

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

St. Paul, Man With a Vision

One of Rome's most beautiful churches is St. Paul's Outside-the-Walls. It gets its name because when it was built, it was outside the city, beyond the walls which once ringed the city to defend it.



The church stands where tradition says St. Paul was martyred and buried about the year 68 A.D. A chapel was built there as early as the year 103 and Constantine had a basilica built there in the fourth century.

stands today as a magnificent memorial of that magnificent man, St. Paul.

High above the church's main altar is a majestic mosaic of Jesus Christ as Lord.

St. Paul, I am sure, never suspected that a church so large and so beautiful would be built in his honor, but he did insist on the importance of Rome and for him the image of Christ was a cornerstone of his theology.

All his life Paul was haunted by the thought of Rome. He was born in Tarsus, a city on the

Mediterranean Sea in what is now southeast Turkey, 1200 miles from Rome. He was educated in Jerusalem, an added 300 miles farther from Rome, and he had his overpowering conversion to Christian faith on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus, just about on the outermost fringe of the Roman Empire.

"I must also see Rome," he told his converts at Ephesus, and when he wrote his stirring Epistle to the Romans, he told them, "I long to see you...I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome." (Acts 19:21 and Romans 1:11 and 15)

St. Peter was quite likely already in Rome and the number of Christians there was increasing rapidly. Rome, capital of the Empire and center of trade and culture, was a magnet which drew the best and the worst kinds of people. In today's terminology, we would say Paul wanted to be "where the action is."

But it is that image idea that was uppermost in Paul's thoughts, too. At least ten times in his epistles he uses that very word and in other passages he uses several similar words.

For St. Paul, Jesus is the image of the invisible God and we in turn are to be living images of Jesus Christ. Jesus, "is the image of the invisible God." (Colosians 1:15)

St. Paul then says we are to live "conformable to the image of God's Son." (Romans 8:29)

These days when so many people suffer identity crises or ego deflations, we have a clue to sanity and contentment in the longago letters of St. Paul. If he were writing today, I think he might express his thoughts somewhat this way:

"If you are wondering who or what you are, look into a mirror. See there a living reflection of Jesus Christ who is the image of our invisible God - God who is Love. Then whether you are rich or poor, learned or uneducated, hired or fired, you have a dignity and an honor greater than any earthly rank or treasure."

Fyodor Dostoevsky, in one of his lesser known but remarkable novels, "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man," has one of his characters say, "I have beheld the truth...I will not and I cannot believe that evil is the normal condition among men. And yet they all laugh at this faith of mine. But how can I help believing it?...I have beheld it, and the living image of it has filled my soul forever."

Many people, even many of his converts, thought Paul was also a "ridiculous man." Even he, perhaps a bit tongue-in-cheek, admitted as much, "I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness," he asked the people of Corinth. Like the living image of the invisible God in his vision near Damascus and it filled his soul ever after.

I hope we can glimpse that vision too and become "living images" of a loving Lord.

vatican news

Religion Sheds Light on Dark Mysteries

During the General Audience on June 22nd, the Holy Father delivered the following address.

A thought dominates us here, beside the tomb of the chief Apostle, to whom the Lord, with spiritual solemnity said the famous, unforgettable words: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (Mt 16, 18). It is a thought about the Church.



We will do well to let this thought dominate us. It contains many secrets; secrets that concern us. Above all, the secret of our true, inexhaustible relationships with God, which we can never renounce! The mystery, at one and the same time, attracts our eyes and dazzles them. Can we disregard this necessity? On its

solution everything depends: our understanding of the world, of time, of our destiny. One can ignore, deny religion, but its reality, its necessity remains, asserts itself. It is the key to understand something of the meaning of the universe. It is the light which, like the sun, illumines the world, history, good and evil, the human spirit, life, our life. Everything, in the light of religion, takes on a meaning, even if the latter plunges beyond our understanding, giving us a glimpse of depths which increase the universal sense of mystery. It is no longer a mystery of darkness, but a mystery open to thought, to the joy of knowledge, to the discovery of inexhaustible scientific treasures. Let us begin to fix this conviction in our mind: religion is light.

Then thought, almost spontaneously, acquires wings and flies over history, over mankind, over the world and its vicissitudes. And from this panoramic view a precise pattern takes shape. It is a long, rambling way, but keeps a direction of its own, recorded in a book of two volumes, the Bible with its two testaments. It is the great, dramatic poem of revelation, which is concentrated on Christ. The mystery is revealed as a new degree of reality. We will never succeed in completing our reading, our study, our meditation on the Word that becomes Man, the Verbum that becomes flesh. Before disappearing from the brief scene of its marvellous history it leaves us two things: the Church and the Spirit. These become the soul of a bivalent history, the history of humanity, gathered together in an assembly, in a Church, in

human society, no longer divided by space and time, but one, unique, and universal, one single body composed of all men who have the fortune to participate in it. This is the Church, gathered together, as we said, and we add, animated. It is animated, yes, by the Holy Spirit, God-Love, vivifying the Body of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, the Christus totus, as St Augustine said, which we are, by means of this convivification with Christ which will last not only beyond our physical death, but for ever.

