

**PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE**

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

**The Spirit of '76**

Hoping to play a significant role in a worthy celebration of our nation's Bicentennial, the American Catholic community has inaugurated a year-long program of spiritual renewal in preparation for the International Eucharistic Congress to be held next Summer in Philadelphia.



The Bishops of the United States see the Congress as a unique opportunity for the Church to make an impact on our nation by promoting spiritual and moral values which are so lacking in this country today.

The theme of the Congress, "The Eucharist and the Hungers of the Human Family" is well chosen. Pope Paul VI in speaking of the Congress, referred to the "widespread hunger for God" that characterized our world. It is this hunger that will have to be appeased across the broad spectrum of America if the Congress is to be more than a display of pageantry.

What are the various hungers of the human family?

**1. The Hunger for God**

This past decade has witnessed an astounding search for God and ultimate meaning on the part of young and old alike. It has often taken unconventional forms, such as drugs or yoga. Surely the interest evinced in eastern religions, the ability of Rev. Moon and others to make millions on the religious thirst of people tell us something about the hunger that we have not as yet been able to satisfy. The need is there. Hopefully, this year will recommit us to the task.

**2. The Hunger for Food**

The American bishops have already addressed themselves to the reality of starvation today. It is becoming more apparent that the

real scandal of our time is the continued wanton consumption of the world's goods by only a small minority of the world's population. If anything runs counter to the example of Christ in giving us His Body to be broken for all men, it is the insularity we can develop in our relationship with God — one that would exclude our brothers in need.

**3. The Hunger for Freedom and Justice.**

We need not think automatically of those enslaved behind the iron or bamboo curtains. We can too safely mourn over the unfortunate millions who are so afflicted. There occur similar situations here in America. What about the rights of minorities? The question of social justice is not irrelevant to an awakened Christian conscience. As yet, however, there has been very little mobilization of Catholics for such issues as migrants, integration, even the legitimate demands for equality by women.

**4. The Hunger for Love**

One of the reasons why people find it hard to love unselfishly is that they themselves have never had the security of a stable home where the essentials of life were assured. Today, everyone seems to be reaching out for love. We must better our ability to demonstrate the practical love Jesus has already shown on our behalf.

**5. The Hunger for Truth**

It is a dictum of most parishes that efforts of educating the faithful fall pitifully short. We have evolved certain stable forms, such as schools, CCD programs, Sunday sermons, adult education courses, etc. Yet, we are all agreed that these reach only a minority. Perhaps we have been too inward-minded. Perhaps, also, we have not expended enough effort on bettering communication of the truth that is ours to the world at large.

**6. The Hunger for Understanding**

The 19th century was a time of rugged individualism, nationalism and the glorification of the individual. The 20th century sees us talking about spaceship earth and the ecological awareness of our total interdependence. Through it all we return to the individual who longs for dignity and understanding. We should realize that we will never succeed in imparting truth or love unless we approach men as Christ did.

**7. The Hunger for Peace**

The world has not known true peace for centuries. One consequence of our disastrous involvement in Vietnam, hopefully, is a much greater realization of the futility of wars ever solving problems. Peace, both externally and as a personal possession, is a gift which Christians profess to have, but which we have not sufficiently committed ourselves to sharing.

**8. The Hunger for Jesus, the Bread of Life**

At the end of the first century St. John was already finding it necessary to stress Jesus' eucharistic role as the bread of life. Jesus answers the deepest needs of human nature. The vision of the Congress is such that when all is said and done, Jesus remains as the one who gives direction to man's total search for meaning. Whether we think of Christ as the omega point towards which our world is evolving, or whether we prefer Augustine's reminder that we have all been made for God and are restless until we return to him, we know that ultimately, we have a tremendous truth to share. **We have the Bread of life.**

If it is true that Jesus is the answer, then, the only real question that should concern us in the coming year is how to transmit the message. Hopefully, the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress is one that will enable us to make a real impact on the nation and on all Christians in the name of Jesus.

**vatican news**

**Anti-Abortion Doctors Penalized, Prelate Says**

Vatican City [RNS] — Cardinal John Heenan of Westminster, Roman Catholic Primate of England, has charged in a letter to Prime Minister Harold Wilson that a recent government directive discriminates against medical personnel who object to abortion.

Vatican Radio said the cardinal had written to Mr. Wilson (in the prelate's words) "to draw attention to a matter which is greatly disturbing to Catholic doctors and nurses."

"It has been made clear in a memorandum on medical appointments under the authority of the chief medical officer of the Department of Health and Social Security," the letter was quoted as saying, "that doctors who object to performing abortions because of their conscience should not be appointed to

certain posts. The same thing applies to nurses objecting to participation in abortion procedures."

Cardinal Heenan called attention to the fact that at the time the present British law permitting abortion on request was being debated, the government had given assurances that doctors and nurses unwilling to take part in abortion measures

would not be penalized, the radio said.

"But," the cardinal was quoted as saying, "the memorandum makes it clear that they have no future in state-run National Health Services."

"I write on behalf of Catholics, but, of course, there are many others who have conscientious objections to taking innocent life."

**Vatican Counters Rumors**

Vatican City [RNS] — The Vatican has denied that it is reaping financial benefits from the influx of Holy Year pilgrims to Rome at the expense of the Roman municipality.

The 34-member Central Committee for Holy Year 1975 issued a statement denouncing what it called "a new wave of unfounded rumors" circulating in "a section of the press."

Calling the rumors "malicious and false," the statement said, "To clarify matters, it is well to bear in mind that the Central Committee for the Holy Year has no business relations with any organizations whatsoever which deal with such concerns as the lodging, transportation, or care of pilgrims in Rome. . . . Within the Vatican walls, no commercial enterprises of any sort pertaining to Holy Year pilgrims as such are conducted."



**Pope Tells of His Sky Watch**

Castelgandolfo, Italy — Speaking from a balcony of his Summer palace at Castelgandolfo, Pope Paul VI tells those assembled in the courtyard below that he had been "nearly enchanted by the unique encounter in the sky," and that he had become one with the "multitude of men who watched the feat of Apollo and Soyuz in these days." The pontiff, an admirer of space ventures, told of watching television and scanning the night sky in the vain hope of having a direct glimpse of the Soviet and American space vehicles. RNS photo.