's." Psalm 24:1)

Above all, I believe that a Holy Year offers to each of us the grace of **accountability** for our stewardship for the Lord's abundant blessings. St. Augustine once commented on the necessity of the miraculous to awaken us from our 'ho-hum' attitude toward daily generosity of the Lord.

It takes a year of grace to change our habitual attitudes from rapist of earth to stewardship of His gifts. I would hate to think that fear would be our basic motivation. I prefer to believe that love of God and His image will lead us to a vision of an earth worthy of His benediction.

Pilgrimage Churches

St. Mary's, Corning

BY FATHER ROBERT F. McNAMARA

St. Mary's Church in Corning has been a pilgrimage church on several occasions of jubilee during its nearly 125 years of parochial existence. For example, Bishop McQuaid so designated it in the local Holy Year observance of 1901. Corning Catholics could fulfill the jubilee pilgrimage then by making two visits both to St. Mary's and to its chapel of ease at the other end of town, St. Patrick's. (St. Patrick's became a separate parish one year later.)

The first St. Mary's, built to accommodate the growing Catholic populace of immigrants (a few German, but most of them Irish) was a simple frame hall built at a cost of \$1,200 and dedicated on July 24, 1849. It remained a mission church until 1854, when, because of the rapid Catholic increase, it was made an independent parish.

The present St. Mary's Church, which today lifts up its gold cross in blessing from its southern hill, was planned during the Civil War, and completed at the beginning of the next decade. The pastor who engineered the project was Father Peter Golgan.

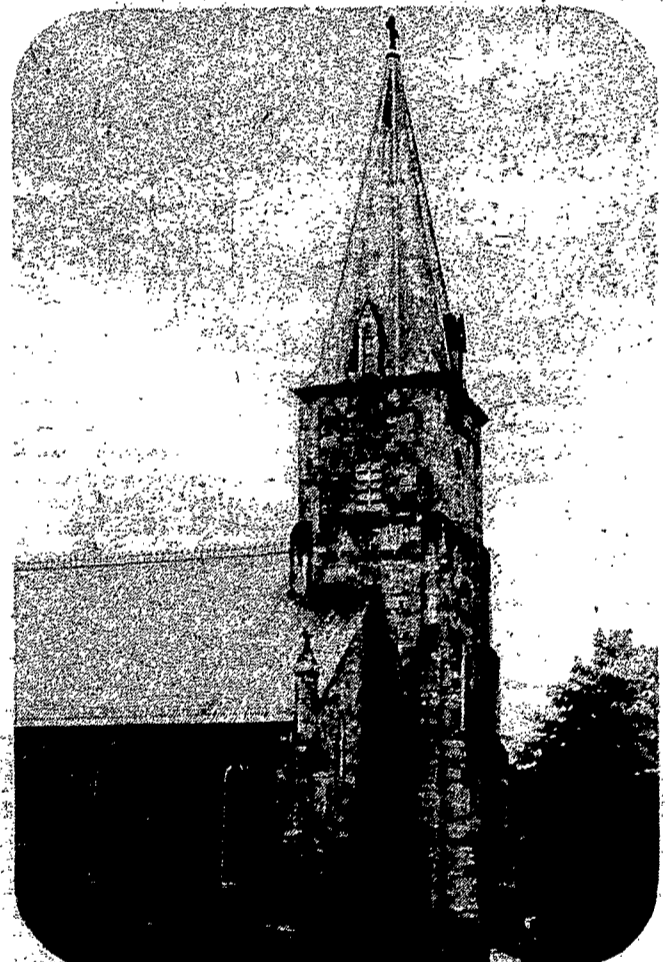
Bishop John Timon of Buffalo had ordered the construction of the original church in 1849. He was also on hand June 10, 1866, to lay the cornerstone of this second building, constructed of Corning granite. But it was the second bishop of Buffalo, Rt. Rev. Stephen V. Ryan, C.M., who performed the rite of dedication of the finished church, on Oct. 8, 1971. On hand by special invitation of the pastor, was Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid

of Rochester, who had also agreed to give a lecture that evening on "Rome and Her Churches." His presence was prophetic. Fifteen years later, Steuben County, along with Chemung, Schuyler and Tioga Counties, was transferred from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Buffalo to that of the bishop of Rochester. Thus, "St. Mary, Mother of Mercy" in Corning, became one of Bishop McQuaid's churches.

