

Christian Unity Hope Rests In Holy Spirit

January 19, 1977

My dear People:

The beginning of a New Year is an occasion for renewing resolutions, strengthening hopes and reaffirming our longing for the unity of all Christians. The 1977 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity reminds us that "this hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit." (Romans 5:5)

You may wonder why this Scriptural passage was chosen as the theme for this year's Christian Unity focus. St. Paul, in a fundamental way, gives us a foundation for our quest for unity. First he describes the source of the Christian faith that we share. All Christians are witnesses to the fact that through Jesus Christ we have been saved. However different our traditions and beliefs, however diverse our past experiences and present trials and expectations, we share the conviction that we have been made members of the Kingdom.

St. Paul highlights a perspective necessary for those committed to the task of unity. Some of us are eager and impatient and quickly get discouraged or disillusioned. Some lose faith in the possibilities of achieving full unity and become frustrated. There are others who see the growing degree of unity and remain satisfied with that. St. Paul challenges us to base our prayer and work on the hope which God gives. This hope stirs us to discover new frontiers - expectancies shaped and sustained by God's gift of the Holy Spirit whose power, working in us, can do more than we can ask or imagine.

The 1977 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be celebrated January 18 - 25. As you discover the spirit of ecumenism in your family and parish life, I would ask you to reflect upon the role which endurance serves in this quest.

"Unlike patience, endurance is the very pivot and life-style of hope, its testing ground in real life. Endurance is active, restless, searching and courageous. Hope is revealed in perseverance; it works through steadfastness against the frustrating forces of disunity, indifference and disappointment. Endurance is tested in the deepest way where, because of our hope in God, we are put to suffering and are shown the splendor of Christ's way."

Throughout the past twelve years, we have been engaged in dialogue, common prayer, practical collaboration and common witness; often, our hope was put to trial and our endurance to test. It is my prayer that we, the Church of Rochester, may endure in the hope that Christ has revealed. May the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity call you to a deeper belief in the Holy Spirit who is already at work in and through us in the churches, divided though we still are. May the love with which God has already rescued us, in spite of our weakness, encourage us to cry out for renewed hope and endurance as we continue to strive for full Christian unity.

As we move toward this goal, we remember to thank God for that part of our hope which He has already realized. The growth of ecumenism in the Diocese of Rochester has an initiative of its own and its task challenges our support and cooperation. Men and women involved in ecumenical agencies and ministries continue to remind us of the advances toward Christian fellowship and service toward Christian unity itself, which we have already achieved.

And, so, my dear people, like St. Paul, "we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." (Romans 5:3-5)

With every best wish for a blessed New Year, I remain

Devotedly yours in Christ

Joseph L. Hogan
Joseph L. Hogan
Bishop of Rochester

Gay Jesuit Ordination Denied

New York (RNS) - A Jesuit seminarian says that he has been refused ordination to the priesthood because officials of the New York Jesuit Province are "afraid to set a precedent" by ordaining a "known homosexual."

Thomas Sweetin, a native of Jamestown, who joined the Society of Jesus in 1963 and completed his theological studies at the former Woodstock College theologate in New York in 1975, said he was finally informed in September that he was refused ordination and was asked to write a letter petitioning dismissal from the Jesuits.

Sweetin told Religious News Service that he has refused to submit the letter to the Provincial for Formation, Father Albert P. Bartlett, SJ, who he said told him that "the eyes of the society are upon us" and "we would have to set a precedent" in the matter.

(Father Bartlett served as rector of McQuaid Jesuit High School in Rochester for six years. He left the post in 1972.)

Father Bartlett told RNS that Sweetin has been refused ordination but would not comment on the reasons for the refusal because "that is a private matter." He said that "whatever Tom says will be up to his own conscience."

Father Bartlett would not say that a "homosexual orientation" alone was an impediment to ordination, but he asserted that a man who was "active" homosexually would surely be prohibited from being ordained a priest. He acknowledged Sweetin's claim that he is an "inactive" homosexual.

Sweetin believes major objections to his ordination focus on his views that homosexuality can be a "viable lifestyle" and the

conviction by some of his superiors that only heterosexual persons can witness to the vow of celibacy.

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Deaths

N. Trabold

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Monday, Jan. 10 for the repose of Norbert F. Trabold who died Jan. 7, 1977.

The rites, held at Holy Ghost Church, were performed by more than 15 priests, including Father Alphonsus Trabold, OFM, Mr. Trabold's son, and Bishop Dennis W. Hickey.

Mr. Trabold had, for many years, been a member of the parish Men's Club, the Third Order of St. Francis, and head usher at the church.

He is survived by his wife Irene (Bier) Trabold; Father Trabold, who teaches at St. Bonaventure University in Olean; two daughters, Miss Vera Trabold of the Diocesan Missions Office and Mrs. Edward (Ruth) Moreland; one brother, Herman Trabold; and seven grandchildren.

W. Wittmann

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, Jan. 2, at St. John the Evangelist Church, Rochester for William Wittmann who died Friday, Jan. 7, 1977 at the age of 75.

Mr. Wittmann was cofounder of the Rochester chapter of the Kolping Society and was an active member of many German-American organizations.

Leo Saeum, president of the Kolping, said Mr. Wittmann was the "most prominent and active man in the German Community," here.

Among the priests present for the burial Mass, which included German language hymns and prayers, were Fathers John Mulligan, Joseph Brennan, Winfried Kellner, Paul Freimesser and Msgr. Charles Boyle.

Mr. Wittmann also was a past president of the Federation of German American Societies. After World War II, Mr. Wittmann was area chairman of the Auxiliary Relief Committee for Germany, a division of the National Catholic Welfare Conference War Relief program.

In 1960, he was given the officers' cross of the Order of Merit first class, by the Federal Republic of Germany for his contributions to bettering the understanding between Germany and the U.S.

Mr. Wittmann also was a member of the Catholic Central Union; the Schwaben and the Steuben societies; the parish Men's Club; The Elder Statesman Club of the Gleason Works, where he worked many years until retiring 10 years ago; and the Nocturnal Adoration Society.

He is survived by his wife Margareta; a son, Joseph Wittmann of Cleveland, O.; a daughter, Monica Cloonan of Rochester; a sister, Anni Wittmann, and a niece, both of Germany.

Henry Egan

M. Henry Egan of Auburn, whose son is pastor of three rural parishes south of that city, died Jan. 6, 1977, in Auburn Memorial Hospital, after a brief illness. He was 91 years old.

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Jan. 8 in St. Bernard's Church, Scipio Center, by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, Father Robert M. Egan, pastor, and several priests of the area. Father Edwin Wedow gave the homily and Paul F. Egan, a grandson, was the reader. Burial was in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Fleming.

Mr. Egan was born in Auburn and lived there most of his life. He worked at International Harvester for many years. He was a communicant of St. Alphonsus Church and a member of its Holy Name Society. His son's pastorate covers St. Isaac Jogues in Fleming and St. Hilary's, Genoa.

ERB ON CITY BOARD

John J. Erb, director of urban social ministry for the Office of Human Development, has been named to the City Zoning Board of Review. He was a member of the Citizens' Zoning Coalition that helped draft the zoning ordinance adopted in 1975.

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