

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

When Rome Speaks . . .

In the past several days since my public statement on the ordination of women document from Rome I have received both favorable and adverse comments. One phone call to the Pastoral Center was from a woman asking with much concern what this all means for women in the Church — are we 'less' than men? Is my life as a Christian diminished in some way because I am female?



Another phone call, from a concerned priest, asked about how important to me is a show of loyalty to the Holy Father when a document from Rome is published.

The press release which is here published in full for you, my dear people, contains several messages, none of which I have taken lightly.

As a Bishop I see it as my responsibility, in unity with the Holy Father and the Bishops, to be a teacher of the faith that Jesus Christ has entrusted to the Church. I cherish that unity I share with my fellow bishops, and reverence deeply the charge we all have. Particularly am I in respect for Pope Paul, whose responsibilities today require the virtues of the holiest men and women in our Christian tradition.

I also consider it important that we all recognize the gradations of authoritative teaching that mark different documents that Rome issues. Infallible statements, such as the doctrine of the Assumption of our Blessed Mother, call us to the deepest kind of assent. Papal encyclicals require of us a level of assent that is profound, and at the same time does not in every case end discussion or disagreement. Teaching statements from the Pope's congregations and commissions are different again, and have a number of times been greeted with a dialogue leading to more fully developed and even revised positions. (The most recent document falls

in this last category of documents from congregations.)

My statements indicate that I anticipate the dialogue and study on the question of ordaining women will continue. This, I believe, will happen whether I want it to or not. I personally feel more discussion and study is needed to arrive at a position that treats questions as yet unanswered. Central among these are questions relating to women in ministry and the special gifts for the building up of the Church with which women have been blessed.

I entertain no illusion that the decision to ordain women is mine to make. I never have said this. I do believe that reading 'the signs of the times,' an important phrase from the second Vatican Council, requires continuing dialogue on these questions.

May God bless us all, women, men, pastors and bishops, in our desire to do what is right for God's glory, for we all are, in part, His way of revealing His goodness and love to all people.

'Hope Does Not Disappoint Us'

(Following are excerpts from Pope Paul VI's general audience address on Jan. 19.)

The week dedicated to prayer and meditation on the unity of Christians is, as it were, a great choral song which is raised in these days by members of nearly all the Christian confessions to the one Father of all through the Lord Jesus alone in the bond of the Spirit himself. In prayer, in fact, the pursuit of unity finds its deepest orientation, as well as strength and a reason for hope.



Unity is a note of Christ's Church and is a part of her mystery. Therefore, like the Church herself, unity, too, is a gift from God and a sign of his mercy. It implies purification of the heart, conversion of the mind, forgiveness of sins, and holiness of life: all things that only God can give

his children, if they have recourse to him with a contrite and humble heart and with the sincere resolution to begin to walk again in his ways.

It is therefore a cause of joy to see that the prayer for unity is spreading in the world among all Christians.

It is an evident sign that people are gaining new awareness of the importance of unity for the life of the Church and for her mission in the world. In this way the deep ties which still unite Christians are becoming more manifest. At the same time there is expressed the common will to obey the Lord together which means that his Church, one and unique, should be fully and harmoniously united.

The subject proposed to the reflection and prayer of us all this year is taken from St. Paul: hope does not disappoint us. How opportune this appeal is, so that we do not fall into disappointment, so that we do not remain in the web of habit and stop half way. Hope is the moving spirit of the ecumenical cause. It is the star that directs our steps toward the place

where the Lord certainly is. St. Paul reminds those who, from the first hour, have committed themselves to the search for unity and who, perhaps with a touch of sadness, observe that the desired unity is not yet reached; that "hope does not disappoint us," and that perseverance is necessary.

Our hope in fact is based on God and on his plan of salvation. God is omnipotent and faithful and always keeps his promise. Therefore we do not rely presumptuously on our works and our aspirations, but "we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God," as the apostle admonishes further.

This word is certain: God will finally make his glory shine forth and will communicate his holiness to everyone.

Our hope is also based on and sustained by the positive results which the search for unity among Christians is obtaining. A new atmosphere in fact has been established and the spirit of true brotherhood is becoming more and more fruitful.

Bp. Harrison Installation

Continued from Page 1

And now, as your new shepherd, may I share with you my faith. I believe in the Word of God. I believe that the Word can bring light into the darkness of man's questioning, doubt and confusion. I believe that the Word reminds us that we are all the beloved of God and that this truth calls each one of us to be free.

I believe that the Word calls us to live together as a community of faith; it summons us to reach out in loving service to one another — calling us to support and help those less fortunate than we. It bids us to accept one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord. It commands us to be forgiving — it has the power to strike down the barriers that divide us. I believe that in the Word we are the new city of God — we are and can become the heavenly Jerusalem where all people can live together in the presence of the Lord — one in faith, one in peace, and one in love.

I believe that this is the mission that the Word of God is calling me to. But it is a task that I cannot do alone. Together we are the Church — the mission of Christ — of the Church — is our mission. Bishop, priests, religious, laity — together we are called first to experience this power of God's Word in our own lives then to bring the powerful word to others — to the poor, the oppressed, those in need, to one another.

Yes, this is a formidable task. It is a challenge. It is a dream. But I firmly believe that it is and that it can continue to become even more of a reality. As we set out on this mission, may we together find strength, find hope in the promise that God has made to you, and to me, when he said, "I am with you always; I will never forget you; I hold you in the palm of my hand."

Catholic Schools' Week Mass

Catholic Schools' Week was opened with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan at Sacred Heart Cathedral. Joining in the Mass last Saturday were Bishop John E. McCafferty, Sister Roberta Tierney, superintendent of Catholic Schools, Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, and Father Donald Schwab, director of the Department of Religious Education. Below, Timothy E. Leahy, deputy superintendent of Catholic Schools, looks over the banners of various schools that are part of the procession at the beginning of Mass.



Photos by Ben Susso