A point of interest: when the first Mass was offered in the new church, on July 12, 1870, the deacon of the solemn Mass was a Franciscan priest who had just relinquished the presidency of St. Bonaventure College at Allegany. He was Father Diomedea Falconio. Later on, he was recalled to Rome, and then sent back to America as an archbishop and apostolic delegate. After serving in this office from 1902 to 1911, he returned to Rome and was made a cardinal.

Father Golgan added a wooden, slate-covered spire around 1880. His successor, Father James M. Bustin rebuilt the spire, lengthened the nave, and added a new apse, sacristy and Sisters' chapel. The church continued to be used during reconstruction (1900-1903). A local paper observed: "It was remarked this morning that anyone could detect a member of St. Mary's that attended services yesterday morning from the plaster on their clothes after service hours."

One typically Corning addition (Corning was then famous for its cut-glass tableware) was the church's inside-vestibule doors, glazed with plate glass cut by local craftsmen. Some of these can still be seen in the south transept exit, where they were placed in 1946 during a redecorating project by Father John A. Smith,



the fifth pastor. The sixth pastor, Father Thomas F. Brennan, has accommodated the sanctuary to the requirements of the revised liturgy.

Visible far across the valley, St. Mary, seems to be inviting pilgrims: "Come up to Jerusalem, to the holy city!"

Palestinian 'Aspirations' Theme of Papal Document

Castelgandolfo (RNS) — Pope Paul, in a letter marking the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, reiterated his concern for the plight of Palestinian refugees and his support for their "legitimate aspirations."

"May our paternal solicitude," he said, "bring comfort and encouragement to the refugees,

who for years have been living under inhuman conditions. Unfortunately, such a state of affairs has produced in many Palestinians a sense of frustration, and in some of them, such anguish and desperation as to move them to acts of violent protests, which, with sorrow, we have been constrained strenuously to deplore."

The papal letter was addressed to Msgr. John C. Nolan, the American president of the mission, which was founded in 1949 by Pope Pius XII.

The mission, which was established at the instigation of Pope Paul when, as Msgr. Giovanni Montini, he was Deputy

Vatican Secretary of State, is the papal relief agency for some 1.5 million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Gaza strip. It distributes food, clothing, and other essentials, and maintains medical clinics, orphanages, libraries, refugee camp schools and chapels.

"The work of the mission," Pope Paul said, "has been one of the clearest signs of the Holy See's concern for the welfare of the Palestinians, who are particularly dear to us because they are people of the Holy Land, because they include followers of Christ, and because they have been and still are so tragically tried."

After expressing his "heartfelt sharing in the sufferings" of the refugees, and his "support for their legitimate aspirations," the pontiff voiced measured optimism for the future:

"It seems to us, nevertheless, that this is the moment for all Palestinians to look to the future with constructive, like-minded, and responsible attitudes, as the hope becomes ever stronger that their particular problems will be discussed, and a solution for them will be found during the current general negotiations for peace in the Middle East." (Talks are being held in Geneva).

Pope Paul urged the Mission for Palestine to continue, with

renewed fervor, to give assistance, "without distinction of nationality or religion," to those "who have suffered or are suffering in any way as a result of the repeated, conflicts which have devastated the Middle East."

SHERIFF'S AUCTION

An auction of unclaimed property at the Monroe County Sheriff's Department will be held at 7 tomorrow night, Aug. 8, in the sheriff's garage, 130 S. Plymouth. Among the items going up for bids are 50 bicycles, two television sets, guitars, radios, tools, toys and clothing, the announcement said.

WARNING

The American Cancer Society estimates that 115,000 Americans will develop skin cancer this year. It's a form of cancer that can be prevented by avoidance of excessive exposure to the sun.