

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

The Eucharist and the Hunger for Peace

PART V

With this column I conclude the series on selected themes for the 41st Eucharistic Congress. I had expressed in the beginning of this series my hope that the Congress would be a success, not to be measured in terms of numbers attending or in an image promoted of a Church triumphant in its achievement during its almost 2,000 years of history but in the challenges it would offer to all of us responsible for its mission to proclaim the Gospel to the world.



Father Joseph O'Hare, S.J., editor-in-chief of America magazine and a weeklong observer of the Congress, had this evaluation of its success:

"The Congress was not, as some skeptics claimed it would be, a relapse into pre-Vatican II triumphalism. One important reason why it was not was the genial inspiration behind the themes of the Congress: the hungers of the human family. It would be hard for American Catholics to feel complacent as they listened to Catholics from Africa, Latin American and Asia voice a powerful protest against the domination of the poor nations of the world by the wealthy.

"Secondly, the sense of community amid differences so dominant at the Congress seemed peculiarly American and peculiarly Catholic. The exhibits and liturgies that affirmed distinct ethnic and national heritages were reminders of the special character of that pluralist society that was born 200 years ago as the United States of America. And the final liturgy of the Congress, the *Statio Orbis* (Assembly of the

World) dramatized the full meaning of Catholic. All week long, pilgrims from all over the world had themselves embodied this truth: that no religious tradition in the world today can witness so vividly and realistically to an international brotherhood and sisterhood. The challenge to such a worldwide community to overcome the division of nation, race and wealth became correspondingly clear.

"Finally, the Congress above all was witness to the meaning of the Church as the people of God, not an elite secure in some superior wisdom, but a people of marvelous variety and very human confusions, of an energy and vitality still untapped and occasionally misdirected, but a people always alive to all the hungers for the bread of life."

America - Aug. 21, 1976

One of the themes for this Congress was 'The Eucharist and the Hunger for Peace'. It is interesting to note that the major interruptions in the chronology of the Congress were caused by wars. The first Congress was in 1881 at Lille in France. The idea was conceived by Marie Tamisier, a French laywoman who envisioned an instructional and inspirational assembly to honor the Blessed Sacrament and to study Eucharistic teaching. It was a humble beginning attracting 800 people and two Bishops. Thereafter, the span between Congresses has varied from one to fourteen years — all depending on the status of peace in the world. The longest span came between the 34th and 35th Congresses (14 years) with World War II as the interrupting factor. For what hypocrisy it would be to hold a universal assembly to honor the Sacrament of reconciliation at a time when the human family was divided by hatred and hostility.

Lived in conscience, the spiritual unity and

the love we profess to acknowledge in the Eucharist is meant to reduce our differences and to blunt our hostilities. The true Christian cannot love in the Church and hate in the marketplace. The oneness we say we believe must be translated into the acts we perform in the broader community and into the attitudes we hold towards each other, towards the rights of other persons of whatever race or nation or creed.

In this tormented world there has arisen a growing recognition of our planetary unity as human beings, forced on us by a new awareness of the limits of earth's resources and environment. There is in our world community for the first time in history a sense of our common responsibility to meet basic human needs, a recognition that the rich and the poor must find ways to reconcile their competing claims and to fashion a new order that will ensure a measure of economic and social justice.

We would be hard pressed to find any conflict in the world today which does not have as its root cause a violation of human rights. Both Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI have set the respect for human rights as the imperative foundation for peace.

Surely, we who profess to be united in the Eucharist, to be nourished by Christ Himself, must have something within us to contribute to the building of peace in this world — to contribute to a climate where peace is possible.

A grace of this Congress which was offered to us as a moment of celebration and, even more, as a grace of personal challenge is this — how can we share the peace and love we received in the Eucharist and how do we define our own individual commitment in building peace strengthened, as we are, by Christ "Who is our peace" and Who meets our hunger with His Body and Blood.

