

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Roman Reflections

Before my departure for Rome on September 10 for the canonization of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, I promised to report my personal impressions of the pilgrimage as soon as I returned home. Yet not fully recovered from the physical exhaustion which is described in modern terminology as 'jet lag', but hyper with the exaltation of spirit prompted by the events, I offer this report as the authentic reaction of sixty fellow pilgrims of the Diocese of Rochester to our common Roman experience.

The six-hour time differential provided the briefest of nights as we traveled eastward from New York to Rome. Within a few hours after departure in the dusk of evening, the aurora heralding a new day greeted us over the Atlantic. The 747 Jumbo Jet — Alitalia Flight 858 — touched down with incredible smoothness at Rome's Fiumicino Airport at 8 a.m., Roman time. The mad confusion at the airport, our guide's delay in meeting us and the 90-degree heat that greeted us assured us that there is pain in pilgrimage which would require of all of us a good supply of *Pazienza*.

But our spirits were revived after a few hours of rest at our headquarters in Rome — the new Hotel Cicerone near the Piazza Cavour and a ten-minute walk from St. Peter's.

We were young and old in terms of chronology, but our entire group had a youthful spirit and a deep sense of the spiritual values that bless the pilgrim. We were not tourists. We had come to receive the graces offered by the Holy Father's invitation to come to Rome for the Jubilee Year of 1975, and we had come to witness a unique moment in the history of the Catholic Church of the United States — the canonization of our first native-born Saint.

These were the highlights of our spiritual experiences:

September 12 — Monsignor Richard Burns (what a precious blessing he was for all of us!) made the arrangements for a special Mass at the altar of the Chair of St. Peter at 8:30 on this Friday morning. I arrived in the sacristy and found priests from many countries all vested for the celebration. It

was the first indication to me that much more than I had expected was about to begin. And, indeed, it did. The procession began with bells ringing, the organ sounding triumphant tones, and Roman Masters of Ceremony leading the way to the Altar of the Chair. Thousands of pilgrims had gathered because this was the daily Jubilee Mass — a High Mass in Latin. Thank God, my memory of the melodies of bygone days quickly revived. Monsignor Burns preached in English and Italian, and the presence of the Church of Rochester was announced to all the faithful assembled. The experience was deeply moving. As one of our priests remarked at the conclusion of the ceremony: "Everything has to be downhill from here."

But our spiritual odyssey was just beginning. Saturday's pilgrimage was to the Catacombs of Domitilla along the old Appian Way, and Sunday we were back in St. Peter's Square for the canonization ceremony. There were 15,000 American ticket-holders for the celebration and the Rochester delegation was seated in section #1. A crowd of 120,000 came from all parts of the world. There were hundreds of pilgrims from the north Italian City of Leghorn where Mother Seton once lived with a devout Catholic family before her conversion. But the American presence was dominant with 78 United States Bishops, U.S. Ambassador to Italy John Volpe, Presidential Envoy to Pope Paul VI Henry Cabot Lodge, Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf II, and a group of high-ranking Naval Officers. Mother Seton had two sons who served in the United States Navy. An American Sister made history as she became the first woman to take part formally in a papal liturgy. I met her the evening before the ceremony. She is Sister Hildegard Marie Mahoney, General Superior of the Sisters of Charity of Convent Station, New Jersey, and she read the first lesson during the Mass.

The two hour ceremony was inspiring and marked the culmination of a 92-year process of careful examination of the Saint's life. The scrutiny began in 1882 at the request of James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore. Why all this expenditure of time and money to reach the moment of solemn declaration of proven sanctity? Simply because the power of emulation is a mighty teaching force. We will always need heroes and heroines to inspire us. It is the duty of the Church to set before us examples to give us that inspiration. And now we are sure that we have someone to look up to and to strive to imitate — a woman of our time and of our very own American culture. Present for the

canonization were a 27-year old mother of four children, Ann O'Neill Hooe, and a 72-year old retired construction worker, Carl Karlin. Their restoration to health was attributed to the intercession of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

The two-hour ceremony completed, we returned to our Hotel for lunch and by 3 p.m. we were ready for our Holy year Pilgrimage to the four Major Basilicas — passing through the Holy Doors of St. Peter's, St. Mary Major's, St. John Lateran and St. Paul's — chanting the 'Salve Regina', reciting our prayers from the Pilgrim's Handbook and making our Profession of Faith.

As we passed through the Holy Doors we prayed the Pilgrim's Prayer:

"God, Our Father, look with kindness on your children gathered before the Holy Doors of your temple.

"Although we are fully aware of our sinfulness, we trust in your goodness and mercy and, inspired by faith, we have come here to do penance.

"We beg of you to open to us the door of your infinite pardon.

