

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

St. Benedict — Worship is Our Work

A visitor to the Rochester area was recently taken by his hosts to the Trappist Monastery at Piffard, near Geneseo, New York. After Vespers and Mass, he remarked in amazement, "I can hardly believe it. I thought everything like that ended with the Middle Ages."



He found it difficult to believe that day in and day out, year after year, there are people whose lives are focused on the worship of God. His amazement was matched by his admiration, even though this visitor was not a member of our faith.

Why do monks, like the Trappists at Piffard or the Benedictines at Pine City, near Elmira, live far from the bustling cities and devote themselves to eight hours of worship a day?

They trace their religious roots back to a remarkable, virtually legendary man named Benedict who lived in Italy in the sixth century. What he said and did then molds the lives of thousands of monks around the world today, as it has for these past

fourteen centuries. His motto was, "Ora et labora," which is variously translated as "Pray and work" or "Prayer is our work" or "Our work is to worship."

He also said to his monks, "Prefer nothing to the worship of God."

I can think of few events in Church history more amazing than the growth of monastic life — and its survival in our age and in our own country. Following the grim three centuries of persecution, the Church emerged free at last. Even then, in Egypt, austere ascetics had depopulated the towns and villages and flocked to the desert and sanctity soon assumed bizarre forms. In Syria, for example, St. Simon Stylites spent thirty years living at the top of a pillar and many others imitated him.

Other eccentric displays of faith developed in Italy. Benedict, born into a wealthy and titled Nursian family, studied in Rome and enjoyed its excitements and luxuries. He witnessed both the pomp of the world and the religious idiosyncrasies of his time. He sought a middle road, a way of life that was orderly, productive, peaceful. At Subiaco, not far from Rome, he described his idea to other monks and at Monte Cassino, in the year 529 he established his first

monastery and it remains the cradle of the Benedictine family to this day.

Monastic life lived according to his rule is delicately balanced between work and worship. The monks do not despise those who remain "in the world" but rather work to make our world more humane. Monasteries have always been centers of learning, culture, art, science, as well as centers for religious study and devout worship.

In more recent years, great Benedictine monasteries, such as Maria Laach in Germany, St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, as well as the monasteries in our own diocese, have provided excellent examples for fashioning a liturgical way of life.

Pope St. Pius X, in the early years of our twentieth century, said, "The primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit is the participation of the people in the Church's worship of God." St. Benedict knew this fourteen hundred years ago. If many people have drifted from the Church in our time, I think it may in part be due to their seeking spiritual strength in secondary and often sterile sources. I hope the feast of St. Benedict, on July 11, brought us back to the "primary and indispensable source."

vatican news

Pontiff Pleads for Unity in the Church

The following is an excerpt from Pope Paul's address to the secret consistory of cardinals held on June 27.

On the eve of the Holy Year we launched a pressing appeal for reconciliation within the Church (Dec. 8, 1974). We think it is necessary to insist anew on this appeal, since, it seems to us, the flock tends at times to be divided, and the Church's members undergo the worldly temptation to oppose one another. Now it is in the ardor with which they seek unity that the true disciples of Christ are recognized; it is in the harmony of fraternal sentiments, inspired by humility, mutual respect, benevolence and understanding, that the Christian communities reflect the true face of the Church; on the other hand the spectacle of divisions damages the credibility of the Christian message.

We therefore address ourself to all our sons and daughters, that there may be banished from within the ecclesial community those sources of corrosive criticism, division of minds, insubordination to authority, and mutual suspicion that have occasionally succeeded in paralyzing abundant spiritual energies and in holding up the Church's conquering advance on behalf of the Kingdom of God.

We desire that everyone should feel at ease in the ecclesial family, without exercising exclusion or isolation harmful to unity in charity; and we desire that there should not be sought the dominance of some to the detriment of others. "United heart and soul," like the Christians of the first mother community in Jerusalem, under theegis of Peter, we must work, pray, suffer and strive in order to bear witness to the Risen Christ, "to the ends of the earth."

But Christ has wished that this unity in charity should never be separated from unity in truth, without which the former could become linked to an indefensible pluralism or a fatal indifferentism. The rule of faith to which we have already referred demands this perfect consistency in fidelity to the word of God, without obscuring the clear source of truth, which flows from the Most Blessed Trinity and is communicated to humanity by Christ, the Son of God and Son of man, the cornerstone on which the Church is founded.

Nor must there be any interruption of the continuity that has passed down that Revelation through the centuries with unaltered fidelity and has drawn forth the treasures hidden within it, in continuous deepening, but eodem sensu eademque sententia.

But the question arises. According to the very teaching of Christ and the unchangeable constitution of the Church, who is responsible for judging fidelity to the deposit of faith, the conformity of a doctrine or rule of conduct to the living Tradition of the Church? It is the authentic Magisterium, which comes from the Apostolic See and the body of bishops in communion with that see. Ever since the beginning, this has always been a touchstone of truth, be it a matter of faith or morals, sacramental discipline, or the more important orientations of pastoral action for the proclamation of the Gospel in the world.

Today it is very necessary to remember this, since certain interpretations of doctrine imperil the faith of believers who are not sufficiently mature or instructed. As we have already said, when we dealt with abuses in the liturgy, we are certain that the bishops are unceasingly vigilant on this point. And we warmly urge everyone — bishops, priests, religious, and laity — to work with one mind for unity in truth.

And with a heart full of sadness we express again the suffering which the unlawful ordinations cause us — ordinations which our brother in the episcopate is preparing to confer wrongfully, as he has done in the past. We firmly deplore these ordinations. In this way he is emphasizing his personal opposition to the Church and his activity of division and rebellion in matters of extreme gravity, notwithstanding our own patient exhortations and the suspension he has incurred formally forbidding him to persist in his designs contrary to the canonical norm. Young people are thus being placed outside of the authentic ministry, which, by the sacred law of the church, they will be forbidden to exercise. The faithful who will follow them are led astray in a posture of confusion if not in downright rebellion greatly harmful to themselves and to ecclesial communion. Whatever may be the pretexts, this constitutes a wound to the Church, one of those which Saint Paul condemned so severely.

We ask this brother of ours to be mindful of the breach he is producing, the disorientation which he is causing, the division which he is introducing with the gravest responsibility. Our predecessors, to whose discipline he presumes to appeal, would not have tolerated a disobedience as obstinate as it is pernicious for so long a period as we have so patiently done. We ask you to pray with us to the Holy Spirit that he may enlighten consciences.

Christ wanted his Church to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. But if unity is broken by one side or another, a shadow is thrown over the entire ecclesial reality in its constituent marks. For unity Christ prayed; for unity he gave his life: "Jesus was to die... to gather together in unity the scattered children of God." Unity was his gift to the Church at the begin-

ning of her life, so that before the world and for the world she might be a united witness to the Word of God and to his salvation.

This unity which the Catholic Church guards intact is what we earnestly commend to all our brothers and sons and daughters.



Pontiff Greets Leaders

Pope Paul VI greeted Father Connor Lynn, O.H.C., Superior of the Episcopal Order of the Holy Cross, at the Vatican recently. The pontiff held the private audience for Superiors of Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran orders during their meeting in Rome. (RNS)

Pope at Summer Home

Vatican City—Pope Paul will continue to hold his Wednesday general audiences in St. Peter's basilica, shuttling back to Rome by helicopter.

He also will continue to give his Sunday noon homily, but from the courtyard of the summer residence. His remarks will be relayed by radio to pilgrims at St. Peter's.

Ordinarily the pope holds no private audiences during his work-holiday. He will