Guatemala Bishops Charge Government with Injustice

Guatemala City (RNS) — Guatemala's Roman Catholic bishops, declaring that the country exists in a situation of "institutionalized violence" resulting from unjust social structures, called for extensive land reform and a more just distribution of wealth among the small Central American nation's poor majority.

marginalization of the masses" in a country where 70 per cent of the population makes an average of \$42 a year, the document also called attention to the little nation's "repressive" circumstances by commenting:

"We have entered into a vicious circle of violence — oppression leads to subversion and subversion

leads to repression — so that gradually the climate has become most exasperating, and the bloodbath is unbearable."

The document was issued by the Guatemalan Bishops Conference, whose president is Bishop Juan Cerardi Conedera of Santa Cruz del Quiche. The strongly worded statement hit hard at government

policies and wealthy landowners and charged that poor farmers (campesinos) have been deprived of lands they cultivated for centuries.

"It grieves us to see millions of quetzals (dollars) invested in armaments, luxuries and unnecessary expenditures by both government and private enterprises" when the

needs of the people are "grievous and basic," the bishops said.

The bishops pointed out that the country's low gross national product is distributed in an "extremely unjust way: a very small minority receives a large part and small part has to be distributed among the majority of people."

"In spite of efforts to care for the population as a whole, many are enduring misery, hunger and sickness; infant mortality and illiteracy rates are high, great differences in income, marginalization, tensions between social classes, outbreaks of violence and limited participation of people in community administration are other problems," the bishops added.

The document commented on land tenancy in Guatemala by noting that most of the arable land is owned by a small minority, and said that the agrarian reform implemented was "apparently passed to protect private ownership and to close all doors to fair distribution."

The bishops also called the existence of paramilitary groups "unjustified and illegal." They said that in a "permanent climate of terror they move throughout the nation in the service of opposing political factions to kidnap and murder."

The hierarchy also called attention to increased juvenile delinquency and corruption in government administration, citing embezzlement, bribes, and political entanglements. The bishops said institutions to safeguard and impart justice, such as the police, "are often tools of partisan interests."

"The people of Guatemala have lost confidence in democratic institutions and consequently, there is a strong decline in civic awareness," the bishops declared.

The Bishop's Public Appointments



September

- 7— Priests' Council Meeting, Becket Hall — 10:30 a.m.
- 7— Task Force, Permanent Diaconate, Pastoral Center — 7 p.m.
- 10— Priests' Program for Pastoral Leadership and Parish Spiritual Renewal, McAuley Building of Mercy High School — 10 a.m.
- 10-11— Parish Council Congress, Mercy High School.
- 12— Celebration of Eucharist and Homily, Installation of Parish Council, St. Mary's Church, Corning — 11:30 a.m.
- 13— Advisory Board of Becket Hall Meeting — 10 a.m.
- 13— Priests' Meeting, Northeast Region, Church of Assumption, Fairport — Noon
- 14— Priestly Spirituality Meeting, Becket Hall — 12:30 p.m.
- 14— Confirmation Task Force Meeting, Mercy Motherhouse — 7:30 p.m.
- 16— Pastoral Office Status A Meeting — 9:30 a.m.
- 16— Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, and Conferral of Candidacy, St. Bernard's Seminary — 5 p.m.

- 17— Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, St. Agnes High School — 8:30 a.m.
- 18— Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting, Holiday Inn, Waterloo — 10 a.m.
- 20— Ministerial Review Committee Meeting, Becket Hall — 7 p.m.
- 21— Regional Coordinators' Meeting, St. Mary's Parish, Canandaigua — 10:30 a.m.
- 21— Fund Development Meeting, Becket Hall — 7:30 p.m.
- 23— Goal Planning Meeting — 9 a.m.
- 23— Joint Executive Committee Meeting — 7:30 p.m.
- 24— Lawyers' Red Mass and Homily, St. Mary's Church, Rochester — 12:15 p.m.
- 24— Diaconate Ordination, St. John's, Greece — 7:30 p.m.
- 26— Centenary Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, St. Januarius Church, Naples — 10 a.m.
- 27-28— St. Bernard's Seminary Alumni Reunion.
- 29— Education Conference, Our Lady of Mercy High School — 9:30 a.m.
- 30— Fund Development Meeting, Becket Hall — 7:30 p.m.