"In the name of your Son, Jesus, Our Lord, through His blessed passion and glorious resurrection, forgive us all our sins.

"Together with Him may we conquer all evil, and learn to live a new life until that day he opens to us the door of the heavenly Jerusalem, and bids us enter, together with all the saints, into the joy of eternal life."

Optional trips to Assisi and Capri were offered on the final days. The latter was for recreation and relaxation; the first was an extension of our spiritual journey with a special Mass for our group offered at the Tomb of St. Francis. In my reports to you last year during my month of study in Rome, I wrote reflections about Assisi. There is no need to repeat these.

I am sure I express the sentiments of our entire group when I say — Thank God for the graces of our pilgrimage and for His provident protection that accompanied us each step of our journey.

Summary of Mercy Sisters Chapter Meeting

A commissioning ritual at the Mercy Motherhouse Sunday afternoon confirmed the apostolic appointments of the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester and sent them forth to work for justice through mercy, in terms defined by their 1975 Chapter.

The sisters were urged "to live without the assurance of tomorrow, and to live in the gladness of today."

The Chapter, which completed its work in August, brought together 30 elected delegates as the highest governing body of the congregation. In the first promulgation of its decisions, at the annual Mercy Day, Sister Mary Judith Heberle, superior general, said that the delegates "clarified, delved into deeper understanding of issues, worked out positive attitudes and values which hopefully will strengthen us as a congregation and as ecclesial women serving the Church in 1975."

Mercy Day was a jubilee celebration also. Sisters Mary Patricia O'Rourke and Mary Hortense Schenck observed the 60th anniversary of their first profession of vows.

Marking their 25th were Sisters Mary Denise O'Brien, Janet Caufield, Mary Annette D'Amico, Mary Celeste Boyle, Anne Marie Lennon, Mary Noreen Craney, Mary Noel Ringwood, and Edith Francione.

A tureen supper of meatless dishes brought by the various local communities was planned, in the words of Sister Janet Wahl, assistant superior, to "remind us of our special concern for the hungry as well as our support and sharing with each other in a true spirit of mercy."

Chapter affirmations described by the superior general and a team of delegates came under the headings of poverty, social justice, mission and ministry, religious witness, congregational government, community life and personal growth in community.

Three affirmations dealt with Gospel poverty. The first urged each religious to rise above the compulsion of possessing and using material goods, to resist being utilized by forces of promotion and production in our affluent society, and to strive "to live without the assurance of tomorrow and to live in the gladness of today."

The second described the sisters' free choice of vowed poverty as an act of love and liberation and "a commitment of solidarity with the poor in their struggle against misery and injustice." The third stated that the sisters, recognizing their dependence on one another, accepted the obligation to support the Congregation's needs through their work and its remuneration.

In the area of social justice, the Chapter drafted a letter concerning conditions in Chile, where several Rochester Mercy sisters work. The letter asked that the United Nations Committee on Human Rights be allowed to function in Chile to protect the rights of the people. It was sent to the UN committee and to the Organization of American States, among other agencies.

The Chapter established two new congregational commissions. The Commission on Future Directions in Church Ministry will "seek means to participate at the diocesan and national level in the design of the future forms of ordained and non-ordained ministries in the Church." Its existence will be

made known to Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and to all appropriate groups with the expectation of its participating in future planning. The Commission on Inter-Faith Concerns will be responsible for research in this area and for encouragement of the sisters' ecumenical involvement.

Two statements will be added to the Religious Witness section of the sisters' Constitutions. One stresses the need of developing a prayer life that gives "evidence of our spirit of faith and joy so as to proclaim to all the reality of God-with-us." The other reaffirms

World Hunger Is Focus Of Friday 'Banquet'

A World Hunger Banquet will be held at McQuaid Jesuit High School this Friday, Oct. 3, at 7 p.m. The banquet is an educational project of the human development committees of the Southwest Region intended to evoke a Christian response. Its contradictory title is meant to draw attention to the incongruities in the world's food situation.

Father Charles Mulligan, director of the Office of Human

celibacy and community.

The Central Administration was commissioned to study the concept of associate affiliation, which would involve a laywoman's agreement to live and work with the sisters for a time.

The chapter's resolutions will guide the congregation until the next chapter, in 1979. Sister Mary Judith said a long-range educational process, soon to begin, "is intended to help the Congregation internalize the values affirmed."

Development, will be the main speaker. Mayor Thomas Ryan, Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, and Congressmen Barber Conable and Frank Horton are among those especially invited.

An invitation is extended to everyone; all parishes are encouraged to send representatives. Ticket donations, \$4, will be given to charities involved in the fight against hunger. Tickets are available from Bernie Kiel, 889-1388, and Hank Maher, 235-5085.