



Photo by Anthony J. Costello

Reaching Out!

The faithful reach to Pope Paul VI after his general audience in Castelgandolfo. At left rear is Bishop Joseph L.

Hogan of the Rochester diocese who joined with the Pope in blessing members of the audience on September 11.

'Every Man Has a Right to Life'

My Dear People,

Our late, beloved Pope John XXIII in his encyclical letter of April, 1963, Peace on Earth, reminds us that

"Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely, that every human being is a person, that is, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Indeed, precisely because he is a person he has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature. And as these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable so they cannot in any way be surrendered.

If we look upon the dignity of the human person in the light of divinely revealed truth, we cannot help but esteem it far more highly, for men are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, they are by grace the children and friends of God and heirs of eternal glory.

Every man has a right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services. Therefore, a human being also has the right to security in cases of

sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, unemployment, or in any other case in which he is deprived of the means of subsistence through no fault of his own. (n. 9, 10, 11)

Today we begin our diocesan observance of the Respect Life Program which is now in its third year. This program continues to focus on the sanctity of life and the growing number of situations in which human life and human dignity are endangered or challenged. The objectives of our year long program are to raise the consciousness of all American Catholics regarding possible ways of promoting respect for human life in all its dimensions and of motivating us to establish a just social order in which people's rights are assured and protected.

The 1974 Respect Life Program will focus on the rights of people that must be recognized and supported. Particular attention must be given to the rights of the unborn, the mentally retarded, the aging and those in prison. The program will also direct attention to efforts in our society that can assure a greater enjoyment of basic rights and legitimate hopes — a quality health care system, better food production and distribution, and some form of amnesty to reconcile those who could not in conscience take part in war. Finally, this year's programs will look at situations where human life is endangered or seriously limited — as in the case of

euthanasia, gun control and poverty.

I call upon all of you good people to support actively this year's Respect Life Program. Your parish, through its liturgies and programs, will offer you a challenge and an opportunity to be involved in this human life concern. Likewise, I take this opportunity to commend all the groups and organizations in our 12 county diocese which promotes every individual's right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life. To be involved in the problems of people is to bear testimony that we truly love and care for one another. The 1974 respect Life Program provides us with an opportunity to manifest our Christian love for one another.

With my blessing, I am

Devotedly yours in Christ

Pastoral Council Unit Publishes Constitution

Full text of Constitution is on Pages 12-15.

By SHARON DARNIEDER

This week's Courier-Journal carries the final draft of the

Pastoral Council constitution, the prelude to the setting up of that consultative group which Bishop Joseph L. Hogan describes as his "fondest hope."

According to Father Douglas

Hoffman, director of Pastoral Ministry, the constitution represents the "latest stage of bringing to fruition the bishop's hope for broad participation of the laity in the decisions of the diocese."

As the most broadly based diocesan consultative group, the Pastoral Council's purpose is to share with the bishop its insights into diocesan needs and resources.

The constitution, composed by the Pastoral Council Formation Committee, will go through the diocesan decision-making process this fall. This includes presentation to the Priests and Sisters Councils and the regions.

If approved it will go to Bishop Hogan for ratification. Father Hoffman noted that it was hoped that the Pastoral Council would be established in the Spring.

Father Hoffman said he was pleased with the constitution and the concept of a Pastoral Council and added that he felt it was a "really big thing."

"I like to think of it in terms of a metaphor," he commented with a smile. "Just as the railroad men in Utah in 1869 drove in the golden spike joining the Union Pacific to the Central Pacific, thus establishing a transcontinental railroad, so the establishment of the Pastoral Council will join the parishes and regions to the

bishop and open the flow of traffic of insights and concerns back and forth."

He added that the reason for printing the constitution in its entirety in the Courier was so "everyone can have a look at it."

"The Pastoral Council intends to make decisions by consensus in striking contrast to the American practice of majority rule," he said.

"There are great hopes on the part of the Pastoral Office staff that they will get feedback from the regions through the Pastoral Council on programs and unmet needs of the diocese."

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