

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

To Know Her Well Is To Know Him Better

In this month dedicated to our Blessed Mother, I write this column as a personal tribute to her whose tender motherly care has meant so much to me. She has, above all, led me closer to her Son.



Many of our modern downgraders of Marian devotion seem convinced that they are performing a noble service — an apostolate of confirming the solid doctrinal truth that there is but one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ. They seem to be saying that there is a distraction

from this saving truth which St. Paul expressed so often in the phrase 'in Christ Jesus.'

There have undoubtedly been exaggerations in devotions to Mary, but there is a balanced reverence for her which should lead us to a greater knowledge of her Son. She may truly be called the **Pathway to the Sacred Heart.**

The essential truth about Mary is her Motherhood of the Son of God — her part in making Him perfectly man. God could have created a human nature for His Son without her, but it would have been a deception of a sort. The Heart of Jesus was formed physically in the womb of Mary. Through the marvel of Divine Providence, the Holy Spirit used the flesh and blood of the Immaculate Virgin to fashion a perfect and complete nature for the Son of God. The laws of heredity were not repudiated. In fact, since Mary was the only human parent of Christ, these laws applied with a two-fold efficacy. All of us are by heredity prolongations of both parents. Christ is a prolongation of Mary alone. Cardinal Newman expressed this when he wrote: "He received her lineaments and her features."

Since motherhood is much more than a physical function, it is true to say that Christ received the blessings of her moral influence on his life. Essentially, the moral excellence of the humanity of Christ came from its contact with the divine nature. But Mary was allowed a mother's role in training Him that He might be perfectly human and advance like us in wisdom, age, and grace before God

and men. It is safe to believe that His emotional maturity was derived from the wholesome environment of Nazareth.

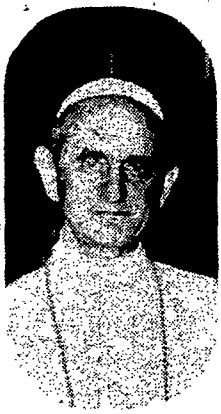
The important truth for us is that His mother has been willed to us as our mother to fashion us into the image of a Son whom she was privileged to fashion. Just as a maternal principle is so necessary in our total physical and moral development, so God has willed that our supernatural life be perfectly human — with a maternal principle devoid of all selfishness. The Immaculate Conception freed Mary of all egoism.

I would prefer to err by excess than by defect in devotion to Mary. For the attitude of Mary expressed in the Magnificat would correct our excesses. Hers was the habit of total referral of all honor to her Son. But I often wonder how many who have thought of her as a distraction from her Son, have thereby found themselves closer to Christ. I wonder if they may not have experienced that a rejection of a part of God's goodness has cast doubt on the entirety of His goodness and the reality of the Incarnation. Yes, I often wonder.

'Apply Principles of Faith to Life'

During the General Audience Sept. 7, Paul VI delivered the following address.

The logic of the Holy Year, we mean its spiritual and moral dynamism, invites us to a twofold religious movement: to go back to the sources of our faith, and then to apply logically the principles of our faith to actual life.



To go back to the sources; to apply their fertilizing virtue to the practical experience of our present existence; we can say that in this very simple schema there is sufficient for our welfare.

Let us observe ourselves with the courageous clarity to which the spirituality of the Holy Year has certainly initiated us; and let us ask our conscience: what binding and real influence on us has the fact that we are Christians? Certainly we always attribute great importance to this qualification, which we know is imprinted, with baptism, upon our being, in the mysterious depths of our spirit; and none of us would like to deny the dignity and the fortune derived from this indelible religious qualification: we are Christians.

But this qualification: I am a Christian! often takes on a static, inert, absent character in the psychology and activity of modern man, who is often not aware of the specific and operating requirements deriving from such a name, or rather from such a being. For many people the title of Christian, impressed on their personality, does not entail any practical result, either individual, (remember the ancient saying: "homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto", I am a man and reckon nothing human alien to me; Terence); or social, (remember the Council: "We are tempted to think that our personal rights are fully ensured only when we are exempt from every requirement of divine law" Gaudium et Spes, n. 41): That is to say, in the outlook of modern man there is a marked distinction, or rather separation of the citizen of the secular world from any reference of a religious character.

That a citizen of the secular world should appeal to aprioristic principles, as binding as they are questionable, seems a perfectly normal thing; it does him credit, in fact, owing to the consequent consistency between ideas and the way of applying them. But that a Christian should dare to profess himself such in the exercise of his own social or professional functions, this too often seems intolerable today, as if it were a lack of commonsense and good taste, or an integral clericalism that is outdated today, or fetters, which must be shattered, on freedom of discussion and action. After the Council, it is said, secular culture, science, temporal activity, politics, in short, natural human life, are freed from religion. Religion remains, but every religion has an equal right to bear witness to itself as it thinks fit, so recourse to one's own Christian character has no longer any meaning, except perhaps in the secret forum of conscience, if the latter remembers that this forum is still open and sitting in judgment.

