

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Enriched by Family Love

I was at the airport recently to meet a friend returning home and as I stood in the crowd of people also waiting there, I became aware of how many others were waiting for their loved ones to come "home." There was anticipation and a little anxious straining of necks searching for the faces of those who were arriving "home."



How very important it is to have a place to come "home" to. What I began to realize was that although we talk about a place to come home to, we really do not mean a "place" at all. We mean, rather, the people who make the place "home." The place which we call home is where we feel a part of the family. It is not what we do that makes us part of the family, it is the way we are related to each other, who we are for one another.

"Home" is where our family is, where we are loved for whom we are and not for what we do or avoid doing. Home and family are almost the same thing. Family is where we feel "at home" and do not have to pretend or cover up or be less than honest. Family is where we can always find unconditional positive regard and acceptance. In families, mistakes are recognized as mistakes and not unretractable tragedies. Members of a family give each other the freedom to make mistakes, but then they stand by one another when the pain of the mistake has to be suffered. In a family, affirmation is a higher value than being right all the time. Correction and critique are given without the threat of withdrawing the powerful matrix of love.

St. Thomas Aquinas once said, "learning only takes place in a loving atmosphere." I heartily agree. A family in which there is love and affection is one in which there is much life, creativity and great learning. We hear more and more today about the need for physical contact, for tactility. How true. Have you ever noticed how many, or better, how few people we

actually touch during the course of one day? When is the last time someone reached out and physically touched you? Family is where touch and touching should begin and from which it is learned. The warm hug given to the person in need of assurance and strength can say much more than the most carefully chosen words, however sincere and well-intentioned they are. Families need to touch one another.

Families do not just create and sustain new life in a physical sense, they are also called to create and sustain new life in their mutual love for each other. New life happens when people feel free to be themselves and to listen deeply to one another. Families do not come equipped to be this way, they have to grow and mature. In fact, they probably learn how to do this by making mistakes — it seems we all learn more from our mistakes and failures than we do from our successes and accomplishments. Families just like people, grow into what God wants them to be. So, patience is such an important virtue for families to have.

Family members must not give up on one another. They must keep trying to live up to the high call to be a sacrament of God's love in this world. They are called to respond in love and not be satisfied with reacting out of frustration or whatever the emotion of the moment might be. Families must keep working on the hard task of loving one another. How long should they keep up this great adventure? I would say — until they get it right! God's faithfulness to all his people is seen in families' faithfulness to one another. We cannot give up on one another.

Another thing that families are expected to do is to make the implicit, explicit. So often we just live our lives from day to day without ever really telling one another what is going on inside us. Families need to do this. They need to tell each other the special qualities they see in each member. It is so easy to take each other for granted. Families cannot afford to do that. Each member must be affirmed and valued for who he or she is and the special gifts which each brings to the

family should be recognized and celebrated. It might be one child's imagination, another's optimism and another's friendliness, another's industry, another's sensitivity, the parents' powerful love for one another. The art of loving begins at home and families who value each other's gifts form a strong bond of love and affection, as well as become a source of strength.

Families need to praise one another! Some friends of mine recently decided to see how effective they are at praising their children. They did this not to flatter or manipulate their children. One night at dinner they turned on a tape recorder. It was placed out of sight of the children and it recorded the entire dinner conversation. After the children had gone to bed, their parents listened to the tape of what went on at the dinner table. They were pained greatly to hear all the commands and criticism. "Pass the butter." "Don't spill your milk." "Don't interrupt." "Your brother is talking." "Stop playing with your food." "If I hear you ridiculing your sister once more, you'll go right to your room." "You spilled your water, you clumsy oaf." This went on and on. It is so easy to criticize and be negative. It takes work to praise them for what they have done instead of seeing what they haven't done. This applies to us adults, too. How often do we praise each other for a job well done or a situation handled very well? All of us need praise and affirmation! It is part of ministering to one another. It begins in families. Families need to praise one another

A long time ago it was stated that the family is the basic unit of society. I believe this to be profoundly true, but I also believe it is important to realize that families come in all shapes and sizes. It is more than a husband and wife and their children. There are one parent families, parish families, rectory families, convent families, neighborhood families, community families, senior citizen families, other special group families and diocesan families. We all belong to a family of some sort. I belong to your family by reason of a relationship to you as your Bishop. Be assured of my prayers that the Lord will continue to bless each family in our Diocese.

vatican news

Faith Is the Fundament

Following is the text of the Holy Father's address during the May 25 general audience.

We must reread together the words of the evangelist St. John, with which he begins his first letter, as we find it in the Holy Scripture recognized by the Church. He expresses himself as follows:



"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life — the life was made manifest, and we saw it and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us — that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete."

