

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Election '76 — Privilege and Responsibility

As a religious leader and citizen I take pride in the representative democracy which our forefathers established and which generations of Americans have preserved and developed for the 200 years of our nation's history. Election Day is a forceful reminder that each of us is privileged and duty-bound to guide the country onward by making an informed judgment on the values, policies and programs that are proposed to us and on the public servants who will guide and direct our destiny as a nation.



The Administrative Board of the United States Catholic Conference has referred to the upcoming elections as a "test of our democratic institutions because increasing numbers of our fellow citizens regard our political institutions and electoral processes with indifference and even distrust."

Four years ago, only one-half of the eligible citizens exercised their right to vote. And two years ago, at the time of national elections for Congressional leadership, only 36 per cent voted. This trend must be reversed if our government is to truly reflect the "consent of the governed."

We can spend our energies in grieving over the causes of our disenchantment. But this does not lead to a solution of our problems. Or we can work to become a committed, informed, and involved citizenry to revitalize our political life, to require accountability from our political leaders and governmental institutions and achieve the common good. Pope Paul VI has reminded us of this duty: "The Christian has the duty to take part in the organization and life of political society."

Is the Church meddling when it enters the political order? By no means. We believe that Jesus' Commandment to love our neighbor should extend beyond individual relationships to infuse and transform all human relations from the family to the entire human community. Jesus came to "bring good news to the poor, to

proclaim liberty to captives, new sight to the blind and to set the downtrodden free." (Luke 4:18) He called us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick and afflicted and to comfort the victims of injustice (Matt. 25). His example and words require individual acts of charity and concern from each of us. Yet they also require understanding and action upon the broader dimensions of poverty, hunger and injustice which necessarily involve the institutions and structures of economy, society and politics.

The 1971 Synod of Bishops declared that action on behalf of justice is a "constitutive dimension" of the Church's ministry. And this simply means that the Church cannot fulfill her mission unless she proclaims justice on the social, national and international level, and denounces instances of injustice when the fundamental rights of man and his very salvation demand it. **The Church has to relate positively to the political order since social injustice and the denial of human rights can often be remedied only through governmental action.**

The Statement of the Administrative Board of the United States Catholic Conference (February 12, 1976) makes clear the position of a bishop as a teacher and moral leader:

"We specifically do not seek the formation of a religious voting bloc; nor do we wish to instruct persons on how they should vote by endorsing Candidates. We urge citizens to avoid choosing candidates simply on the personal basis of self-interest. Rather, we hope that voters will examine the position of Candidates on the full range of issues as well as the person's integrity, philosophy and performance."

I have underlined passages from this document to clarify the position of the U.S. bishops. Reports of a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Conference of Bishops with the presidential Candidates were interpreted as the endorsement of a Candidate because of **one issue**. The

misinterpretation was clarified by the bishops in a statement issued on September 16:

"As bishops we have a duty to make clear the moral and religious dimensions of secular issues, to point to God's word as an authentic norm for social and political life, and to make clear the practical requirements which spiritual and moral values impose upon efforts to achieve a more just social order. At the same time, we are not supporting religious bloc voting nor are we instructing people for whom to vote. Rather, we urge that citizens make this decision for themselves in an informed and conscientious manner in light of Candidates' positions on the issues, as well as their personal qualifications."

The issues are many and complex. They can be grouped under one central theme — **basic reverence for human life**. Human life in every form and shape is an event of beauty and promise. Every human person, at every moment of his or her existence, proclaims the glory of God as we share the struggle of all creation to be true to our calling. It is for this reason that I am against abortion as a violent and harsh solution to the genuine problems that face women and their loved ones. It is for this reason that I am opposed to capital punishment as a violent and harsh solution to the genuine question of crime in our society. I am also against unemployment as a harsh and destructive side effect of our "solution" to the genuine problems of inflation. Too often, the most "practical" method of solving the problems of this society involves the undercutting of human life. This list could be expanded. But these examples may help you understand what I mean by respecting human life.

You and I have only a few days left to prayerfully reflect on the issues and come to a decision that merits to be called an **informed vote**. As our nation enters its third century, let no one say that Americans are an apathetic people, an irresponsible people, a people indifferent about their leadership and national policies. Under God, let us be confident, responsible and actively involved in preserving and developing our heritage for the generations to come.

The Bishop's Public Appointments



November

- 2— Priests Council Meeting, Becket Hall — 10:30 a.m.
- 4— Priestly Spirituality Meeting, Becket Hall — 12:30 p.m.
- 4— Ministerial Review Committee Meeting, Becket Hall — 7 p.m.
- 6— Parish Liturgy Committees' Workshop, St. Mary's Church, Canandaigua — 3:30 p.m.
- 7— Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Diamond Jubilee of Blessed Sacrament Parish — 11:30 a.m.
- 7-11— Fall Meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Statler Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.
- 13— Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Rochester Marriage Encounter Convention, Aquinas Institute — 4 p.m.
- 14— Livingston-Stauben Regional Meeting, St. Joseph's School, Wayland — 3 p.m.
- 16— Confirmation, St. Ann's Church, Hornell — 7:45 p.m.

- 17— Permanent Diaconate Task Force Meeting, Pastoral Office — 7:30 p.m.
- 18— Status A Meeting — 9:30 a.m.
- 18— Confirmation, St. Mary's Church, Auburn — 7:45 p.m.
- 20— Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting, Sheraton Inn, Canandaigua — 10 a.m.
- 22— Confirmation, St. Pius V Church, Cohocton — 7:45 p.m.
- 23— Regional Coordinators Meeting, St. Mary's, Canandaigua — 10:30 a.m.
- 25— Eddie Meath Thanksgiving Day Show, Channel 10, WHEC-TV — 7 a.m.
- 25— Thanksgiving Day Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Rochester — 10 a.m.
- 27— Radio Message, Family Rosary Network — 7 p.m.
- 28— Celebration of the Eucharist and Homily, Dedication of Altar, St. Andrew's Church, Rochester — 12:15 p.m.

Pope Proclaims Scottish Martyr As Saint

Vatican City [RNS] — A 17th Century Scottish Jesuit martyr, Father John Ogilvie, was solemnly proclaimed a saint by Pope Paul at a colorful ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica on Oct. 17.

In a homily, the pontiff hailed the new saint, who was hanged in Glasgow in 1615 for refusing to acknowledge that King James I held religious primacy over the Pope, as "a glorious champion of his people."

Noting that the 36-year-old Jesuit priest had been condemned as a "traitor," Pope Paul said: "He was nothing more than the defender of the independence of religious freedom, according to the eternal maxim of Christ the Lord, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'"

More than 20,000 pilgrims, some 4,000 from Scotland, crowded into the basilica for the canonization ceremony, the Church's first solemn proclamation of a Scottish saint since Queen Margaret of Scotland in 1250.

All sections of Scottish Catholic life played a part in the ceremony. Concelebrating the Mass with Pope Paul was Cardinal Gordon Gray, Archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, who himself made history in 1969 by becoming Scotland's first resident cardinal since the Reformation.