

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Personal and Social Status Quo — A Living Death

"Stay just as you are" is usually intended and interpreted as a compliment. In reality, it is the worst advice and encouragement we could ever accept. For we are all by vocation called to constant personal growth and restlessness with our imperfections. And this means that a holy dissatisfaction with our status quo is virtuous at any given moment of our life.

All growth is painful and involves the risk of making free decisions within the context of past promises, ongoing love, and new commitments. The New Testament speaks of this growth process in terms of the grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying to bring forth new life.

Tomorrow's vitality of our person depends on our open response to today's inner urgings and external events. To be a person is to accept a loving call to be more than we are at this moment.

Jesus Christ is the new man leading and inspiring us to new life. Through free and

obedient response to His Father and total service to people, Jesus grew in a way that answered and expanded the deepest desires of human nature. The full potential of His life was accomplished only through personal struggle.

For us, then, who are called to pattern our life after the manner of His, there is always more to know, more to love, more to do, and more to become. Yet, no one makes this long journey of growth alone. We fashion our history with others in the relationships, structures and institutions which compose a society. All social orders are, at best, incomplete expressions of what is possible for man and will ever be in need of reform until all men are liberated to seek their full potential as persons.

Just as Christ's redemptive work embraced the role of prophet denouncing a society with its institutions that enslaved man and denied him the liberty in which he could reach the fullness of his human dignity, so, too, the Church which continues His presence in the world has a prophetic mission of liberation.

There are obvious forms of human enslavement to be openly denounced — eroding poverty, illiteracy and powerlessness — all born from unfair social orders. But there are other

forms of enslavement not so readily recognized. There is a poverty, too, that can afflict the materially affluent. The II Vatican Council (Gaudium et Spes - 31) warned against this erosion of the human person: "But while human freedom is often crippled when a man falls into extreme poverty, it also withers when he indulges in too many of life's comforts and imprisons himself in a kind of splendid isolation." Insensitive affluence is the reverse side of abject poverty. In fact, this manifestation of avarice is the most evident form of moral underdevelopment (Populorum Progressio - pp. 18-19).

For affluence is a form of poverty when it deadens our ability to share our gifts and when it spawns self-sufficiency — a disease fatal to the development of our person.

The prophetic role of the Church is to liberate us to the freedom of the Sons of God. Therein lies our sole hope for development to our full stature as a person. There is no challenge for improvement in saying to people or to institutions, "Stay just as you are." But there is a challenge in saying, "Be alive — shed your self-seeking, be sensitive to the needs of others."

Sweden Says 'No' To Pomo Film

Minneapolis [RNS] — No funds of the government of Sweden will be used to finance the making of a pornographic film on the life of Jesus.

This assurance has been given writers who deluged the Swedish embassy in Washington and the Swedish consulate general in Minneapolis with letters protesting the proposed film, "The Many Faces of Jesus."

The film, planned by the Danish film director, Jens Joergen Thoresen, purportedly would portray Jesus lying with street whores and engaging in homosexual activities with numerous men.

According to statements by Per Olof Forshell, consul general in Minneapolis, and by Ove Svensson, cultural attache for the embassy in Washington, Thoresen had turned to various Swedish authorities in an attempt to find financial support for his project.

"Mr. Thoresen's film, however, has been refused support from any official or semi-official Swedish funds," the statements said.

Thomas More Club Plan Approved to Form Advisory Board on Aging

The St. Thomas More Club will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a dinner dance Sept. 18 at the Mapledale Party House. The club consists of single adults between the ages of 18 and 35, who participate in social, spiritual, cultural and community service programs.

Club activities include working with children from St. Joseph's Villa and the Hillside Children's Center, donating food baskets at Thanksgiving, and teaching at Industry. Members have helped out with area blood drives, flood relief, and programs for the elderly at St. Ann's Home.

Invitations have been sent for the reunion to former members the club could locate. Those not contacted should notify the St. Thomas More Club, P.O. Box 1041, Rochester, N.Y. 14603.

A recommendation to form a statewide Advisory Board on Aging to the New York State Catholic Conference was approved by representatives of New York's eight dioceses at a meeting on the problems of the elderly in Albany.

Sister Rachel Ricciardelli, from the Albany Diocesan Office for Health and Social Services, introduced the resolution at the conference. The recommendation will have to be accepted by the Catholic Conference and the Council of Catholic Charities Directors before implementation.

"The Advisory Board will be composed of one or two representatives from each diocese," Sister Rachel said. "The group will make recommendations, facilitate communications, and coordinate the efforts of the dioceses in meeting the needs of the elderly."

The diocesan representatives who attended the conference, at the College of Saint Rose, heard panel presentations on topics ranging from Spiritual Ministry to the Aging and the Theology of Social Justice, to Government Responsibility to the Elderly.

In his opening remarks, Msgr. Charles Fahey, director of Catholic Charities for the Syracuse diocese, told those present that the elderly population in the United States will increase yearly. By the year 2000 there will be more than 30 million people over the age of 65, and the majority will be unable to survive without some type of financial assistance.