This prologue to the stupendous apostolic letter makes us consider a very important aspect of our religion, namely, the apostolic witness on which, in the historical and external sphere, our faith is based. The passage we have read shows how we know our faith, that is, what we believe of history and of Christian revelation, through apostolic witness. The apostles, and with them the generation that lived in Jesus' times and were able to enjoy immediate and sensible knowledge of him, had the mandate from Jesus himself to transmit their direct and sensible knowledge of him, and make it an indirect and spiritual knowledge, that is, a "testimony," a faith.

The Lord had predicted this before his Ascension, that is before disappearing from the scene of this world, saying to his disciples, "... you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." And it was so. The preaching first of the disciples, become apostles, and of those who succeeded them in the office of proclaiming Christianity in the world, was a testimony, made persuasive, and at certain moments overwhelming, by a charism of the Holy Spirit, at work

both in the apostles and in listeners, a testimony of the evangelical event, the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and of the prophetic and theological interpretation of this true and extraordinary happening.

Apostolic witness, which under certain conditions is accompanied by the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, is the source of our Faith; which comes to us through the magisterium, through exterior and social transmission, in which there passes the enlightening and operating presence of the Holy Spirit; it is the Church in her authentic evangelizing mission which gives us faith.

And here we see the historical miracle of this condition, on which there depends nothing less than our salvation, our being Christians: "He who through faith is righteous, holy Scripture warns us, shall live."

A conscientious revision is necessary here, sons and brothers, of this word on which our religious system hinges, we mean faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Few other words, perhaps, have been given more different interpretations than this one, from that of a spiritual and generic sentiment to that of a personal opinion, as imprecise as it is captious. Today, moreover, every subjective use seems to become legitimate; every one thinks he is authorized to eliminate this word from scientific language, while, in a purely natural sense, it, faith, dominates all scholastic and rational teaching. Many modern intelligences, when they agree to discuss spiritual matters at all, give the word faith the imprecise and accommodating meaning of a vague religious sentimentalism, in which it becomes a synonym of dimness, doubt, interior restlessness, when it is not torment and vain expectation of a light as much desired in its sincere consolation as it is rejected in its logical exigencies. The Protestant mentality, with regard to so-called private judgements, rehabilitates the great word "faith" to the stature of a religious conviction; but, detached from an authorized and perennial magisterium, that of our Catholic Church, what does it become? It becomes a subjective opinion, deprived of superior authority. It becomes an escape to an equivocal pluralism. It becomes a

nominal and elastic faith, ready for too many insignificant adaptations. It is no longer the divine treasure, for which so many heroes have given their lives. It is no longer the morning light of Christian life, which anticipates some gleam of divine truth and which really sustains moral and intellectual life. And so on.

In memory of the paschal mystery we have celebrated and as a prelude to the feast which awaits us, Pentecost, let us all try to strengthen our faith, tested by the living magisterium of the Church and, if necessary, let us adopt the words of the humble Gospel character: "I believe. Help my unbelief."

Courier Calendar

- Sacred Heart Cathedral - Pontifical Mass in celebration of canonization of John S. Neumann, 2:30 p.m. Sunday, June 19. Sacred Heart Cathedral, public invited.
St. Jude's - Marian League installation dinner tonight at parish hall.
St. Augustine's - Summer festival June 17-19 with chicken barbecue 1:00 p.m. Sunday. Dinner available also to take out.
St. Salome's - Summer festival June 24-25 on parking lot, 4250 Culver. Spaghetti dinner 5-8 p.m. Friday.
Square Dancing - At St. Charles Recreation Center, 64 Maiden Lane, sponsored by Friends, Inc. for singles.
Capital Punishment - Workshop sponsored by Church Women United, June 17, 9:30 a.m. noon, Emmanuel Evangelical Covenant Church, 219 Browncroft.
Student Honors Show - Art exhibit in Beyer Gallery, Rochester Institute of Technology, open daily 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. through September 22.
The Collector's Show - Coins, stamps, antiques, etc. at Dome Arena June 18 and 19, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Crafts Show, Steer Roast - Sponsored by Pittsford Eggs and Rotarians as money raiser for service projects, 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Saturday, June 18, at Pittsford Park off S. Main.
Seniors' Matinee - Tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 Dryden Theatre, Duffin at Chambermaid, 1946 comedy starring Paulette Goddard, Burgess Meredith.
Classic Films - Anne Oakley (1951) starring Barbara Stanwyck, June 18, 2 and 8 p.m. tomorrow, Rochester Museum and Gardens.
CACRER - Board of Education's new Citizens Advisory Committee on Race and Education in Rochester invites comment from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. meetings tonight, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School No. 9, George H. Thomas School No. 49, East Junior Senior High School, John Marshall Jr. Senior High School, W.E. ...