

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Unique Gift of the Lord

The moving Feast of Pentecost was celebrated this year on the last Sunday in May. This Feast of the Holy Spirit, often called the Birthday of the Church, establishes a beautiful framework for the celebration of so many priestly ordination anniversaries, which occur during the month of June.

for those who try and rebuke us, reminding us that our way is not necessarily the only way or the best way.

Closely aligned with prayer, a healthy sense of humor to be a mainstay of priestly humility. How important it is to laugh at ourselves, to retain perspective, to fight temptations to power and greed. There are so many occasions in priestly ministry that are formal and public. So often though, the effective priest is one who maintains a warm and personal touch, who realizes that his humanity is not an obstacle to grace, but its very instrument

This gratitude culminates in the beautiful **Thank-offering** we celebrate daily in the Eucharist, reminding us of our call to be faithful to Christ's command, "Do this in memory of me."

A second characteristic of priestly vocation is Christian humility. How easy is it to forget that the strength and impact of our priestly ministry depends primarily upon God's grace, not upon our intelligence, efficiency or industry. This virtue of humility does not mean a denial of our personality or individual gifts. Rather it is a reminder that they were given to us to use in His service.

Finally, the virtue of Christian joy is the mark of a healthy vocation. It does not signify the absence of trials or sufferings, but the realization that Christ, the High Priest has overcome sin and sufferings to give us an inspiration for our own hope and courage. Joy is the outward manifestation of prayerful faith, the willingness to make love and hope concrete in daily life. It is the deepest sign of God's presence within us, awaiting active translation into service of our people.



Up until the late sixties, priestly ordinations were held at the Cathedral and young men were ordained together as a class. Many generations of priests will pause during this month of June, to concelebrate together the mystery of priestly vocation, gratefully, humbly, joyfully.

Gratitude has always been the basic mark of a Christian, and a fundamental sign of a vocation. During this month of June, we priests should be filled with gratitude. We are grateful for a Pilgrim Church, whose constant journey keeps us ever mindful of the promptings of the Holy Spirit, ever aware of the needs of our people and our times. We are grateful for faith-filled parents, family and friends, whose prayerful support in spite of our obvious failings, is a constant blessing. We are grateful, too,

Humility is maintained through a spirit of prayer. How incongruous it would be, were priests to assume public leadership roles in the praying community without being personally people of prayer. Yet we are not all subjected to the same temptations, there is one more book to read, one more committee meeting to attend, one more person to visit, etc. The pace and complexity of our era is such, that we can easily overlook that special time alone with God unless we guard it jealously.

May I invite you to join me in prayerful congratulations to the priests of our Diocese. May we ask God to bless them and strengthen them in their chosen call. May we pray that they be faithful teachers, inspiring preachers, loving healers, humble servants and prophetic leaders.

May a merciful and loving God grant eternal rest to the bishops and priests who have served generously and gone to their reward with Him.

vatican news

Faith and Easter

Following is the text of the Holy Father's talk to the general audience of May 18 in St. Peter's Square.

We have celebrated Easter, that is, the great event of Christ's death and resurrection.

This is a great event, it is of capital importance, under two aspects. First, the aspect that regards Jesus himself. He manifested himself in this way, he carried out the work for which he had come into the world, he took his place in the world, in history, as the light of mankind, as if in the darkness that covers the whole earth, a flame shines forth and lets us see things, and gives meaning to them, to space and time. He is the true Teacher of the world, he is the beginning and the end. Jesus Christ, alone, makes the universe a splendid, a terrible sight. But then the presence of Jesus in time, in the Gospel, takes on another importance, and it is the relationship he has with men, with us, with each of us. He is our Saviour; we cannot do anything without him.



It is necessary to reflect carefully on this principle. We need Christ. How can we get in touch with him? And even if we had had the fortune to live in his times, and to approach him personally, would we have been able to know him for what he was, to understand him, to penetrate into the secret of his divine Being? Would it really have been possible to discover Christ, his dual nature, human and divine, and his divine Person, the true Son of God, the Word of God, infinite and eternal? And then how would we ever have been able, far away from him in time and submerged in the ocean of mankind, to approach him and have the blessed destiny of being individually known and loved by him, of being saved by him? For this is the problem that demands a solution, our salvation is to be found by Christ; how is it possible? What use is it for us to celebrate the Lord's Easter if it is not actual and operative for us here, today?

