

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

A Tribute to the "Common Laborer"

PART I

The title may sound like a nod to 'second-class' citizens after two weeks of writing about leisure. By no means! For there is no opposition in themes. Both leisure and labor are divine blessings presented to us. Onus is converted into bonus only by the measure of personal acceptance. Time freed up from work can be sheer boredom just as work can be a daily monotonous grind. It all adds up to a state of mind more than a condition of existence. But the climate must be right to develop such a mentality.



I just returned from our annual Liturgical Institute. This year it was held on the beautiful campus of Keuka College on the shores of Keuka Lake. There I was renewed and inspired by the presence of over 400 of the faith community of the Church of Rochester, searching for a deepening vision of what it means to be a community offering worthy praise to the Lord of our history. In the generous sharing of our gifts we were all enriched. But what does this have to do with labor? Simply this. There was a diversity of gifts brought to the conference without contention. Some came with the rich endowment of gifts to be assigned as 'keynote' speakers; others with the qualifications to be 'discussion leaders'; most with the precious and rare gift to be 'good listeners'. Yet there

were two who came as 'common laborers' to work behind the scenes to take care of tasks usually considered 'menial'. Whose contribution was most important? Just let me say that there would never have been the blessing of our Liturgical Institute without the contribution of a Paul Oliver and Dick Voelkl whose giving was indispensable. It was personally gratifying to hear the public recognition they received. They have a sense of vocation which seems to be missing today in large segments of the working force of our society. Our technological progress has been gained at the expense of the destruction of human dignity crushed by the cogs of well oiled machinery and ruthless management.

So, I write this tribute to all who seek to find a sense of vocation in their common and unheralded daily tasks. And this includes most of our people. Labor Day in Europe is May 1, and the Church has a special universal feast of St. Joseph the Worker on that day to proclaim the dignity of labor. This past weekend we celebrated our national Labor Day to issue the same proclamation. This public recognition of the dignity of labor is especially addressed to the non-skilled and semi-skilled laborers who constitute most of the laboring force of our world and who do not enjoy the social acceptance and recognition that seem to honor those who have the educational opportunities to be ranked as skilled laborers.

Following the example of Christ Who identified Himself with manual labor as the foster son of the humble carpenter of Nazareth, the Church has voiced her concern

in countless documents defending the dignity of the common laborer.

One of the many unsolved social and economic problems of the world is the sheer boredom and meaninglessness of so many of today's dead-end occupations and the low esteem in which society seems to hold these occupations. During the past few years there has grown an uneasy feeling on the part of the working class that they are a forgotten people. Their plight has caught the attention of the media and has found dramatic expression in books, articles and television documentaries. What the aggrieved worker has been saying in sorrow and in anger is that while they need higher wages and will demand a fairer distribution of the national income, they want, more than anything else, to find a sense of meaning in the work they are required to do and want to be recognized by society as men of dignity and worth.

As one semi-skilled laborer said in a recent interview: "You can't take pride any more. Picasso can point to a painting. I think I've worked harder than Picasso and what can I point to? A writer can point to a book. Everybody should have something to point to."

Another frustrated worker put it this way: "What all of us are looking to is a calling, not just a job. Most of us, like the assembly line workers, have jobs that are too small for our spirit. Jobs are just not big enough for people."

[to be continued]

vatican news

Pope to Jesuits: Keep Control of Schools

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul has called on Jesuit educators to retain the Catholic identity of their colleges and universities, insisting that the effective direction of these institutions must remain in Jesuit hands.

"To lose this well-merited tradition," said the Pope, "would only cause you to lose your identity, but also and especially to lose something which the Church needs and cannot do without."

The pontiff was addressing some 70 presidents of Jesuit-operated universities and colleges around the world. The educators were in Rome, at the invitation of Father Pedro Arrupe, superior general of the Society of

Jesus, to consider the educational aspects of decisions of the recent general chapter of the order.

Twenty-five of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States were represented.

The Pope did not mention any particular country in his discourse, but observers noted that the two questions of Catholic identity and Jesuit supervision are currently being debated in Jesuit academic circles in the U.S.

"The rapid cultural changes of our times," said the pontiff, "make all the more important the work of Catholic universities as 'outposts' of human thought and of the life of the spirit."

Affirming that the Catholic

university should be open to the world and to the problems of today, he said it should carry on dialogue with atheists and with non-Christians, as well as with Christians of various confessions.

