

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

More Reason To Rejoice

In the light of Easter we have been scanning the signs of renewal as they appear to us. One of the most important signs is that more and more people are coming to believe that the mission of the Church belongs to all its members. I remember the old days



when Catholic Action was defined as the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy. The Ecumenical Council has done away with all that and there has emerged a very real sense that this mission belongs to every Christian. We see this in so many ways at the practical level. It is positively amazing to me as I move about the diocese in the various institutions and parishes how many of the laity have taken the

initiative in bringing the teaching and healing and goodness of Jesus Christ into their own particular places and areas of influence. They are no longer waiting to be the adjutants of the hierarchy in carrying out their mandates but rather now are looking for the hierarchy to be their guides and inspirational leaders in building a better world.

One of the places in which this is most evident is in the work of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. I have been more than impressed by the zeal and enthusiasm with which they seek out ways of implementing the Church's mission in the areas of Word, Worship and Witness. They do their homework. They consult their constituencies. They pray fervently. And they take their bi-monthly meetings seriously. It has been a good beginning indeed, and will soon become an exemplar, not only for parish councils in the diocese, but perhaps for pastoral councils elsewhere in the country.

Other areas of renewal are surfacing too. Not too many years ago we spoke of the Catholic Church as

being alone in the Body of Christ. Vatican Council II has taught us that the Body of Christ does indeed embrace all the baptized. One of the greatly hopeful signs of renewal in this particular area is the dialogue which is taking place between Catholic and Anglican theologians and also Catholic and Lutheran theologians and Catholics and theologians of other Christian faiths, trying to come to an understanding of where we are in relationship to Jesus Christ.

Not enough people know that the commissions of Catholic and Anglican (Episcopalian) theologians have come to substantial agreement on such basic doctrines as the meaning of Holy Eucharist, the meaning of authority and Holy Orders. Catholic and Lutheran theologians have made notable progress in some of these areas. The Ecumenical endeavor is one of the most hopeful signs of renewal in the Church today. Every once in a while it receives a little setback as it did recently in the Vatican statement on non-ordination of women. But these things need not be fought about. They will be resolved because we all believe in the importance of being one in Christ. Just before Easter we had a very fine meeting of the Catholic and Episcopalian clergy for a day of study and togetherness. It augurs well for our efforts toward unity. I subscribe wholeheartedly to the ideals of John XXIII who believed that while there were wide differences among the Christian traditions, if we try to be understanding, the Holy Spirit will take over.

The final sign of renewal I would like to bring to your attention is the one Father John Courtney Murray, S.J. brought to the Council. It opened so many doors and windows that many Catholics, clergy and laity feel that the whole Church is falling apart. For many years Father Murray sponsored the cause of freedom of conscience and expression. For centuries the Church had clung to the idea that error had no rights. And, of course, in the abstract, error has no rights because it is the opposite of truth and Jesus Christ came not only to bring the truth — He was the truth.

However, when that error resides in a particular human person, we have a different situation. The inviolability of the human person and his or her conscience take precedence. We may not agree with someone but we must respect not only his right to believe that way but his right to express that belief when it is merely that. For some people this is a distressing development and has produced all sorts of "problems" in the Church. Seen as a part of a much wider issue — respect for human dignity and freedom of expression — it is the door to dialogue and growth. And in this I rejoice.

The Bishop's Public Appointments

MAY, 1977

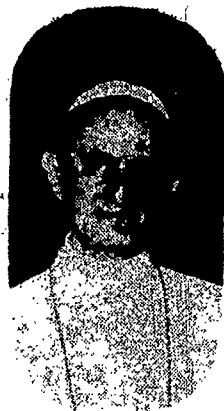
- 3-5 National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Meeting, Chicago
- 7 Radio Message, Family Rosary Network - 7:00 p.m.
- 8 Celebration of Eucharist and Homily, St. Charles Borromeo Church, Rochester - 11:00 a.m.
- 9 Fund Development Meeting, Pastoral Center - 2:00 p.m.
- 9 Testimonial Banquet for Very Reverend Joseph P. Brennan, Mapledale Party House - 6:00 p.m.
- 10 St. Bernard's Seminary Board Meeting - 10:00 a.m.
- 10 Fund Development Meeting, Becket Hall - 2:00 p.m.
- 11 Fund Development Meeting, St. Alphonsus, Auburn - 2:00 p.m.
- 12 Fund Development Meeting, St. Charles Borromeo Church, Elmira Heights - 2:00 p.m.
- 13 Celebration of Eucharist and Homily - Sisters of St. Joseph Riverside Community - 5:30 p.m.
- 14 Celebration of Eucharist and Homily - Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse - 2:00 p.m.
- 14 Baccalaureate Ceremony, Nazareth College - 5:00 p.m.
- 15 Diocesan Mission Sunday Celebration of Eucharist and Homily, WHEC TV, Channel 10 - 8:30 a.m.
- 15 Liturgical Service, First United Methodist Church, Victor - 10:30 a.m.
- 16 Confirmation, St. Bernard's Church, Scipio Center - 7:45 p.m.
- 17 Confirmation, St. Stephen's Church, Geneva - 7:45 p.m.
- 18 Priestly Spirituality Committee Day of Recollection, Abbey of the Genesee, Piffard - 10:00 a.m.
- 19 Confirmation, St. Ambrose Church - 7:45 p.m.
- 20 Pastoral Office Staff Meeting - 10:00 a.m.
- 20 Becket Hall Board of Trustees Dinner Meeting - Becket Hall - 6:00 p.m.
- 21 Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting, Sheraton Motor Inn, Canandaigua - 1:00 p.m.
- 22 Confirmation, Church of the Resurrection - 2:30 & 4:30 p.m.
- 23 Confirmation, St. Patrick Church, Seneca Falls - 7:45 p.m.
- 24 Regional Coordinators Meeting, St. Mary's, Canandaigua - 10:30 a.m.
- 26 Priesthood Ordination, Holy Ghost Church, Coldwater - 7:30 p.m.
- 26 Clergy Conference, Becket Hall - 10:30 a.m.
- 27 Celebration of Northeast Region, St. Rita's Church, Webster - 12:00.