If this is so, as it really is, our interest turns first to faith: what is meant by faith? And how does one reach, how does one adhere to faith? The question becomes serious again: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb 11, 6). We are on the threshold of Christ's religion; he who believes enters! How many religious problems are placed before us! Now we will just mention the first pages of this book of faith, which can easily be summed up in simple words; they will then require long study for those who wish to continue in the exploration of the mysterious volume.

For this problem, insoluble for us, the Lord has wonderfully provided a solution. Listen to the last words that conclude the Gospel of St. Mark: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mk 16, 16). Faith and the sacramental action of baptism are the two fundamental conditions to enter the luminous and real orbit of Christian salvation, which is no small thing if it associates us with Christ's immortal and divine life, no less.

The first page, the one at which the secular world stops, is at once very difficult and severe: faith is a kingdom of mystery. For us, during this life, which is still an apprenticeship, an initiation, it is an obscure science; it is based not on arguments of rational evidence, though it is supported by excellent reasons of credibility, both intrinsic and extrinsic, but is founded in itself on the authority of a revelation, on the Word of God. Only this character of faith represents a difficulty for us who are pupils of our reason, and we are rebellious, to the point of declaring that we are thinkers, to admitting truths of which we cannot give ourselves a direct explanation, not thinking that before Truth, when it really manifests itself, we must always be docile, if we are reasonable. Faith is mysterious and obscure for our mind, but when our mind is admitted to the school of faith, it already catches glimpses, which leave it fascinated and happy, of stupendous and deep areas of beauty and light.

Bishop's Public Appointments



JUNE 1977

- 1—Supervisory and Leadership Training Program, Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua
- 2—Celebration of Eucharist, Homily and Luncheon with Priest Jubilarians of 40 and 50 years, Episcopal Residence, Victor — 12:00 Noon
- 2—International Peace & Justice Commission Meeting, Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse — 7:30 p.m.
- 4—Radio Message, Family Rosary Network — 7:00 p.m.
- 5—Installation Ceremony of Sister M. Judith Heberle, Superior General and Councilors of the Religious Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Motherhouse — 2:00 p.m.
- 6—Ministerial Review Committee Meeting, St. Thomas More School Library — 7:00 p.m.
- 7—Knights of Columbus Executive Committee Meeting, Episcopal Residence, Victor — 7:30 p.m.
- 9—Celebration of Eucharist and Homily, Closing of Priests' Retreat, Becket Hall — 10:30 a.m.
- 10-11—Diocesan Pastoral Council Convocation, Becket Hall
- 12—Confirmation, St. Michael's Church, Rochester — 10:30 a.m.
- 13—New York State Bishops' Meeting, Immaculate Conception Seminary, Douglaston, New York
- 15-24—Pilgrimage to Rome for the Canonization of St. John Neumann
- 26—Celebration of Eucharist and Homily for Wedding Anniversary Jubilarians, Our Lady of Good Counsel Church — 3:00 p.m.
- 27—Election of Officers of Becket Hall — 10:00 a.m.
- 27—Celebration of Eucharist and Homily with newly ordained priests, Episcopal Residence, Victor — 5:00 p.m.
- 28—St. Bernard's Seminary Board Meeting — 10:00 a.m.
- 28—Board of Directors of Catholic Charities Dinner Meeting, Becket Hall — 6:00 p.m.
- 29—GEM Executive Meeting — 10:00 a.m.
- 30—Pastoral Office Staff Meeting — 10:00 a.m.

So it is, indeed: faith is a sky that is above our natural understanding. Faith does claim the adherence of the intelligence, but not without the will. To believe, it is necessary to will. This means that faith is free. This is a very important subject, especially today that the Council has confirmed this prerogative of thinking man, also in the religious field; the Council itself reaffirms that "all men are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Church" (*Dignitatis humanae*, n. 1).

We will have to consider a third point when examining these aspects that prepare for faith, that is, the bliss of the certainty it produces in the spirit of those who accept it with wise humility. But we will perhaps have occasion to return to this point. Let it be enough for the present to recall as an irradiation of the paschal mystery the faith that keeps it for us and lets us live it again.