Then thought reflects on itself, and becomes conscience. The question poses itself interiorly, making us tremble. And we, are we really Christians? What relations of faith and grace unite us with this

blessed and prophetic Church of God? Are we really Christians? Are we Catholics? In name or in the reality of our life? Is the Church really our Mother, our Teacher? Is she really our ship for the great voyage on the stormy sea of the present world, is she really our hope?

Brothers, let this be a decisive moment for our life. Let us renew here, on Peter's tomb, our humble, strong, faithful commitment: yes, we will be faithful! His Church will be our wisdom, our concord, our school of charity. What joy for the whole of our life!

May it be so! With our apostolic Blessing

Pope Very Active

Vatican City (RNS) - For a man nearing his 80th birthday and carrying the burden of office as head of the Church, Pope Paul is doing very well, to judge by a listing of his commitments, appointments, and ceremonies during the last 12 months.

According to Vatican Radio, the Pope took part in about 30 major public religious ceremonies; received in audience 29 groups of bishops from many nations; granted audiences to 21 new Ambassadors to the Holy See, 32 heads of state, prime ministers and ministers, and to 25 Ambassadors already accredited to the Vatican or to Italy.

He spoke separately to 45 heads of international organizations, to 71 special groups, and to 14 groups of religious leaders, non-Catholic and non-Christian.

"One must also remember," said Vatican Radio, "the Pope's general audiences on nearly every Wednesday and his regular Sunday talks to the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square."

Pope Paul was born on Sept. 26, 1897.

COURIER-CALENDAR

Holy Trinity Fair - At 1460 Ridge Road East, Webster, July 14-17, featuring spaghetti supper Friday, chicken barbecue Saturday, tractor pull contest Saturday, reduced fares on rides Saturday and Sunday afternoons

Summer in the Courtyard - Free, public series at Temple Birth Kodesh, 2131 Elmwood. Tonight at 7:30 Professor Joseph Kelly of St. Bernard's Seminary and Baruch Kraus, visitor from Jerusalem, discuss Saul Bellows' book, To Jerusalem and Back

Rochester Art Club Centennial - Opens Saturday, July 16, at Memorial Art Gallery, with annual exhibition of Print Club of Rochester; both shows through Aug. 14

All's Well That Ends Well - Shakespearean comedy played by U of R Summer Theatre company 8:30 p.m. July 13-16, 612 Wilson Blvd

Notorious - Ingrid Bergman, Cary Grant (1946) 2 and 8 p.m. tomorrow at Rochester Museum, in Classic Film Series

A Boy and His Dog - 1975 movie in Science Fiction Film Series at Rochester Museum's Eisenhart Auditorium, 8 p.m. Saturday, July 16, preceded by cartoon

Visiting the Indians with George Catlin - Cinema and Speakers Series at Rochester Museum, 2 and 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 17, discussion led by W. Stephen Thomas, director emeritus of museum

Gifts from the Gods? - Puzzles and mysteries examined in Strasenburgh Planetarium feature through Sept. 11. Reservations 244-6060, ext. 56. (Also, Laserium concert occasionally)

Wonderful Rocket - Strasenburgh Planetarium show for preschool children, 10 a.m. Friday, July 15. Reservations 244-6060, ext. 56

Promenade, All! - David V. Robison's comedy about four generations of a family, played by four persons in multiple roles, at Bristol Valley Playhouse, Naples, July 15-17, 8:15 p.m. curtain Friday and Saturday, 1:15 Sunday afternoon. Reservations (716) 374-6318

Dime-a-Dip Supper - At annual festival, July 15, 16 St. Patrick's Church, Victor, serving begins at 6 p.m. Auction of farm implements, toys, antiques, etc. 1:30 p.m. Saturday

Piano Recital - Brian Preston of Eastman School 8 p.m. Sunday, July 17, Memorial Art Gallery

Clarinet and Piano - Stanley Hasty of RPO and Eastman faculty, with Robert Freeman, Eastman School director, in tree public recital, 8 p.m. Monday, July 18, Hubbell Auditorium in Hutchison Hall, U of R campus

Calendar items should be mailed to the Courier-Journal Calendar Desk, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. Deadline is Wednesday noon, one week ahead of the publication date.