Christ Is Risen, He Lives, Alleluia!

The following is the text of the Holy Father's Message, Urbi et Orbi, which he delivered from the central loggia of St. Peter's Basilica on Easter Sunday.

To you who are gathered in this assembly place of peoples, Saint Peter's Square, and who hear and see us directly,

To you who are linked to this center of diffusion for Christ's word and reverently receive its living echo,



To you throughout the world who almost with surprise hear our joyful message, source of joy,

Here is our blessed greeting: a happy Easter, a happy Easter!

Who does not know the meaning of this surprising greeting?

It proclaims to you two wonderful things. The first thing that it proclaims to you is that Jesus of Nazareth — who was crucified in Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea at the time of the Roman Emperor Tiberius — rose again the third day after his death. He truly rose, opening up a new and unlimited horizon for life. Thus he gave witness of himself: "There is nothing to fear. I am the First and the Last, and the One who lives. Once I was dead but now I live — for ever and ever. I hold the keys of Death and Death's domain." A new world is established; a new way of living is begun. Christ is risen! Christ lives!

The second thing it proclaims to you is the universal Resurrection. Christ is not the only one to rise again: Christ is the first among many, and as all die in Adam, so all will receive life in Christ. Christ is the Easter Resurrection for us too. Death is no longer the limit of our existence. Christ is the gate. An eschatology, that is to say an entrance gate into a kingdom that is not consumed by time, is open before us. Those who have died in Christ will rise in Christ. Bodily death is not the inexorable end of our existence; it is the sleep that precedes a new day without end.

Do not the values of all present things therefore change? If to this present brief, precarious and suffering life — judged according to the law of the universal clock, which is time — there is added another life, an endless one, then is not the classification of present values changed? That is to say, should not these present values be judged in the light of the future ones? And if these future ones are determined by their relationship to the present ones, what a responsibility and what a price these values of our daily life take on.

In honor of Easter, re-read the Gospel Beatitudes, and you will see what a reevaluation is taken on by those forms of life that were thought to be inferior, and you also see what merit is gained by those who have sought to bring them human assistance, even if only temporal.

Today the Risen Christ is very close to each of us who are baptized. He makes us sharers in his Resurrection, gives us his Spirit, and raises up in us a new heart, in order to renew our life and our love, and which will help transform the earth. Great is the mystery of the Resurrection at work today in the world, in expectation of another world to come.

A happy Easter! A happy Easter!

You understand, sons and daughters and brethren how important this wish is, if it is referred to the scale of values which becomes that scale of duties in relation to which we must construct our life. Yes, this can be the optimistic transformation of our way of thinking about life. This Paschal transformation we therefore present not only as a conventional and sentimental good wish, but as a program that gives direction to life itself.

We believe that the young people of today are particularly predisposed to understand and welcome this good wish, which is full of hope and energy. And to the young people we address it with stimulating deliberateness: life is beautiful if it is new; it is new if it is good, if it is wise, and if it is strong; in a word, if it is Christian! To you young people especially, and to everyone, there goes our good wish: a happy Easter, to happy Easter. And with it goes our Apostolic Blessing.

(At the conclusion of his address, the pope proclaimed Easter greetings in 14 languages.)

Regional Highlights

Northeast Region

The Family Life and Education Committees at St. John of Rochester Church, Fairport, will sponsor four "Evenings for Parents" from 7:30-10 p.m., April 21, 28 and May 5, 12. According to NERVE, the Northeast Region's newsletter, "each evening will be a learning experience and an opportunity to gain and affirm one's confidence in being a parent." For more information interested persons may call Ted and Mary Cooper at 586-8530.

The Regional Youth Leadership Training group is now making plans for a

training session with CYO personnel for the first weekend in June at Camp Stella Maris. Those parishes in the region which have not yet nominated representatives are still welcome to do so. The youth group will next meet at 2 p.m. on April 30 in St. Philip Neri's School basement, 1776 Clifford Ave, Rochester.

The Northeast Region is "looking for a person to call a regional meeting for education in the near future." Father Foster P. Rogers, regional coordinator, announced he will be contacting all parish council presidents soon regarding the issue.