He insisted, however, that this should be done without sacrificing the specificity of the Catholic university.

"All this should be done," the Pope said, "while maintaining intact the character of Catholic universities — and in your case, of the Catholic universities of the Society of Jesus."

"Your universities must always maintain — in teaching, in publications, and in all forms of academic life — complete orthodoxy of doctrine, respect for the Magisterium (teaching authority) of the Church, fidelity to the hierarchy and to the Apostolic See, without yielding to a doctrinal relativism or to a permissive morality, which are incompatible with a university that wants to call itself Catholic."

On the question of a trend to shift control of Jesuit higher educational institutions to predominantly lay hands, Pope Paul observed that there was "in the face of serious problems," a "temptation" to transfer administrative authority to non-Jesuit personnel.

Warning against the trend, the pontiff said: "Collaboration of laity and non-Jesuit priests in the running of your institutions is certainly praiseworthy, but it is necessary to be sure that this collaboration be so pursued that your Society retains the authority to fulfill its Catholic responsibilities."

"The Society of Jesus," he

reiterated, "should not renounce authority in its institutions."

The question of identity was further developed by the Pope. "In some Catholic universities, in recent years," he said, "it was thought possible to respond to some questions posed by the world by weakening or diluting the distinctively Catholic character of the institutions."

The consequences of this, he said, were a weakening of Christian values, a substitution in

their place of a humanism that has transformed itself into a veritable secularization, and a lowering of moral standards on university campuses.

This, in turn, he added, has led to a reaction among the faithful, in the form of a falling interest in, and lessening support for, Catholic institutions of higher learning.

"But," he declared, "the Church needs Catholic universities as never before. And woe to us if we forget this!"

Pray the Angelus, Pope Urges

Castelgandolfo [RNS] — Pope Paul urged the Catholic faithful to foster the practice of daily recitation of the "Angelus," as a way of sanctifying their daily lives and praying for the needs of mankind.

The Pope, in a special appearance marking the Marian Feast of the Assumption, addressed a large crowd of Holy Year pilgrims in the courtyard of his Summer residence here at noon, shortly before a scheduled recitation of the Angelus.

A Catholic devotion that commemorates the Incarnation of Christ, the Angelus (Angel), named after the first word in the devotion, consists of three Biblical verses, three Hail Marys, and a special prayer.

It recalls the announcement to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel that she was to become the Mother of the Messiah, her acceptance of the divine will, and the moment when "the Word was made man."

Pope Paul observed that the origins of the devotion were "not easy to establish." He said it seems to have been "a spontaneous flowering of medieval piety. A simple bell rang out in the morning, at midday, and at vespers from the bell towers of monasteries and parish churches at a time when there were no clocks to mark the passage of time, inviting the faithful to pause and insert a sanctifying prayer into the course of their daily routine."

"Thus," he went on, "the meaning of the Angelus is clear: to associate the memory of the sublime two-fold Christian mystery — the Incarnation and the Redemption — with our day-to-day existence."

The pontiff said the aim of the devotional practice was to hold up before God, "through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother," one's daily needs and those "major" concerns of the world, such as "social justice" and "true peace."

Seton Canonization Changed to Outdoors

Emmitsburg, Md. [RNS] — The size of the anticipated audience at the canonization ceremony Sept. 14 of Mother Elizabeth Seton, the first U.S.-born Catholic saint, has necessitated changes in its location and time.

Father Sylvester A. Gaggart, vice postulator for the cause of Mother Seton, announced here that the ceremony will take place outdoors in St. Peter's Square, rather than inside St. Peter's Basilica as originally planned.

The ceremony has also been rescheduled for 5:30 p.m., a time when the outdoor temperature in Rome can be expected to be much cooler than in mid-morning. More than 12,000 requests have been received by the U.S. Secretariat for the

Postulation, set up in Rome to handle reservations for the canonization ceremony. The anticipated audience cannot be accommodated in St. Peter's Basilica.

Pope Paul will be chief concelebrant of the Mass and deliver a homily.

The Federation of the Daughters of Elizabeth Ann Seton, which represents 7,500 Sisters of Charity in North America, will present a monetary gift to the Pope, in accord with Mother Seton's example of "universal charity." The gift will be for alleviation of "the needs of the starving people of the world."

The Sisters of Charity was founded by Mother Seton in 1809.