

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Variety of Gifts and Ministries

Last week we talked about the renewed understanding of the shared ministry of all Christians and about the place of pastoral ministers in enabling this shared threefold mission of word, worship and witness. These pastoral ministers have a vocation of leadership that they are called to exercise within the Church community. The gift is given not for the enhancement of the leader, but for the benefit of others in the community. It is given for the inspiration and enablement of all the gifts of all the people in the Church



There is no question that there is a variety of gifts within the people of God as a whole. Among pastoral ministers, too, there are a variety of gifts in leadership. Today it will not be one person, like Paul the Apostle, who will be all things to all people; rather the local Church makes use of a wide diversity of leadership ministry.

Throughout her history the Church has exercised authority over the shapes and forms of her ministry. The young Christian community we read about in the Acts of the Apostles felt called early to respond to perceived needs through formal ministries. The early deacons enabled the Church to care for its widows and orphans. Later in her history, too, the Church created some ministries and eliminated others.

Recently, at least since Vatican II, the Church has been at work again in reshaping her leadership ministries. I have listed a few, so that we might reflect on this development of new forms.

1. DIACONATE: The ministry of the deacon is no longer only a stepping stone to ordained priesthood.

The Church has reinstated diaconate as a distinct and permanent rank within the hierarchy of the Church, i.e. bound to work in a particular diocese under the authority of the bishop.

Reestablishment of the role of deacon is based on pastoral necessity. Minorities and married persons need access to ordained leadership positions in the Church. Urban areas need ordained ministers. Large rural parishes could use the gifts of the ordained deacon. Some special ministries call out for diaconal leadership ministry, e.g. family life, prisons and jails, hospitals, ministries to youth and elderly. Deacons, serving as skilled leaders, will encourage Church response to a given need

The implementation of the permanent diaconate in the Diocese of Rochester is the work of a special Task Force, which I convened one year ago. Its membership reflects the variety of gifts and life styles which characterize the Church of Rochester, and its preparatory work will be completed within the year.

2. LITURGY: There are a number of emerging leadership roles in Liturgy. Preparation of liturgies by liturgy committees and homily teams is often coordinated by a pastoral assistant or priest or, in some cases, by a parish liturgist.

In 1973, Pope Paul VI approved formal installation of lay readers and acolytes. Formerly orders existed preparatory for priesthood. Their establishment as lay orders is a response to the reality of increased participation of the total community in our common worship. These functions are clearly part of the ministry of the Word and Eucharist.

3. PASTORAL ASSISTANTS: Pastoral Assistants perform a variety of functions in parishes, sometimes assuming a function of general parish leadership

similar to that of the priest. They take positions as staff liaisons to liturgy, human development, education and finance committees. They are instrumental quite often in training and supporting parish councils. More and more frequently they prepare for their ministry through formal training and or participate in continuing education and refresher courses. Most are women religious at present, but hopefully they will more frequently include many single and married laity.

4. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS: Religious education leaders have been in the forefront of renewed ministry. In the past ten to fifteen years they have accoch ministry to the youth in a given area. The training and dedication of this new breed of ministers have begun to bear fruit. Youth ministry committees of adult and youth volunteers are organizing social events, volunteer activities, retreats, etc.

The period in which we are now certainly reaffirms the tradition that the Church has the power and responsibility to formulate new ministries. The question of formal installation is a difficult one, however. At present the American Church has two formal lay ministries, reader and acolyte (see No. 2 above). These two functions are crucial ones and recognition is appropriate. Installations, however, are open only to men, while the function, e.g. of reading at liturgy, is now exercised by both men and women. Should not the installation rite (not, by the way, a sacramental ordination) be open to any person who can perform the function?

A second problem associated with the present existence of only these two lay ministries is that both are related to liturgy. Church ministries, including lay and clerical leadership, should reflect the threefold mission of word, worship and service.

vatican news

Pope Sees Churches 'United, Not Absorbed'

The following is the text of the address of Pope Paul VI at the conclusion of a private meeting with Archbishop Donald Coggan of Canterbury.

