

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Leadership — A Gift for Others

PART I

St. Paul reminds the Christian Community on several occasions that there exists by the wise and generous giving of the Lord a variety of gifts which are not to be used for personal promotion but for the upbuilding of His Kingdom.



The human temptation to make these gifts an occasion for rivalry, divisiveness, competitiveness in the Christian Community of Corinth occasioned a letter reminding them that in the mind of the Lord "no one was first," that all were equal in responsibility to share what they had been given and that they really possessed nothing if charity did not dominate their lives.

I have been called by the Lord to leadership in the Church of Rochester. I have often meditated on this awesome responsibility to serve the Church. Most recently, my meditation was prompted by the election of Sister Jamesine to leadership in the Community of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Here, too, is a vocation to service, to bring the Community to its full potential in Christ, to promote the climate in which the variety of gifts which each Sister has, will be used in a spirit of unity, mutual respect and charity for promoting His Kingdom among us. St. John the Baptist summed it all up when He prepared the way of the Lord with adherence to this norm of conduct: "He must increase; I must decrease."

What I have to say in these articles about the bishop as leader applies to all who have positions of leadership in the Church — pastors, religious superiors, heads of diocesan departments, regional coordinators, administrators and teachers. The roles have the common vocation to liberate people into their full potential in Christ, to help them move from self-distrust, to self-esteem, from anxiety to peace, from emptiness to joyful hope, from cringing fear of loss of security to the adventure of risk. This leadership is never an easy task. It is humble, quiet, pains-taking, filled with risks, doubts and sacrifice and deprived of publicity. It is, above all, alien to the world's idea of leadership as a power to dominate and control people.

I think most bishops today suffer some confusion about their role of leadership. There are times when we are not supposed to know anything because we are not supposed to speak without first consulting thousands of people; then, at times, we are supposed to have all the answers and make the decisions. The whole concept of collegiality which was pretty well buried for centuries is now coming to the fore, and this makes our position more difficult. Yet, I am sure that for the welfare of the Church it makes our position much more effective. I look upon the role of the bishop today as that of one who wholeheartedly engages our Christian people in active responsibility for the Church's mission of service to the world. I have often defined my role as the Executive Director of Eschatological Tension, which means that I have the duty to see that the inevitable tensions of our pilgrimage remain creative and never destructive. Collegiality requires, of the bishop, a great deal of patience and a willingness to trust people. I want to be a very good listener, a good leader

has to be a good listener. I would like to make it very clear that I don't think that the Church of Rochester is mine any more than it is yours.

The Christian Community has long been aware that the rulers of the Church rather easily imitated the external forms and structures of human government. I do not believe anyone is really sorry that the day of the prince bishop is over. In fact, we have a lot of trouble explaining how such an institution ever arose in the Christian Community. I suppose it was natural that when the Church emerged from her primitive condition and became a dominant society in Western Europe, she should have adopted the only forms of authority that were commonly known then. But, how often can the Church afford to do what it is natural to do? Should there not have been someone on the scene at the time to recall the Gospel account of the temptations that were made to Jesus Christ, in particular the temptation in which He was shown all the kingdoms of the earth — the temptation to ambition, to power? There should have been and there were people who would challenge those who were princely bishops at the time. The list of those who wondered whether pomp and power inhibited the genuine image of the Church is a very long list and includes many names which are venerated in the Church today. The accretion of power and pomp to the hierarchy and clergy was the result, I am sure, of a lot of good faith and a lot of devotion, of a desire to present the Church to men in a manner becoming her dignity. Such an impressive institution, I suppose, people thought deserves an impressive manifestation of itself and it was precisely there that all our troubles began.

to be continued

vatican news

Consequences of the Holy Year

Paul VI delivered the following address July 23 to the multitude of pilgrims who had come to Rome for the celebration of the Holy Year. The Pope had come from Castel Gandolfo by helicopter.

We will continue to draw from the religious principles of the Jubilee which we are celebrating, those inspiring and intended deductions for the spiritual, moral, and real renewal, which is our common hope.

