

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

A Tribute to Our Graduates

When I was principal of DeSales High School, graduation was a time when school life was "changed — not taken away" (to accommodate a phrase from the Resurrection Mass preface). Classes and discipline cases and the details of administration fell away to be replaced by cleaning and painting and working out new schedules.

Now, as I attend graduations and present diplomas, I am struck by how dramatically the lives of these young men and women will be changed. They will go on to jobs, to special career training, to marriage — to the many directions their lives will take them. And they will go with power.

The power they take with them will be the power of education — information, understandings, concepts, skills, talents developed and all that is implied in that word, "education."

Obviously, the Christian sees an

obligation to use any gift in a responsible way. But this is especially true of the gift of power. Power used without principle is a dangerous thing. The events of recent years have taught this lesson anew to us Americans. It is most important that our graduates learn the lesson; the power of an education must be used with wisdom, sensitivity and a sense of service.

The experience of Jesus is a good example for us. Matthew's Gospel tells us how Satan asked Jesus to use this power for His own comfort. "Tell these stones to become bread." Jesus would have none of it. Then he invited Jesus to challenge God. "Throw yourself down." Again, Jesus would not comply. Finally, he urged the Lord to use his power for amassing wealth, prestige, more power. "All these I will give you, if . . ." But the "if" part was unsatisfactory; Jesus had been given His power for other things.

The graduate, too, is faced with options. The power of education can be used for selfish purposes, or as an excuse to think God is no longer involved or necessary in his life, or it can be used to pursue further prestige and power. How, in fact, that power gets used will in large measure depend on the personal principles and values that motivate its use.

These young men and women will go into a variety of vocations. Many who have been classmates will never see each other again. Yet, in the providence of God, their use of their talents, the power released by their education, will contribute to one another and the whole community. It is bigger and more profound than simple economics; it is Paul's vision of the body of Christ made whole by the variety of its members.

I wish the graduates every blessing and pray that, as they have been gifted with power, they will indeed use it with principle.

I ask God's blessings also on the parents and teachers who brought these young people to this milestone in their lives. So many people have collaborated for so many years to nurture the gift which is their education. I congratulate them all.

In a special way I commend those parents, teachers and benefactors who have made the sacrifices which continue to make our Catholic schools a reality. This generosity is testimony to the concern we share that the values of the Gospel will direct the lives of the graduates whom we salute.

Refugees

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"Well, here are the Gnos," she says.

"They didn't know anything about us, we didn't know anything about them, they just had to trust," Gillette recalls.

Three days later the Red Cross calls the Gnettes asking if "their family" had arrived; three days later, an embarrassed Mrs. Nancy Shaffer from the operative agency the Catholic Family Center still hasn't called the family, still doesn't know the Gnos' name.

No matter, Lita shrugs, "The important thing is to love one another so there won't be any more wars, any more refugees — but that takes work."

Than leans into a smile, English is his biggest difficulty.

Federal Aid For Refugees

New York (RNS) — After weeks of unanswered questions, confusion and some haggling, channels have been cleared for all four religious agencies involved in Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee resettlement to receive federal assistance.

Contracts provide \$500 per person in public funds for each refugee resettled by a voluntary organization. The money comes from \$405 million for refugee evacuation and resettlement appropriated by Congress on May 16.

Church World Service (CWS), an agency of the National Council of Churches, and United HIAS, a Jewish agency, agreed in principle on June 10 to sign contracts.

Migration departments of the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) and the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. (LCUSA) signed earlier, the USCC on June 2 and the Lutheran agency initially in mid-May, with several ensuing revisions.

One question which the voluntary groups still want answered is whether Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees placed in American communities will be eligible to apply for such public services as Social Security, Aid to the Handicapped, Medicare and Medicaid.

Protest: "No you can understand me, you answer well."

"Yes," desperate to please.

Gillette breaks the tension "The rototiller." James Jr. laughs, he has been sitting silently on the porch.

Rototiller springs into Than's memory and he swells into a hearty smile.

"What happened?"

It is evident the story will be told for many years that Than's first experience with the rototiller was a disaster. Seems he plowed down one row, tried to turn the machine, couldn't, and proceeded to plow up his neighbor's lot.

"Turn it off," Gillette shouted. And after a chase, the machine was halted. Everybody laughs. The Gnettes for the memory. Than and Dung for the reporter.

Another story: Lita says that she made up signs reading "Refrigerator," "Stove," and the like and labeled her kitchen. During the night Bernadine, the Gillette pre-schooler decided to switch the signs around, to the confusion and enjoyment of all.

