

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

With Mary — God's Mother

The Gospel proclaimed by the Lord Jesus was lived in the faith community of the infant Church long before the four Gospels were written. Our Blessed Lord had assured His faithful followers that His Spirit would be with them to help them recall all He had said and done and to give them a deeper understanding of His message. It was only after His Gospel was proclaimed by His disciples to Jews and Gentiles that the Holy Spirit inspired the Evangelists to put the message into writing.



It is interesting to note that in these days when Marian devotion seems to be losing ground among many, the role of Mary in our redemption is receiving greater recognition from scholars who are searching the Scriptures. It is such a solid Biblical foundation that assures us of an authentic devotion to the Mother of God.

And what do the Scriptures tell us about her?

1—There is a parallel between Mary and Eve just as there is a parallel between Christ and Adam. As Christ is 'Adam in reverse' (Phil. 2, 6; 1 Cor. 15, 22, 45); so Mary is 'Eve in reverse'. Eve's disobedience is the starting point of the sinful rebellion of the human race against God's will. Mary's humble response to the divine will is the starting point of the redemption of the human race from sin: "Here am I," said Mary; "I am the Lord's servant; as you have spoken, so be it." (Luke 1:30) Eve's pride which gave birth to the

haughty ambition to play God (Gen. 3:5) is contrasted with the humility of God's handmaiden (Luke 1:48).

2—The melody of her Magnificat highlights a world dimension of redemption — again contrasted with Eve who was sent "empty away" from Paradise (Gen. 3:23). Mary announces the good news that the hungry will be "satisfied with good things." (Luke 1:53). The sadness of the old creation will be changed into joy. While Eve conceived in sorrow (Gen. 3:1), Mary proclaims joy: "My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." (Luke 1:47)

3—The new liturgy in all four Eucharistic prayers has the phrase "with Mary" and Scripture justifies this simple expression of our need for her company if we are to enter our heavenly inheritance: For it assures us that with her we begin to learn the need to surrender our lives to Mystery — on the margins of which our cherished calculations, plans and desires often collapse. Where sober speculation could never resolve her question, "How can this be?" (Luke, 1:33), her belief that "Nothing is impossible to God" (Luke 1:38) resolved her anxieties and doubts. Mary reminds us that without our willingness to surrender to Mystery, we will never be awakened to the presence of God in our lives especially when He summons us to Calvary. It is our companionship with Mary in Mystery which alone allows God to transform the cares, anxieties and disappointments of life into the redemptive plan and to illumine for us with redemptive light the heavy darkness which life sometimes is.

4—If we search the Scriptures we can find in Mary the simplicity of the Christian vocation: She heard the Word of God; nourished the Word within herself and brought forth Christ to the world. Her spirit calls all Christians to do what Christ did: "Happy the womb that bore you" but He replied: "Still happier those who hear the Word of God and keep it." (Luke 11:28-29) Our vocation summons us to give witness to the omnipresent power of the Word-made-flesh in the concrete circumstances of our life. It is by living out the Word of God in every dimension of our existence that we bring forth Christ to our world.

5—And if we search the Scriptures, we can reach the conviction with Mary of the redemptive worth of living our ordinary human life. She forces us to question our value system. Hers was a marginal existence — the struggling, nonluxurious existence provided by a carpenter of that era. For 30 years her life was hidden in an obscure province of the Roman world. Her daily tasks were undoubtedly the routine work of a mother. Through prayerful faith such as Mary's we can learn to accept the ordinary in our lives to build up our relationship with Christ. The Sermon on the Mount assures us that God's fatherly care extends to the seemingly insignificant aspects of our lives.

I am convinced that we are witnessing the dawn of a new era of devotion to Mary that will endure as long as we continue to search the Scriptures to find in her again what the early Church saw in her — the prism through which the brilliance of Christ's redemption is refracted.

Palmyra Church Notes 125 Years

Last week parishioners of St. Anne's Church in Palmyra reenacted the horse and buggy arrival of the first priests in Wayne County. The reenactment was part of the 125th Jubilee Celebration at St. Anne's.

The anniversary celebration will be highlighted May 31 with a bike hike for 7th and 8th graders, a Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving, and a dinner dance. Concelebrants for the Mass include Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, Father William Hickey, pastor, and four priests formerly associated with the parish: Father John Maxwell, retired pastor of St. Vincent De Paul in Churchville; Msgr. Frank Kelly, pastor of a Pennsylvania parish; Father Thomas O'Keefe, associate pastor of St. James Church in Rochester; and Msgr. John Ball, a retired pastor living at St. Francis DeSales in Geneva.

Other events during the month included Jubilee First Holy Communion and Jubilee Confirmation, a youth Mass and record hop, a special Mother's Day tribute to mothers, and a fashion show.

A Mass for deceased parishioners will be celebrated June 7. The new altar in the cemetery will be dedicated and the graves will be blessed. The color guards of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion will perform together. The following day there is to be communal anointing of the sick.