Dear Brothers in Christ,

This is a joyful occasion. For has not Christ our Lord told us that "where two or more are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them"?

Since we are gathered together in the name of the

unity of Christians, we are gathered in obedience to the Lord's will, for he has asked his Father that they may all be one.

But it is a particular joy for us to gather in this spirit with Your Grace and with other leaders of the Anglican Communion, which in the words of the Second Vatican Council has with us "a special place."

Last week we kept the feast of Saint Anselm, a fellow-countryman from Aosta, who became Abbot of Bec in Normandy and then Archbishop of Canterbury.

At such moments it is natural to think of full communion between our Churches.

However, we must not see such a celebration as mere nostalgia for the past, but rather as a spiritual reality. For the liturgy also points to what is to come; it is the first-fruits, pointing to what is to come.

The history of relations between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion has been marked by the staunch witness of such men as Charles Brent, Lord Halifax, William Temple and George Bell among the Anglicans and Abbe Portal, Dom Lambert Beaudin, Cardinal Mercier and Cardinal Bea among the Catholics.

The pace of this movement has quickened marvelously in recent years, so that these words of hope, "The Anglican Church united not absorbed" are no longer a dream.

You yourselves Brethren, are concerned that the Gospel should be translated into deeds, and renew its significance for a society of Christian tradition. As our predecessor Pius XI put it, "the Church civilizes by evangelizing."

The Gospel is the heart and soul of your Christian living and it is equally our inspiration. The civilization of love is our shared hope — something which is utopia for the worldly-wise, but prophecy for those who live in truth.

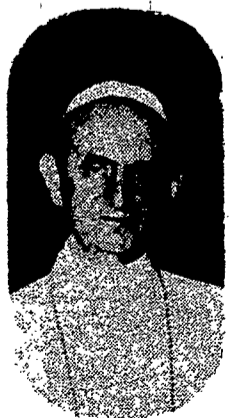
With the happiness of that shared hope we greet you and bid you welcome here. May your visit be fruitful and carry us forward along the pilgrim way of love and unity in the Risen Christ.

The Ideal of a Pure Life

Following are excerpts from Pope Paul's general audience address on April 20.

Our time obliges us to prolong our reflection on the paschal mystery, under the aspect of our participation in Christ.

This is a multiple aspect owing to the fact that the liturgical and moral sacramental celebration of the work of redemption carried out by Him and recalled and in a certain way relived by us, tends to leave some deep traces in our spirit and morals.



Christian life is characterized by a continual and progressive effort of renewal and improvement: the inner man, who lives in us, St. Paul says, strains to be renewed from day to day.

We must always remember two orders of truth, which are part of the fundamental principles of our correct way of thinking and therefore of acting.

The first is derived from the knowledge that our anthropology, that is our science of man, enlightened by faith and partly confirmed by our painful experience, teaches us. We know that man is a being

into whom there has entered a disorder which we can say upsets his constitutional plan, and which people often claim does not exist, unless as a result of anti-pedagogical constraints; a harmful opinion that is still in vogue today.

The other order of truth puts forward to us a kind of duplication of our human nature, on which the ineffable thought of God, communicated to us by faith, has, so to speak, superimposed a "supernature," a "new man," who gives back to the "old man" a purified face, from which the deformation of sin has been cancelled, even if the weakness which still makes it possible has not been removed. But, over and above that, there has been imprinted the new image of being reborn, raised to be an adopted son of God, associated with a brotherhood which becomes living together with Christ and animated by a vital and divine breath, which we call grace and attribute to the Holy Spirit.

That is why the concept of an immaculate life, that is, a pure, simple and beautiful life is restored, or rather granted to those who have received baptism, and who as St. Peter states in his first letter have been ransomed "with the precious blood of Christ," like that "of a lamb without blemish or spot."

This ideal of an innocent, uncontaminated and pure life must be restored to our Christian mentality and give back to us the resolution and the grace of a new, really paschal existence.