Here we are at the decisive point of our conversation with the mentality of our times. Let us pay attention. We certainly admit that culture, science and secular activities have their own specific freedom of action, according to the laws of natural thought and of the natural order. In fact, Catholic education itself will promote and defend culture and scientific research from the in-roads of preconceived ideologies, so that

they may be guided by pure rational principles, characteristic of the field to which they are applied. The Council, if we wish to refer to its great pronouncement on the major problems of our contemporary life, says clearly, in fact: "Christ, to be sure, gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economic, or social order. The purpose which He set before her is a religious one" (Gaudium et Spes, n. 42). And again: "the Church does not indeed forbid that when the human arts and sciences are practised they use their own principles and their proper method, each in its own domain. Hence, acknowledging this just liberty, this sacred Synod affirms the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences" (ib. n. 59 and n. 36).

But that does not mean that man, as such, and all the more so if he is a Christian, is not ordained to God, that he has no vital relationship with the Principle, with the Legislator and with the End of our existence, in other words, that he is not gratified by a religious tie, which the secularization of practical life, and even more so theoretical and practical secularism, which radically and arbitrarily disregards ontological reality, are unable to destroy, even if they have the unhappy power of forgetting or denying. A fish cannot disregard the water in which it finds itself; nor can man disregard the atmosphere he breathes and in which his present existence takes place. God is the ineffable, but real "element", in which our life has its origin, norm and term: it is immersed in God. Let the listener exult: God is love, an ocean of love.

In other words, we must return to the thought of God, to the positive fact of religion, and we must give

our religious faith the place and the function due to it in a wise and organic conception of our life. Religion does not hinder our secular activity; it respects it, promotes it, rectifies it and sanctifies it. It is, as it were, the lamp lit in the darkness of the room of our experience; the darkness disappears, and the room acquires its shape, its colours, its beauty; and any deformities it has are, to the advantage of the person living in the room, revealed and can be repaired. God is light: "Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea; quem timebo? The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?" says the well-known psalm (n. 26), which still adorns the front of the medieval University, and still indicates to us the way along which we must travel back.

That means, therefore, that we must never blush, for fear of what people may say, at being people who believe in God and in Christ, we must not be people who need "all purpose" and all-expressive profane slogans to reveal and profess our superior system of thinking and acting. In the second place we, we ourselves, who believe in religion and seek in it the supreme reasons of our existence and contemplative search of God and of Christ the revealer. That is, we must nourish in ourselves a personal religious activity, on the paths laid down by the Church, our teacher, and opening on to the infinite and beatifying mystery of God. To meditate. To pray. To pray means to ascend; to ascend to the first source of everything: of being, thought, action; enjoyment.

Let the Holy Year teach us to do so, Let God's own Spirit help us to pray, to ascent!

With our Apostolic Blessing.

Irish Archbishop to Be Canonized

Dublin [RNS] — Cardinal William Conway of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland, and five other Irish bishops will celebrate Mass with Pope Paul at the canonization of Blessed Oliver Plunkett in St. Peter's Basilica Oct. 12.

Blessed Oliver, an Irish archbishop who was hanged, drawn, and quartered by British authorities in 1681 on a charge of "high treason," will become Ireland's first canonized saint in 700 years.

"The bottom of your treason," declared the Lord Chief Justice in passing the death sentence on the archbishop, "was your setting up your false religion, than which there is not anything more displeasing to God or pernicious to mankind in the world."

Irish Prime Minister Liam Cosgrave, who will head the official Irish government delegation, will read the first Scripture "lesson" of the canonization Mass in Gaelic.

Oliver Plunkett, who was born in 1625, lived 23 years in Rome before returning to Ireland as Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland in 1670.

When Archbishop Plunkett returned to Ireland in 1670, he found the Catholic Church still prostrate after the violent persecution of Cromwell. He traveled continuously around the country, often in disguise, encouraging the clergy and the faithful, administering the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders in the woods and mountains, setting up schools, and churches and seeing them destroyed.

Striving constantly to heal the wounds and divisions that racked the Ireland of the 1670's, he managed to persuade a number of Irish guerrillas to lay down their arms and accept an amnesty offered by the English Viceroy.

For this achievement — in a reaction echoed in Northern Ireland today — Archbishop Plunkett was denounced by Catholic extremists as a tool of the English and a friend of Protestants. And at the same time he was hated by Protestant extremists for his part in trying to revive the Catholic religion.

It was a strange alliance between Catholic and Protestant extremists that brought about his

death. Accused by Titus Oates, the son of an English Anabaptist preacher, of being involved in a "plot" to assassinate King Charles II, he was arrested in December, 1679 and imprisoned in Dublin Castle.

The following year he was transferred to Newgate Prison in London, and in June, 1681, was put on trial, after an imprisonment of more than 18 months, much of it spent in solitary confinement.

Nine witnesses were found among the Archbishop's Irish Catholic enemies, four of them priests, to give perjured testimony against him. He was not allowed to bring in his own witnesses.

Found guilty of treason, he was taken to Tyburn Prison on July 11, 1681, and hanged, disembowled, and decapitated.

The martyred archbishop was beatified by Pope Benedict XV on May 23, 1920.

The last canonized Irish saint was St. Lawrence O'Toole, an Archbishop of Dublin, who died in 1180, and was canonized in 1226.