

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Requirements For Effective Ministry

In the past two weeks we have reflected together on the internal or pastoral leadership ministries of the Church. These ministries exist to help the people of God fulfill their mission in the world. We have first looked, as we must, to the mission of all Christians to



teach, to serve, to build and celebrate community. Then, in last week's column, we discussed some specific internal or pastoral ministries of recent development: religious educator, liturgist, youth minister, pastoral assistant and deacon.

This week I will conclude our series on pastoral ministry by reflecting on some vital concerns regarding renewal of Church ministry and presence to the world. The comments that follow are far from definitive statements. Some of the questions are ones I have raised previously, especially in my pastoral letter, Living Stones. Please reflect on them with me as we ponder the future forms of pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Rochester.

1. PLURALISM AND ADAPTABILITY: It is essential for Church leaders in ministry to have a mighty respect for the gifts which the Spirit bestows in great variety for the upbuilding of the Kingdom. Many of our priests have done much to train the men and women who are emerging pastoral leaders in today's Church. They have not clung to the many roles assigned them before Vatican II, but have rejoiced at the adaptations, however unsettling and confusing this time of change has been.

Of course, the assumption of new roles by the laity has depended much on their own enthusiasm and deep faith. Without their willingness to take risks in ministry the new directions suggested at Vatican II would never have occurred. Years later we might be

tempted to take for granted the new shape of ministry of Church to world and the accompanying new forms of pastoral leadership, lay and clerical.

Basically, of course, this new Church of the '70s is the fruit of God's grace. The Spirit's power has brought forth gifts of courage, compassion, humility and creativity. Administrators, teachers, preachers, organizers, liturgists — all depend on God's action for the ultimate justification and completion of their efforts. Let us never forget that as we move into the future:

2. SPECIALIZATION AND TRAINING: Our society is a complex one, and we see in it many examples of job specialization. Ministry in the Church has become more specialized, too. Parish and regional and diocesan communities depend more and more on trained specialists in religious education, human development, liturgy, music, and youth work. Such specialization is a significant and healthy sign of growth. If the Church is to fulfill its mission in the world, it needs gifted and competent leaders.

Specialized training in pastoral ministry is available at seminaries and colleges both within and outside the diocese. Many diocesan pastoral ministers have taken advantage of such training. Congregations of religious women especially have placed high priority on quality training for their members. The diocesan continuing education program which begins operation this July reflects our commitment to provide training for Church leaders, lay, clerical or religious. It will be based at St. Bernard's Seminary, long a source of first-rate training for priests.

This specialization around various aspects of ministry will not eliminate the role of the generalist in ministry. This coordinator of various ministries will play a vital role in parishes; such coordinating leadership is displayed in the activities of many priests and pastoral assistants.

3. EVALUATION AND SUPPORT: Evaluation according to goals and objectives can be a great support to the serious worker in any field. How does our diocese evaluate pastoral ministers? I am not about to propose a formal system of evaluation, but I do feel that there are ways to create a climate of support which is creative and challenging.

No one in leadership can remain open to the community he or she serves if that community is indifferent to the quality of leadership. Ministers need criticism, positive and negative, if they are to function effectively. Talk with them about homilies, policy decisions, human development projects, liturgies and other parish experiences. Invite them into your homes and share your day to day life. There is no way that pastoral ministers — lay, clerical or religious — can work well with and for you, if they do not know you.

Throughout this series on pastoral ministry I have emphasized my deep conviction that the Spirit is the source and support of the leadership gifts we see emerging in today's Church. It seems appropriate, therefore, to conclude this series by asking you to pray for ministers. A prayer from the Ritual Mass for Ministers of the Church is one we might pray often for our pastoral leaders.

Father,
You have taught the ministers of your Church not to desire that they be served but to serve their brothers and sisters.
May they be effective in their work, and persevering in their prayer, performing their ministry with gentleness and concern for others.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen

The Theology of Easter

Following is the text of the Holy Father's address during the general audience of May 4.

We must meditate again on the paschal mystery. We will never be able to end our "Way of the Cross" without perceiving its universal and perennial value, that is, without connecting the Passion of the Lord and his resurrection with the fate of mankind, with the relationship they have with our salvation. It is not enough to be present at the scene of the evangelical events, which regard the divine Person of Christ, and let his heart-rending and then triumphant story move us and fascinate us, as may happen before a Greek tragedy or an impressive play or film, but which does not concern us personally; it is necessary to grasp the connection that the story of Jesus' death and return to life has with our existence. The paschal mystery is nothing but the work of Redemption, according to the Father's ineffable plan, carried out by Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. See, for example the first chapter of the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians.

This is a very important observation. We are not just spectators of the events that concluded the Lord's temporal life and opened up a new form of ultra-temporal life for Him; we are involved in the drama of Christ, whether we like it or not. It has a sacrificial meaning. That is, Christ suffered for us; he rose again for us. St. Paul applies Christ's sacrifice to himself. He loves me," he writes, "and gave himself for me." And, everyone can say the same thing for himself, "Christ, our paschal lamb has been sacrificed." The Apostle's thought, in fact, goes on to associate the fate of a follower of Christ, baptized in Christ Jesus, to that of Christ; We were "buried with him," and "raised up with him." It is not a question of a mere figure of speech, it is a question of fusion, an incorporation of our life with that of Christ.

The meritorious cause of our justification, Christ a victim on the cross, he become an exemplary cause and a life-bringing principle with his resurrection. And it is useless to maintain that this divine, cosmic, anthropological vision is the fruit of Paul's genius, when we already find it expressed in one of St. Peter's

first addresses at Jerusalem: "There is no salvation except in our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth."

How many things, how much doctrine still remains for our Christian formation! But even limiting our thought to these few, but fundamental truths, we can ask ourselves if they are really present in our conscious attitudes as true Christians, such as we should all rightfully claim to be!

First and foremost, the resolution to have with Christ a "communion," a friendship, a confidence, such as we so easily — and how lucky we are — grant ourselves by often approaching Holy Eucharist: yes, we must live with him, of him for him; but this implies that he is really the inspirer of our new, that is, Christian mentality, our vital "Bread," which

nourishes thought, action, feelings, desires and hopes. That is to say, He must produce in us a "sense," a spirit, a style of thought and life that is by tendency at least consistent with cohabitation which Christ has deigned to establish in us, with the faith and with the sacraments which come to us from him.

This means that the Pasch, that is the thought of this mystery, the commitment it entails, the joy of which it is the source, the energy for good that derives from it, must remain in us, and urge the steps of our spirit along the path of Christian life, which winds upwards in the days following Easter itself and which prepares us for the final meeting with him Christ the Lord

So may it be for all of you, with our Apostolic Blessing.



Pope, Archbishop Sign Declaration

Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Donald Coggan, sign a joint declaration in the Vatican April 29 at the conclusion of their meetings. The

churchmen discussed mixed marriage and a common sharing of the Eucharist, and pledged greater efforts toward unity. (RNS)

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