

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

The Eucharist and the Hunger for Bread

PART II

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. These profoundly moving opening words of the document of the II Vatican Council entitled "The Church in the Modern World" are linked unmistakably to the theme of the Eucharistic Congress.

To think of the Eucharist outside of the context of hunger would make our faith unrealistic. For one of the griefs of large numbers of the human family is hunger. Today no one can be ignorant any longer of the fact that in whole continents countless men and women are ravished by hunger, countless children are undernourished and die in infancy, and the physical growth and mental development of many others are retarded.

Pope Paul describes the world food crisis as a drama of life or death for mankind which must unite to survive and must learn to share our daily bread.

The same Jesus Who nourishes us with His Body and Blood, hungers in the poor with whom He has identified Himself. "For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat." Matt. 25, 34.

Food is inadequately distributed in our world. There is an estimated 600 pounds of grain per year available for every person in the world. In the United States we eat almost 2,000 pounds per person per year. In terms of quantity of food, this means that there are many people inadequately nourished. Another way to measure the gap between the well-fed and ill-

fed is to recognize that there is about one acre of arable land per person available in the world today. The average American uses over three acres per person. Income is another measure. Fifty-four per cent of the world's population now lives on a per capita income of under \$200 a year. Under no circumstances can these people have the necessities of life. The average annual per capita income in the United States is now over \$5,000.

It is only when we measure hunger in its effect on people that we discover its crucial meaning. Hunger then becomes "a child with shriveled limbs and a swollen belly. It is the grief of parents or a person gone blind for a lack of vitamin A. A single example of hunger is one too many." (BREAD FOR THE WORLD, by Arthur Simon.)

In the theme chosen by Pope Paul for the Eucharistic Congress, it would be difficult to miss the point the Pope is making in linking public eucharistic devotion to the global food crisis. The theme of the Congress is a call to re-examine and deepen our understanding of the relationship between the Eucharist and social justice. For hunger is symptomatic of a disease — unjust poverty. Much of today's hunger is not accidental. It is caused by greed and selfishness which are embedded not only in individual hearts, but also in institutions oriented to profit which tend to widen the gap between rich and poor. This way of life is totally incompatible with a true eucharistic life.

During this past Lent those who were making preparations for the Eucharistic Congress promoted Operation Rice Bowl in which Catholic families throughout the country made a consistent modification in their eating patterns for the sake of their hungry brothers and sisters. Once a week, these American Catholics ate a frugal meal and gave the difference in the cost of their typical daily meal to a fund to be used for the hungry. I was personally pleased with the participation in this program in our diocese and especially grateful to our young

people who supported it so enthusiastically. This program was a part of the spiritual preparation for the Eucharistic Congress.

It is my hope that one of the graces of the Congress will be our determination to make such a program a regular and ongoing expression of Christian love in action — a deep call from God to live more simply in order that others may simply live — a deeper realization that our personal piety cannot be separated from social responsibility.

Without a doubt, this year of the Eucharistic Congress is offered to us as a special moment of grace in the development of eucharistic spirituality. For it is only when we sense the meaning of hunger and compassion that we can begin to enter into the mystery of the Eucharist. The identification of Jesus, ordinary bread, and the whole human family is beyond comprehension by any faculty short of faith. Jesus, bread, ourselves: three realities intimately linked. In this moment of history when for hundreds of millions of our one family under God hunger has become dehumanizing, we who are well fed cannot go on with business as usual — or with marginal responses.

In a mysterious way that can be grasped only by a living faith, we know that only the compassion of Christ can inspire the dedication called for to make this planet a worthy dwelling for those for whom Our Lord said, "Take, eat, this is my Body which is being broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

I pray that this Congress will be a turning point in the history of the world and that His miracle of feeding the multitudes and all of us in the Eucharist will culminate in a miracle of sharing that banishes starvation from the earth. Many will say that this can never happen. But they are not the human family. You are — and you, with the grace of the Risen Christ, will prevail. Let us seek the grace of being Eucharist to those who hunger for bread.

Permanent Diaconate Group Issues Report

The task force commissioned last April by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan to study and plan for the institution of the permanent diaconate in the diocese has been working through the summer, and this week launches a series of reports to the diocese on its own work and on the diaconate itself.

According to Father Sebastian Falcone, who is coordinating the effort, the first work of the task force is to focus on the work of its own Theology and Curriculum subcommittee. That unit is exploring and establishing the "rationale," the "controlling principles," of the permanent diaconate for the Diocese of Rochester.

"Such an affirmation," the group notes, "is needed to control the direction of this restored ministry, and so, the work of the entire Task Force."

In the meantime, the group also is studying and evaluating programs already in operation in other dioceses, and is preparing instruments for gathering local response and input for the Rochester program.

