

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

The Year of the Lord — 1976

It is the Eve of 1976 — a New Year of the Lord. As I write this column there is before me a new and fresh and unmarked desk calendar. The blank spaces after each date are to become the record of my personal use of time. A New Year's greeting from a priest friend lies open in front of the calendar. It offers this challenge: "A New Year is being given us untouched, full of things that have never been. Thank you, Lord. Help us fill each day with joy and peace."



A friend once remarked, "I can no longer wish people a 'Happy New Year' when I think of what they seek to make them happy." Though the remark seems cynical, it offers a clue to the real value of the beginning of a year. It is a day for serious reflection on our life's goals, for reevaluating our reasons for doing the things we do and living the lives that we live, and for checking on our personal pursuit of happiness.

To wish anyone a Happy New Year is, indeed, a hollow ritual unless the greeting is accompanied by our personal resolve so to sanctify 1976 that each day will unfold as time worthy of the Lord's blessing of happiness.

What is the divine formula for happiness,

and what is the grace of moments given to us as we proclaim a New Year of the Lord? Jesus' formula for happiness has these essential ingredients: a recognition that God is our common Father; a conviction that if we ever feel abandoned, it is not of His will but ours; that the unity of the human family calls all of us to be brothers and sisters, and that the expression of our love for each other is the revelation of His love.

The Christmas story tells us that the shepherds were given angelic direction to the location of Christ's birth. St. Luke assures us that they found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger. Jesus was found in need of Mary for nourishment and warmth, and of Joseph for the protection of His life. Mary and Joseph were in need of each other for comfort, support and encouragement. And in this family portrait of mutual dependence, the shepherds discovered the meaning of new life in Jesus Christ. And we make the same discovery once we realize that happiness is found in our expression of love for one another. And once this discovery is made, the Year of the Lord becomes the reality of our life that it was meant to be.

New Year's Day was once regarded as an occasion for resolving disputes, healing enmities and effecting reconciliation. If we welcome the Prince of Peace, we are forced to recognize that happiness consists in forgiving trespasses, resolving disputes, effecting reconciliations and enriching friendships.

The New Year offers us the grace of precious moments to effect this reconciliation and to find the Lord who is the unique source of happiness and peace among men. 1976 is a great gift of the Lord to each of us, and its greatest value is the opportunity it gives us to abandon the paths of pretense and synthetic happiness, to lay aside masks of merriment which we use to hide our emptiness, and to seek Him who alone gives peace and joy to the restless heart.

Perhaps our present energy and economic crises will show us down enough to make us more reflective on how we have been using His gift of days and years — that precious commodity of time. A great spiritual writer once commented on its value: "He who is so liberal in all of His other gifts to us, shows us by the wise economy of His Providence how careful we should be in the management of time. He never gives us two moments together."

1976 is a special year of the Lord for American citizens. As we celebrate our national 200th birthday, we are offered the grace and challenge to measure our ideals in terms of justice and the responsibility that freedom gives us and to respond to a reflective assessment with authentic religious integrity.

I pray that this will be a year worthy of the Lord's blessings as we fill in the blank pages of our diary with words and deeds and events that will add up to a Happy New Year.

Communication Problems Focus of Family Course

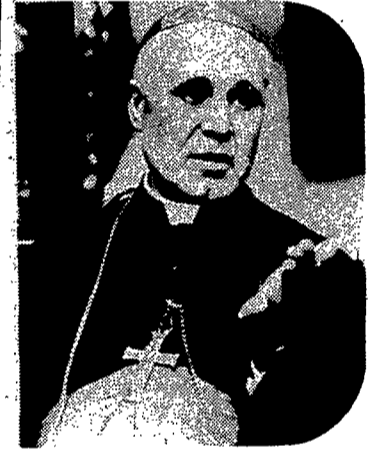
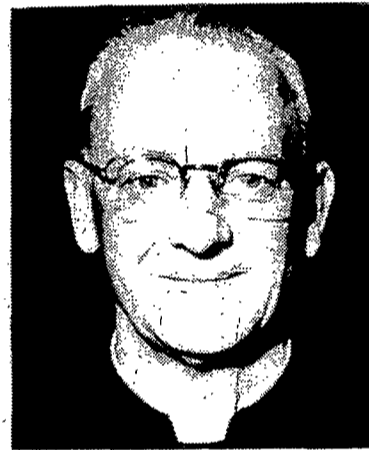
A workshop designed to help couples avoid communication problems will be offered during January by the Catholic Family Center. The three sessions are scheduled for Tuesday nights, Jan. 13, 20, 27, at the Family Center, 50 Chestnut St., from 6:45 to 8:45.

The program will entail group discussions and role playing, supplemented by movies. Leading the sessions will be staff of the Family Center: Alice At-

tridge and Michael O'Donahoe, marriage counselors; John Barnoski and Joann Lytle, family life education workers. A fee of \$15 may be reduced if necessary.

The workshop will deal with problem solving, verbal and non-verbal communication.

Those interested in participating should contact John Barnoski or Joann Lytle at the Family Center, 546-7220, before Jan. 9.



Died During 1975

Among those who died during 1975 were three world-renowned Church leaders. Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty, left, died in May in Vienna at the age of 83. Cardinal John Heenan of England, center died at 70 in November. And, at right, Cardinal Luigi Raimondi, who served as apostolic delegate to the United States from 1967 to 1973, died at the age of 62.

Bishop's Appointments

January

- 5-6—Priests' Council Meeting, Cenacle Retreat House.
- 8—Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily for Priests of the Diocese, St. Mary's, Canandaigua — 11:30 a.m.
- 9—Executive Committee Meeting, Sisters of Mercy, Motherhouse — 3:30 p.m.
- 10—Diocesan Sisters' Council Meeting, Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse — 12:30 p.m.
- 10—Radio Message, Family Rosary Network — 7 p.m.
- 12—Joint Executive Committee Meeting, Pastoral Office — 7:30 p.m.
- 13—Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Desert Experience for Seminarians, St. Michael's Retreat Center, Hemlock — 4:30 p.m.
- 15—Pastoral Office Staff Meeting — 9 a.m.
- 21—Priestly Spirituality Committee Meeting, Becket Hall — 12:30 p.m.
- 24—Right-to-Life Prayer Service, St. Mary's Church, Rochester — 2:45 p.m.
- 25—Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, St. John the Evangelist Church, Greece — 12 Noon.
- 25—Southwest Ecumenical Ministry, Church Unity Octave Celebration at the New Southwest Community Parish, Corner of Post Ave. & Sawyer St. — 4 p.m.
- 27—Religious Education Coordinators' Workshop, Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua — 6 p.m.
- 28—Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Religious Education Coordinators' Workshop, Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua — 9:30 a.m.
- 31—Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting, Geneva — 1 p.m.

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