Father Hickey reported that the parishioners hope to refurbish the sanctuary as their memorial gift.

Home masses will be celebrated throughout the year.

Palmyra, the "Queen of the Erie," was already 60 years old and a prosperous center of

commerce when Father Edmund O'Connor of Canandaigua organized the town's recently arrived Irish Catholic immigrants into a mission in 1849. Fathers McBride of Oswego and Riley of Rochester held Masses in homes and halls until Bishop John Timon of Buffalo appointed Father John Touhey as Palmyra's first resident pastor. At that time, the parish served all of Wayne and part of Monroe County.

According to the church history written by Anne Batterby and published in St. Anne's memorial booklet, Father Michael Gilbride succeeded Father Touhey in 1852 and just two years later Father John O'Donnely followed Father Gilbride to Palmyra. A few months after his arrival Father O'Donnely was killed by a train in Rochester.

Father Thomas Walsh was appointed to succeed the deceased pastor, but he soon was followed by Father William Casey in August, 1855. Father Casey, long remembered and loved for his work in the parish, arrived at a most difficult period. In the previous five years the parish had four pastors; with Father O'Donnely's death coming as a severe blow. On top of that the mood of the times was anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic. The parish needed leadership and counsel.

Father Casey bought land with a small house on it for use as a rectory. Construction of a church began in 1859. It was in use, but not completed by 1860. It cost \$4,000.

Concerned about the traveling distance for some parishioners, Father Casey also purchased lots in Macedon, Fairport, Victor, and Ontario. Chapels were built on all of these sites, except Ontario.

Father Casey ministered at these chapels until they became separate parishes.

Following the Civil War, the church was completed in 1870 when the sanctuary and vestry were constructed, the pews built, the walls frescoed, and the altar erected. Ten years later stained glass windows were added. Father Casey, suffering from poor health, retired in 1893, having brought much new life to the parishioners.

In September of 1893 Father James E. Hartley came to St. Anne's. During his 27 year pastorate the belfry was built and vestibule added. A church bell was donated. Father Hartley was also responsible for the building of a church in Marion, which was dedicated in 1914.

In 1920 the Rosary and Altar Society was founded by the then assistant pastor, Father John Ball. Now Monsignor Ball, he will return for the Mass of Thanksgiving, May 31. The Society has given the church the large altar, carpeting for the sanctuary, and vestments. A Sacred Heart League, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Holy Name Society were formed. The last has provided the church with a new roof, a vestment case, and an altar railing.

During World War II, 28 men from St. Anne's Parish served in the Armed Services. The first from Palmyra to die was a St. Anne's parishioner, James R. Hickey, in whose honor the American Legion Post in Palmyra was formed after the war.

Father Hartley died in the rectory March 23, 1920. Father Edward J. Dwyer succeeded him and undertook modernization of

the heating and lighting of the church and beautification of the cemetery. He died July 4, 1930.

His successor, Father William Doran, headed construction of a parish hall and the present vestry. Then in the winter of 1942 a leak in the gas main caused an explosion and fire. The church was closed for eight months, during which the new hall was used for services. When Father Doran requested donations for the church he was surprised to receive the full amount.

During World War II, 68 men from St. Anne's went to war. One was killed, Terence Crowley, who is buried in St. Anne's cemetery. A gift from the congregation of \$3,200 was divided among the returning men.

Palmyra's council of the Knights of Columbus was organized in 1947.

1959 saw Father Doran hospitalized for cancer of the mouth. During his illness, Father John Healy, who was himself not well, was appointed administrator of the parish. He remained after Father Doran's recovery and fulfilled many pastoral duties. He was responsible for the construction of the parish school and formation of the parish council. The school has since been closed.

Fisher Graduates Include 44 Women

The first women to spend four years in undergraduate study at St. John Fisher College received their degrees Sunday afternoon. There were 44 of them, in a class numbering 318.

The commencement address was delivered by Dr. M. Richard Rose, who became president of Alfred University last year after a

tour with the Defense Department as deputy assistant secretary for education.

but the building is used as the Christian Formation Center, directed now by Sister Mary Ann Raymond, SSJ.

Father Healy died July 22, 1972, of a heart attack. Father Doran died at St. Anne's Home in Rochester in August, 1973.

Since the days of Father Healy, the Redemptorist Fathers have assisted at St. Anne's Church. When St. Joseph's, the Redemptorist church and rectory in downtown Rochester burned, the parishioners helped them to replace their personal belongings.

Following Father Healy, the present pastor, Father William Hickey, arrived in August, 1972. Father George Wiant of the Human Development team in Wayne County, also lives in St. Anne's rectory.

Under Father Hickey's leadership the church bulletin has become weekly. Ushers and lay readers participate in each service. A new choir and young people's folk group have been organized.

The church's history likened him to Father Casey in his influence and concern. His chief goal has been to strengthen the community life of the people of his parish.

The baccalaureate Mass was celebrated Saturday afternoon by Father Charles J. Lavery, Fisher president, with Father John Hempel of Becket Hall as homilist.