The permanent diaconate, according to a report from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on the permanent diaconate, is an example of one institution in the Western Church which flourished vigorously for some time and then failed. The report encourages studying the history of the institution, lest the reestablishment of it lead to a second failure.

The report, published in the winter issue of this year's *Diaconal Quarterly*, says that by the beginning of the second century

the Christian ministry had been divided into three distinct orders: the episcopate, the presbyterate and the diaconate. Each group had its own specific rights, powers, and functions.

The diaconate flourished in the early Church and was an important order until the fifth century when it began to wane. By the seventh and eighth centuries, men who were permanent deacons were a relative rarity, the report says. By the eighth or ninth century the order had been reduced in the West to a temporary step on the road to the priesthood.

At its peak of prestige as an order of Christian ministry, deacons had been the most powerful men in the diocese after the bishop himself. More often than not the deacon was the successor to the episcopal chair.

The report states:

"The reason for the decline of the diaconate was fundamentally one: the disassociation, in practice, of the order from its principal purpose, service of the community."

"The causes of the disassociation of the diaconate from the ministry of service were principally two: the excessive assumption and administration of power by some deacons, and the exclusive concentration by others on the liturgy. These causes were abetted by the introduction of two obligations on the major clergy: progression through orders, and celibacy."

"As the administrative side of the Church became more sophisticated and extensive, the deacon, as the 'aide-de-camp' of the bishop, found his time more and more consumed with the government of

the diocese. His control of the finances of the diocese increased the demand on his time and energy. As a result, the deacon became immersed in the assumption and application of power within the Church. Sheer necessity forced him to delegate the practical work of service to others. Once service and ministry were divorced in practice it was not long until they were distinct in spirit.

"Sacralization was a religious phenomenon which developed in the fourth century and can best be described as an attitude of interpreting the Christian ministry — episcopate, priesthood and diaconate — in terms of Old Testament ministry — high-priesthood, priesthood, and levitical service, with the idea of cult becoming central to the concept of ministry. The Eucharist was seen as a thing of inestimable value in itself, so that all forms of ministry became directed almost exclusively toward it, without real regard for the needs of the community."

"In the environment of sacralization, deacons not absorbed in the quest for and administration of power became oriented toward the liturgy. The Eucharistic sacrifice was seen as the basic reason for the clerical office of deacon, so that performance of liturgical activity rather than service of priests within the liturgy, became for many the purpose of their diaconal ministry. This was to make the deacon the rival of the priest, and to confuse the two orders of the ministry. The diaconate lost its specification and identity, becoming something of a second priesthood."

"Excessive emphasis on the

deacon's role in the liturgy led the diaconate to become disassociated from its prime task, the function of service. Instead of the deacon's role in the liturgy being the expression of and source for his work of service to the Christian community, it replaced that work of service altogether.

"A further factor worth noting is that the collapse of the diaconate, in practice, was hastened by the antagonism and opposition of priests, who generally resented the deacon's assumption of a role which they considered rightfully theirs."

"Another factor contributing to the decline of the permanent diacon was the rule of adhering to the progression through lower orders to higher ones. With em-

Vatican Defers Neumann Cause

Philadelphia [RNS] — The expected canonization of Blessed John Nepomucene Neumann, the fourth bishop of Philadelphia and potentially the third American Roman Catholic saint, will not occur this Fall, according to a spokesman for the Philadelphia archdiocese.

Father Leo McKenzie, director of the archdiocesan communications center, said the canonization would have to be delayed because of the Vatican's busy schedule of canonization ceremonies.

He noted that the Vatican already has set aside three Sundays in October for such rites.

Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia flew to Rome July 14, the day after the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints was to decide on whether to recommend to Pope Paul that

Neumann be declared a saint. The Liturgy in general and the Eucharist in particular, it became more common for men to be dissatisfied with anything less than the priesthood.

"As continence by law, and celibacy by practice, became an obligation for all in major orders, attraction to the diaconate weakened. If to enter the ranks of the major clergy a man was bound to forego his right to marriage, at least in its fullness, he was naturally more inclined, in an atmosphere of sacralization, because of his sacrifice, to strive for the higher order of priesthood rather than be content with that of the diaconate."

Next week: a history of the restoration of the permanent diaconate.

Bishop Neumann be declared a saint.

Since June 1, the congregation has been reviewing Bishop Neumann's life, the last major step in the 79-year study of the Philadelphia churchman. If declared a saint, he will be the first American male so honored.

The other American saints are St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, known for her work among immigrants and orphans, and St. Elizabeth Anne Seton, founder of the Daughters of Charity. Of the three, only St. Elizabeth Seton was born in the U.S.

Bishop Neumann, born in 1811 in Bohemia, emigrated to the U.S. and was ordained in 1836. Six years later, he joined the Redemptorist order in Baltimore, and 10 years later was named fourth bishop of Philadelphia.