The "acculturation process" is what Gillette calls the family's most difficult experience.

The little Gnos are repulsed by American staples such as hamburger. Dung, Lita counters, prepared "an absolutely delicious fish dinner" the evening before.

The Vietnamese are accustomed to fish, rice and vegetables, Gillette says, Than smiles.

They have rice for lunch and supper, Lita remarks.

Trust and hope are the two words Gillette most often uses. "That's all they have," he says.

The United States Catholic Conference (USCC) last week distributed to editors a handsomely prepared, printed and packaged packet of information. Sixty per cent, of the Vietnam Refugees the package says, have opted to work through the USCC.

"If the majority of parishes, in the United States," it says, "would take one or more families, the

problem would be easily and successfully solved."

For the Gnettes it meant not laughing at a joke.

For the Gnettes it meant "To love one another so there won't be any more wars, any more refugees."

Mrs. Shaffer says that the Catholic Family Center wants to set up depots for household goods, a center for services, "anything" to help the refugees. She says that, despite the "red tape" that keeps the Vietnamese in the military camps, the CFC stands ready to "help them stand with dignity."

She begs people with houses to open them up to the refugees; people with jobs to offer, to help them work.

An and Tram stand in front of the Gillette house. They do not laugh, although the war is over.

LaPaz

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commitment to religion by the people, but as Father Marvin explains, "a child-like approach." Also, native superstitions are still strong. Baptism in some instances is just another ritual for keeping the "bad spirit" away.

The LaPaz parishioners do not as yet appreciate the change over to local administration, Father Marvin found. "Trust is the big element there," said, explaining that the people automatically trust Americans because we help them; then when we leave there is a let-down because they feel they've lost a powerful ally.

The priest predicted it would take some time for the people to realize that the Rochester Diocese had done the right thing in turning the parish back to them.

There is no doubt it will be a painful growth process, and the benefits won't be reaped for another generation, but as Marvin enthusiastically confirmed, "by what we're doing . . . by making this happen we are teaching them that they have to trust one another."

Questions on Sponsoring Asian Refugees

1. Is it difficult to sponsor a refugee from Southeast Asia?

No, such sponsorship is quite simple. All that has to be assured is that housing is available and that community assistance and guidance will be provided for the refugee family during their first months in your community.

2. Who can act as a sponsor?

Any individual or community group such as parish, church society or civic organization.

3. Have agreed to sponsor a family, what do we do next?

When potential housing has been located you let your diocesan resettlement director know. His office will work with you to make sure that a smooth resettlement can be made and will forward your offer to the refugee camp nearest you so that a family may, on basis of a comprehensive interview, be elected for your consideration. (James Maloney, Catholic Family Center, is diocesan resettlement director.)

4. Will we be informed as to the type and size of family that is to arrive in our community?

Yes, when a family is selected you will be informed through your resettlement director of the family makeup and if the matchup seems satisfactory, you will be informed of the date and time of arrival in your community.

5. When the family arrives, what does the sponsor have to do?

Meet them at the airport as any long-lost relatives, and take them to their new temporary or permanent living quarters. There should be on hand the basics for family living, beds and bedding and simple foods for three or four days. About 75 percent of these refugees speak some English. If there is a language problem you will be informed in advance.

6. Are there any dos and don'ts relative to the new refugee family?

Yes, very few. They are warm, sensitive and beautiful people. However, on their arrival they will be tired and a bit confused so save that gung-ho arrival reception for a few days. Do what you can to make the family feel wanted and secure, they have had trying times.

7. How do you get the family started in their new life?

Now here is where group action makes it all possible. Arrange to have the women in the household visit the local supermarket and provide some guidance in economical shopping habits. The Southeast Asian menu is quite simple — tea, fresh fruits, rice, vegetables with lesser amounts of meat and fish. Arrange to have the employable men visit with potential employers. Arrangements will have to be made for the children to attend school.

8. What about our legal and financial obligations as a sponsor?

As a sponsor you are assuming no legal obligation. At the most there is a moral commitment to help your new neighbor. Neither are you under any financial obligation. Of course, we hope that you and your neighbors will help the new family with the basics of life.

9. How long does my commitment as a sponsor last?

There is no time limit. We could say as long as it takes your new neighbor to get settled and self-supporting.

10. What if a problem should arise?

We certainly hope every resettlement will be problem free. However, if anything should come up which you regard as a problem, please do not hesitate to ask for assistance from the resettlement director.