



**Signing**

Robert Bates, left, president of the National Catholic Deaf Association, receives the Better World Award from Richard Morales, director of the Gabriel Richard Institute in Rochester. Father Thomas Erdle, right, translates the presentation for the deaf. The award was part of graduation ceremonies marking presentation of 31 diplomas to those who participated in a three-day institute at Becket Hall which brought together individuals from several states and Canada.

Photo by Susan McKinney

**WORD FOR SUNDAY**

**Father in Heaven**

**Sunday's Readings:** (R1) Jer. 38:4-6, 8-10, (R2) Hebr. 12:1-4, (R3) Lk. 12:49-53

As Jesus was approaching His Passion, He said to His disciples, "I have come to light a fire on earth." What is this fire? Certainly not the fire of the "charity" that masquerades as an easy-going tolerance of all creeds and all religions — the good-natured "live and let live" sort of a thing. Had Christianity been this kind of religion, the Roman Empire would have found a place for Christ in its Pantheon. There would have been no three centuries of intermittent persecution.

Against this false charity, Vatican II warned in its Decree on Ecumenism: "The way and method in which the Catholic faith is expressed should never become an obstacle to dialogue with our brethren." But the Decree went on to admonish: "It is, of course, essential that the doctrine should be clearly presented in its entirety. Nothing is so foreign to the spirit of ecumenism as a false irenicism, in which the purity of Catholic doctrine suffers loss and its genuine and certain meaning is clouded" (#11). Our old theology was polemic: it sought to prove and disprove. It emphasized what separated Christians more than what united them. The Council advocated an irenic theology, that is, one that is conciliatory, that seeks Christian unity — but never at the price of truth (false irenicism). The true mother of men cannot divide the body of Christ's teachings.

"I have come to light a fire on earth." If this fire be not charity, what then is it? Most likely, it is the fire of judgment, of separation of good from bad.

That fire would be ignited by the baptism of Christ's crucifixion. This would bring not peace on earth, but war. "I have come for division." Allegiance to Him would split up families, would cause a baptism of fire — the suffering of separation from love ones, of misunderstanding, of downright persecution for the sake of justice.

Read the poignant Acts of the martyrdom of Sts. Perpetua and Felicity and see how a mother's heart was torn in two between her love for family and her love for Christ. Francis of Assisi renounced his father to have only

a Father in heaven. St. Clare gave up title, wealth and kinsmen to become the bride of Christ. St. Frances de Chantal's son flung himself across the doorstep to try to stop his mother from entering religious life. She had to step over his prostrate body to follow Christ. Thomas More, rather than deny Christ, preferred the Tower of London to kith and kin.

The First Reading shows how, even before Christ, adherence to the will of God divided the great and saintly Jeremiah — that pillar of iron — from his fellow-citizens and relates how much he had to suffer at their hands. The Second Reading urges us to persevere in spite of such difficulties: "I have come for division" — a sign of contradiction set for the rise and fall of many in Israel.

It has always been so. The world crucified two kinds of people on Calvary: the innocent Christ and the guilty thieves. It crucifies criminals, because they disturb the peace of society; it crucifies the innocent, because they disturb its peace of conscience.

Thus today we see a systematic attack mounting against the Church, especially against her priests and religious. Hardly can one see a play, a movie or television program without some slur being cast at priests or Sisters. For instance, the film *Papillon* went out of its way to caricature religious and denigrate the Church. Our modern pundits have not the honesty of a Victor Hugo. Though he had an axe to grind with the Church for putting his works on the Index, yet in *Les Miserables* he was artist enough to portray a Catholic Bishop as a Catholic Bishop generally is.

Worldlings do not like what the Church has to say. She disturbs consciences on such things as abortion, contraception, injustice, and so on. Therefore crush the infamous thing!

If the Gospel began and ended with a comforting "stay as you are" message, it would be welcomed everywhere. But because Christianity is uncompromising, demands a change of heart, total commitment to Christ, it is a sword: it divides good from bad. It is a Promethean Gospel bringing a fire from heaven that enkindles the hate of destruction in those who reject it, but cleanses, purifies, transforms those who accept it.

**Youth Group Sets Bike Hike**

The Holy Ghost Youth Community will hold its second annual bike hike to raise funds for the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, Sunday, Aug. 18, starting at 3 p.m.

Bike hikers will leave from Holy Ghost Church, on Coldwater Road, off Buffalo Road, and pedal a 20-mile course through the Town of Gates. At the close of the hike, participants will be rewarded with an evening of movie comedies.

According to John Nugent, the group's president, hikers hope to raise \$1,000 through the event.

**CAR WASH**

The Joy Folk Group of St. Helen's parish will hold a car wash Aug. 24 and 25 at the Schoeffler Service Station, 2061 Chili Ave., to raise money for transportation. The singers perform without compensation at nursing homes, children's homes and churches in the Rochester area.

**Holy Year Family Hour Urged by Catholic See**

St. Cloud, Minn. [RNS] — Roman Catholic families in the St. Cloud diocese are being asked to set aside one hour each week for prayer and other family activity in connection with the 1975 Holy Year program of spiritual renewal and reconciliation.

Bible reading, as long as all the family participates.

Ideas for use of time suggested by the committee include: starting with a period of prayer or religious discussion, reading and discussing a chapter of a book, a family sing-along, etc.

Patterned after a successful Mormon program, it is entitled "The Holy Year Family Hour" and the time set aside is meant to be planned and conducted exclusively by and for the entire family, according to the Holy Year Committee of the diocese.

It calls for one member of the family to plan the hour each week. Some or all of the time may be used for prayer, devotions,

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