In the first place, the good (We include everyone in this sovereign category: the faithful, believers, members of the ecclesial communion, with, in the vanguard, priests, religious, practising Catholics and those who remain sincere followers of Christ and his Church; then, all those whom baptism has regenerated as true sons of God; those, too, who, unfortunately without openly professing their Christian character, are, formally, or out of respect, and sympathy, adherents of the Christian name and beliefs...), the good, we say, must convince themselves that this event, which we call "Holy Year", is not just an event concerning the calendar which, once over, leaves everything just as it was. So it must not be a short-lived celebration, a movement of pilgrimages, which at once vanishes in the great river of the usual news items, exhausting naturally the potential of its own precise function which is a renewal of religious life, and allowing the Christian and non-Christian world to fall back into the vortex of its habits, which are often directed, alas, toward a non-religious and pagan laicism.

No! The Holy Year must keep its efficiency, which applies to modern life the golden patrimony derived from the Ecumenical Council. This impresses upon modern life a new nature, without that treacherous, radical laicism or undue deference to public opinion, as it was once called which deprives it of the spiritual and moral energies that are derived from a reasonable reference to the evangelical

source. Such radical laicism poisons modern life with pseudo-principles that are empty of truth, or full of questionable and often subhuman dogmas. This Holy Year must not end, must not be extinguished; it must continue, and precisely through the merits of the good people, instil a new spirit in our society.

The second consequence, then, is to be firm in aspirations and in regenerating and permanent promises. Where is the "People of God", of which there has been, and still is, so much talk, where is it? This ethnical entity sui generis, which if you like, is distinguished and characterized by its religious, messianic, priestly and prophetic character, which all converges upon Christ, as its focal point and which is all derived from Christ, how is it structured? How is it characterized? How is it organized? How does it exercise its ideal and bracing mission in society in which it is immersed? (cf. Epistola ad Diognetum, spec. c. 5 and; St. Augustine, De moribus vitae christianae, 1, 30; P.L. 32, 1336-1337). We are well aware that the People of God has now, historically, a name that is more familiar to everyone. It is the Church, the Church which Christ loved, to the extent of shedding his blood (Eph. 5, 25), his Mystical Body (Col. 1, 18, 24), his work perennially in the process of construction (cf. Mt. 16, 18); our Church, one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Well, who really knows her, lives her?

Who possesses that "sensus ecclesiae", that is, that awareness of belonging to a special, supernatural society, which forms a living body with Christ, its head, and which makes up with him that "totus Christus" (cf. St. Augustine, Sermon 341, 1; P.L. 19, 1493), that united communion of humanity in Christ, which constitutes the great plan of God's love for us, and on which our salvation depends (cf. Lumen Gentium, n. 13).

Third point.

Beloved Brothers and Sons! This is not esoteric theology, inaccessible to the common mentality of the faithful people. It

is the truth, a very lofty truth, but open to every believer and capable of inspiring that style of life, that "fellowship in the spirit" (Phil. 2, 1), that identity of sentiment (Rom. 15, 5), that feeling of solidarity with one another (Rom. 12, 5), which instils in "the multitude of believers... one heart and one soul" (Acts 4, 32), as it was at the dawn of Christianity. There must grow in us the sense of community, charity, unity — that is, the sense of the Church one and catholic or universal. There must be strengthened in us the awareness of being not just a population with certain common characteristics, but a people, a real People of God, a family bound by deep spiritual ties, a brotherly society, animated by the same sentiments of joy or sorrow (Rom. 12, 15), and convinced of being destined for the same future beyond the present life (cf. Decr. Ad Gentes, n. 2; Clem. Alex., Pedagog. 1, 6, 27).

The Council made the doctrine of the Church its fundamental teaching. The Holy Year adopts this doctrine. The time has come to revive in us this luminous theology as the science of practical and social life. It does not offend, but recognizes, supports and ennobles human and social life in its legitimate and autonomous manifestations (cf. Lumen Gentium, n. 36, Gaudium et Spes, n. 36). It does not need to borrow from anti-religious social formulas, based on conflict, the wisdom and energy for the good to be accomplished, the just reforms for human progress, the continual affirmation of justice and peace. It needs and has the duty of developing the human and social interpretation of life with original Christian expressions, which spring from its religious and evangelical genius (cf. 1 Peter 3, 8, ff.). The Lombard Episcopate was right in its admonition, a few days ago, that it is necessary "to rediscover the originality and the fruitfulness of Christian inspiration in the cultural, social and political field".

The admonition is for the good, it is for you all! With our Apostolic Blessing.