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Special Report

Diocesan Departmental Reports

My dear Family United in Christ Jesus,

Our blessed Lord once told a story about a shepherd who had a hundred sheep.

As your Bishop, I have a flock of 500,000 — not sheep, but people.



**BISHOP
HOGAN**

Jesus said the Good Shepherd would know his flock, that He would speak to them, and that they would hear Him and recognize Him.

How can I speak to 500,000? How can I hear all your voices? How can I

reach out to touch each one of you and comfort you?

I know you have your parish priest or a chaplain to be a shepherd for you. But even they must count their flocks in thousands, not just the biblical one hundred.

I have thought deeply about these questions and I have prayed often about them.

The articles on the following pages of this special edition of your Courier-Journal show you the directions I think we should go to find the answers to these questions.

One step in that direction is to **share my responsibility** — both its joys and its

burdens — with an increasing number of all of God's People, not just the priests but with the religious sisters and brothers and with the lay people who have too long and too often been frozen out of responsible Church decisions and actions.

There are now at least 200 lay people regularly engaged in the decision-making process or serving on more than fifteen diocesan boards or agencies, and there are at least 1,000 additional lay people participating in Parish Councils and their committees. This very weekend, more than 700 delegates representing over 70 parishes of our Diocese will meet at our first Diocesan Parish Congress.

You will notice in the following articles that there is a subtle variation in the emphasis and the direction underway in the various regions of our Diocese: Elmira, Auburn, Hornell, Geneva — Groveland, Sodus, Trumansburg — and all the other parishes in our Diocese have distinct problems and resources in their different areas and only through **regional consultation and cooperation** can these situations be best assessed and responded to, certainly not by my episcopal fiat from Rochester.

And I hear the insistent command of our Savior to "go into the world." We need to **work with all people of good will** — so we can better know the needs of the people of our world and how we can best plan for the world which God is creating daily at our fingertips. Our Diocesan Pastoral Planning Office, for example, is in frequent contact with the regional and county planning boards, the Center for Governmental Research and similar agencies. The wisdom of such planning is recommended, it would seem, not only by common sense but also by the Bible, for Jeremiah tells us, "the plans I have for you, says the LORD, give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

There are formidable tasks and new ones confronting us daily. Besides the needs of all the churches — Mass, the sacraments, instruction, counsel — we have, for example, 100,000 young people attending 20 colleges within our twelve county diocese, with faculty and staff of over 20,000. There are at least 55,000 Black people and as many as 30,000 Spanish speaking people in our diocese, with their own special heritages, customs and needs. There are patients in hospitals, senior citizens in nursing homes and apartments; there are those confined in jails and prisons — how diverse, how complex, how demanding are our responsibilities to them all!

As you read, and I hope, ponder and pray about these words of mine to you, I ask you to be a deputy shepherd with me and for me — so that together we can be shepherds for all God's people. I know we shall not fulfill all our duties overnight nor even within a thousand days, but at least let us start toward the goal. We begin to see where we are going. The interviews and reports you can read on these following pages show you we have already made progress.

This progress is the result of sound fiscal management with income increasing and expenditures 2% under projected budget. But more than that, it has its source in Him who has blessed us and all those whose generous dedication to His Kingdom has prompted Him to smile upon us and to show us His favor.

While there remains much more to do, one of His prophets offers us a note of hope. "The vision awaits its time; if it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come." Habakkuk 2:3

Your Shepherd in Christ,

Joseph L. Hogan
+Joseph L. Hogan