

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

In the Good Old Summertime

PART I

I love this season of the year because of the special opportunities it provides for recreation and personal renewal. I love, too, the cycle of the seasons that our temperate zone of climate provides. Yet, I opt for Summer as the welcome season to refresh my exhausted body and spirit. I have lived in areas of the world where the rhythm of nature was not so clearly separated into our segments of Winter's death, Spring's rebirth, Summer's maturing growth and Autumn's nostalgic reminder of the cycle of life. A Roman Spring is not the vivid and welcome renewal that it is in our locale, because the Roman Winter is but a quiet grey period unlike our snow-covered earth that dramatizes the death of nature. I know the appeal of the earthly paradise with sunshine guaranteed each day and mean temperatures in the mid-seventies and an annual seasonal variance of no more than four degrees. Yet, I prefer our Summers and the cycle of seasons that prepares us to enjoy them.



I love Summer because it offers me each year two weeks of renewal and recreation at the seashore. I first learned its charm and beauty in 1962 when my classmate, Monsignor John Flanagan, then Pastor of Star of the Sea parish in Cape May, invited the Class of 1942 from St. Bernard's Seminary to our 20th reunion. I have returned to the Jersey shore each year ever since.

I have a precious book on the beauty of the seashore which has gone through many printings: "Gift from the Sea" is like a meditation manual for all who would seek to learn the blessings of leisure time apart from the distractions of everyday existence. Anne Morrow Lindbergh is a gifted writer and a deeply reflective spirit. The sea possessed a power to lift her drained spirits and renew her life which had been crushed by the murder of

her infant son. The theme of this inspirational book is this: As the sea tosses up its gifts — shells rare and perfect — so the mind left to its ponderings, brings up its own treasures of the deep. Shells become for her symbols for the aspects of life she is contemplating.

The late President John F. Kennedy was fascinated by the sea. Cape Cod was the setting for most of his leisure moments. He had this unique observation about the source of its charm:

"I really don't know why it is that all of us are so committed to the sea, except I think it's because in addition to the fact that the sea changes, and the light changes, and ships change, it's because we all came from the sea. And it is an interesting biological fact that all of us have in our veins the exact same percentage of salt in our blood that exists in the ocean, and, therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea — whether it is to sail or to watch it — we are going back from whence we came."

Many famous authors and artists have found inspiration in the mighty roar of the surf, in the beauty of the vast stretches of sand and in the incessant shriek of gulls.

"The greatest resource of the ocean is not material but the boundless spring of inspiration and well-being we gain from her." — Jacques Cousteau.

"The sea is God's thoughts spread out." — George Douglas.

"He that will learn to pray, let him go to the sea." — George Herbert.

I suppose no tribute to the sea is better known than John Masefield's "Sea Fever." Most of us were asked to commit it to memory at some stage of our education.

"I must go down to the seas again,
to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship
and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song,
and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face,
and a gray dawn breaking.
"I must go down to the seas again,
for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call
that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day
with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume,
and the seagulls crying.
"I must go down to the seas again,
to the vagrant gipsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way
where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn
from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream
when the long trick's over."

I shall continue next week my reflections on the blessings that Summer can offer. I would not want anyone to feel that I do not appreciate the beauty of God's presence in the lakes and mountains and valleys of our own diocese. Nor would I leave you with the thought that I have a personal conviction that an annual trip to the sea is a ritual that guarantees renewal. Wherever we go, leisure is a blessing only if it is creative living among our own enthusiasms. It is a matter of mind and mood and atmosphere — of interior repose and exterior stimulation. It can happen in our own backyard.

— To Be Continued —

vatican news

Man Needs to Pray, Pope Proclaims

Pope Paul VI delivered the following address at a general audience on July 30.

We are still considering the fundamental formula that sums up our Holy Year: renewal. It obliges us to an investigation of ourselves, and enables us to do so. This investigation must then be extended to the surrounding social field; and it poses a fundamental question: renewal of what? St. Paul answers: "be renewed in the spirit of your minds" (Eph. 4, 23). That is, renew your concept of life, your "Weltanschauung", as the Germans felicitously say, your way of thinking, of evaluating the world, things, life. In other words, we must accustom ourselves, again if necessary, to think and act in a Christian way.