Nine persons involved in ministry to the elderly in the Rochester diocese attended the conference.

Sister Judith Reger, from the Office of Human Development, said that the conference was a good "chance to meet people from different dioceses, across the state" and find out what they are doing for the elderly.

A discussion among diocesan representatives, Sister Judith said, resulted in proposals for a local workshop in the Fall, to discuss items such as SSI, Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare. The group also proposed that an institute on aging be held sometime in the future, bringing together interested persons from throughout the diocese.

Controversial Archbishop Suspended by Vatican

Vatican City [RNS] — The Vatican has placed French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, an activist opponent of Vatican II reforms, under suspension for a year.

Father Romeo Panciroli, acting Vatican press officer, said the 70-year-old former Archbishop-Bishop of Tulle, France whom Pope Paul had recently sternly criticized, had been forbidden to ordain priests. The ban on the exercise of this episcopal power would last for one year, Father Panciroli said.

Archbishop Lefebvre, a member of the Holy Ghost Fathers who has long challenged Vatican II's liturgical decrees — among them, the use of the vernacular in the Mass — founded his own seminary (the "Sacredotal Fraternity of St. Pius X") in Ecône, Switzerland, for the formation of clerical students according to pre-Conciliar patterns. He has ordained about 10 priests.

Bishop Pierre Mamie of Lausanne, Switzerland, has taken steps to have the archbishop's seminary disbanded and has forbidden the archbishop to preach anywhere in the Lausanne diocese.

Archbishop Lefebvre, who was Archbishop of Dakar, Senegal, from 1955 to 1962, and a former Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers, was sharply attacked — by name — by Pope Paul in his address at the May 24 Consistory at which he installed 20 new cardinals.

Referring to Catholics who want to turn the clock back to the 16th Century's Council of Trent in the name of tradition, the Pope said,

There are those who, under the pretext of a greater fidelity to the Church and the Magisterium (teaching authority), systematically refuse the teaching of (the Second Vatican Council) itself, its application and the reforms that stem from it.

Preston, Eng. [RNS] — Exploratory talks on means of intercommunion are being held by representatives of the British Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church, it was revealed here as the Methodist Conference prepared to convene its annual meeting.

The talks were revealed by the Methodist Church's Ecumenical Committee in a statement contained in the 372-page conference agenda sent to the 576 ministerial and lay representatives. The statement also disclosed that the Methodist representatives in the conversations had suggested that the Roman Catholic bishops of England, Wales and Scotland be more flexible on the subject.

Conversations between the two Churches, stemmed from a resolution at last year's Methodist Conference which asked that the Methodist representatives in conversations already going on between the two Churches be asked — provided Roman Catholic authorities agreed — to explore the conditions on which communion

PRE-CANA IN ITHACA

Ithaca — Pre-Caná for engaged couples from Immaculate Conception parish will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 2 and 4 in Room 108 at the school. Couples are asked by the parish to register as soon as possible.

Catholic-Methodist Talks Revealed

might be established between the two Churches.

As a result, the statement said, intercommunion had been the main item on the agenda of the Churches' conversations for the past year. The statement added, "The discussion is still at an early stage but the following points have so far been noted:

\* "The meaning of the word 'communion' as used in the Conference resolution has been taken to be, in the first instance, 'eucharistic sharing.'

\* "It has been recognized by both parties that, though Vatican directives place extremely strict limitations on Catholics receiving communion from and offering communion to non-Catholics the Catholic authorities in some parts of Europe, acting within the guidelines of the Vatican Council and official interpretations of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, have judged it right to extend eucharistic hospitality farther than others, in other circumstances, have yet felt themselves able to do.

The Methodist members of the conversations, believing that there is much to encourage such a step in this country, have therefore suggested that the Roman Catholic Bishops of England, Wales and Scotland should use the same breadth of interpretation as elsewhere.

\* "It has been acknowledged that there is a dilemma faced by many Catholics in local situations in that they wish to communicate freely with their fellow Christians for the sake of Christian unity but are not at liberty to do so because of the discipline of their Church.

\* "It is recognized that the main difficulties preventing Catholics from extending and accepting eucharistic hospitality are: the understanding of the sacrament within Methodism; the validity of the Methodist ministry; the relationship between the individual participant and the church as the community of the faithful; and the belief that eucharistic sharing is a sign of, not a means to, Christian unity.

\* "Exploration of the issues will

continue during the coming year and a full statement will be brought to next year's conference."

Observers said that at present there are virtually no occasions when Methodists are officially encouraged to receive Communion during Roman Catholic services in Britain. But Dr. Kenneth G. Creet, secretary of the Conference, said before the meeting opened here that he understood that in France and Scandinavia local Roman Catholic bishops gave a broader interpretation of the rules, and British Methodist would like the same approach here.

Observers also pointed out that officially, the Roman Catholic authorities in Britain are at this stage only exploring the subject. No recommendation or proposal has yet gone to the bishops.

However, it is a major ecumenical development that the Methodists, the biggest of Britain's Free Churches, should have raised the issue of inter-communion with the Roman Catholic authorities and that it is even being considered.