The ordinance of our lives is derived from our baptism, that is, from the fact that we are Christians, and that we are incorporated in Jesus Christ, by means of faith, grace and our membership of the Church. Our rule of life must be drawn from this essential fact. This is what Christianity is, when all is said and done: to be authentic Christians. This authenticity is expressed, as we well know, in directing our lives towards God, by means of Christ, in the Holy Spirit, who comes to us from God himself, when we have entered the sphere of his plan of salvation.

Another fundamental term sums up and expresses this new and necessary form of life: love, that love which we call charity, **agape**, a love animated by God himself, who is Love; a love that is infused into us to make us capable of loving properly, with energy, with a supernatural purpose. Charity is the newness, the truth, the felicity and the faculty of Christian life. We have a hope for all of you, beloved Brothers and Sons, "pilgrims of love" for this God who, with the Jubilee, resumes his place in the scale of values to which our Christian life must aspire: the first place, the highest, the supremely directive and the most coveted. We hope, for this very reason, that you are able to feel in yourselves this primary spiritual experience: the necessity, the need, the consolation of prayer. Religious expression, prayer, as human and superhuman language, regarding the mystery of God, regarding the Reality of God, springs precisely from love, from charity, when the latter has been kindled in our hearts by celebrating the Holy Year (cf. Rom 5, 5; 2 Cor. 4, 6; Eph 5, 19; etc.). St. Thomas tells us so, with his usual simplicity and with masterly assurance, when he reminds us that the "cause of prayer is the desire of charity, from which prayer proceeds" (St. Th. II-II, 83, 1-14).

There would be no end to the

things that should be said here; but let one thing suffice. It is a well known one, but absolutely firm for us, who have confirmed, or resumed our vital contact with God. It is that of the importance of personal prayer, to give a meaning, to give balance, to give strength to our existence. We say this, thinking of a tendency that is very widespread in modern life. Today, unfortunately, many people no longer pray, do not pray at all. Once it was not so. Even persons engaged in secular life had a least a few moments every day, and some time on holidays, for a thought, a conscious act, an interior moment of prayer. Every child considered it his duty, as is right, to address, at the beginning and the end of every day, a greeting, an invocation to the living God, to the heavenly Father.

Today the lips of modern man seem sealed by a prevailing unawareness of the religious order and by a deluded consideration that reality, the whole of reality, is that of the sense order, that of temporal and material experience. Professional, utilitarian, scientific contact with the things of the secular world, with experimental occupations and with social relations marks the frontier of human interest for so many people who are absorbed by work and study. Crushing and exclusive doctrines, such as those of materialism, have prevailed in practice over

the complete vision of being, reducing knowledge to the sphere of bodies and physical and quantitative laws, and sustaining the inevitable necessity characteristic of matter, as the primordial moving cause that brought into being both nature and history. God being thus excluded as the transcendent Principle of the universe, and therefore also of every free and wise intervention in the world of our experience, how could man address a word to the unknown God, try to have dialogue with him, invoke his loving Providence? Nothingness, proclaimed at the summit of the universe, is at once reflected in consciousness, which is made incapable of prayer, and at once is constrained to strengthen in itself a mystification of self-sufficiency: man is enough unto himself, without resorting to acknowledgement or invocation of a superior Source of being and becoming.

The difficulty of going beyond the circle of the materialistic world by means of thought, which has been deprived of spiritual certainties, has become the theoretical and practical mentality of modern atheism. To this our ancient philosophy, that is, our traditional religion, can still give an acceptable answer today. But we see crowds of young people advancing, as if to come to its aid, to denounce

spontaneously the emptiness produced in the modern spirit by the denial of God. These young people come forward, sad and tormented by the need of a real religion, which will make it possible still to talk to God, to pray to him, to know that he is accessible and close, provident and loving.

May this Holy Year, we hope, open its door, open its light, open its heart to welcome the sons of the new generation in search of a liberating and inspiring aid, in search of a new word, a new ideal that recognizes the difficulty of true prayer (cf. Rom. 8, 26) and adopts the stupendous request that the Apostles in the Gospel made to their Lord and Master Jesus: "Teach us to pray!" (Lk. 11, 1).

Let this be a further victory of the Holy Year: to see the need, the duty, the joy of Christian prayer! With our Apostolic Blessing.

CEMETERY RESTORATION

Penn Yan — Father Thomas McVeigh and his parishioners at St. Michael's Church are renovating and restoring the church's old cemetery grounds. The site was purchased in 1845 in a wooded area to the East of the village. Their goal is to transform the area into as neat an area as the "newer cemetery" which was purchased in 1888. The parish is also planning to observe its 125th anniversary this year.