

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Looking Ahead to September

This issue of the COURIER-JOURNAL contains a special section on Catholic School Education. It is my happy privilege to devote my column this week to the theme of parochial school education.



America through heroic leadership and sacrifice is CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION. We look to the charism and dedication of people like our recently canonized Saints, Elizabeth Anne Seton and John Neumann, who pioneered for Catholic Education.

legacy of their witness and courage is our inheritance today.

The Vatican Congregation for Education recently released a statement on Catholic Schools strongly endorsing the contribution made by this ministry throughout the world today.

The role of the Catholic Schools in society and in the Church today is a difficult and demanding one. Our schools exist to promote and extend the service of the Church to the community within their framework and even beyond, to the total community of which they are members.

Catholic Education

As educational institutions, the Catholic Schools are responsible for offering quality programs reflective of sound pedagogy and psychology. While this academic endeavor is essential, it is secondary to the teaching of religious truths grounded in life-giving experiences.

Today, more than ever, Catholic Schools must guard against becoming institutions serving the economically and educationally elite. Our schools must be sensitive to the mission of promoting a just society.

Charismatics Gain New Visibility

By RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

Has the Charismatic Renewal, which hit a new plateau of visibility with the unprecedented interreligious conference at Kansas City, Mo., in July, really come of age in the Christian churches?

For many Christians the charismatic phenomenon has proved a source of spiritual revitalization, renewed their commitments to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and brought them to a greater awareness of the need for community through the church.

As an editorial in a recent edition of the National Catholic Register put it: "The Charismatic Renewal may not be for everyone." But, the Huntington, Ind., paper added, "for those who have found in it a revival of their faith, it serves a purpose not only in their own lives but in the life of the Church."

While experiencing tremendous numerical growth and increasing influence in the mainline Christian churches over the past several years, the Charismatic Renewal has nevertheless come under fire for being "elitist," "gnostic," and "too emotionally oriented," and some critics have claimed it is at best divisive and at worst heretical.

The movement, which seeks renewal in the churches through the gifts of the Holy Spirit manifested in "charismatic" Christians, has also been criticized in some circles for its lack of attention to the social justice mandates of the Gospel, and for its "sexist" policies that reputedly deny leadership roles to women.

Yet, in the Roman Catholic, Episcopal and Lutheran churches, for example, the Charismatic Renewal has won growing favor.

Most Catholic and Episcopal dioceses have established offices for the movement, and more clergy of all denominations are joining charismatic gatherings. Last Pentecost Sunday, May 28, Catholic Cardinals Terence Cooke of New York and Humberto Medeiros of Boston celebrated Masses for a combined total of more than 400 prayer communities in their respective archdioceses.

Thousands of prayer communities and scores of "covenanted" households have sprung up across the United States and in many other countries.

In July, a national Christian newspaper published in Plainfield N.J., marked the 10th anniversary of the movement in Catholic Church by characterizing the burgeoning renewal as "part of the breath of fresh air" called for by the late Pope John XXIII when he opened the Second Vatican Council.

The National Courier, published by Logos International, went on to add that participation by Catholics in the major interdenominational conference on the Charismatic Renewal in Kansas City was welcomed by Protestants and classical Pentecostals.

At that conference, which was acknowledged by

President Carter as a source of prayer support for his efforts toward achieving peace and human rights in the world, the movement in the U.S. Churches was viewed as a "powerful voice" in American life, one that has led to a "new level of Christian unity" in this country.

The conference brought together Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Episcopalians, Mennonites, Presbyterians, Methodists and Messianic Jews.

Charismatic leaders, including Vinson Synan, general secretary of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, and Kevin Ranaghan, who heads the National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, deny that the movement has "peaked" and will begin to lose influence in the coming years.

They claim it is still growing and has become a significant factor in the American Christian scene and is not going to fade away. Charismatics will continue to serve as a "leaven" in their denominations, working for both renewal and unity, Ranaghan added.

One sign of growth was evidenced in Kansas City when two new "fellowships" of charismatic Christians were formed. One included members of the United Church of Christ, which will meet in October to explore future directions. The other was a coalition of the Wesleyan-Armenian tradition, including the Church of the Nazarene, the Wesleyan Church, Free Methodists, the Church of God (Anderson, Ind.) and the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

The Rev. Larry Christenson, chairman of the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Services, said he expected another interreligious charismatic conference to take place within three to five years. He told one general session of the conference that Catholics and Protestants are all part of the "special army of God" and that the Charismatic Renewal is a "network of outposts strategically placed throughout the land... that the Lord can count on in the day of battle."

During the past year alone, the growth and influence of the Charismatic Renewal has been evidenced in a variety of ways, not only in the U.S. but throughout the world.

Demos Shakarian, founder and leader of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, said his Pentecostal-oriented organization has grown to more than 1,400 local chapters attracting upwards of 500,000 persons to weekly and monthly meetings in 43 countries. Founded in 1952 by the former California dairy farmer known widely as "Mr. Charismatic," the fellowship allows no clergy on its boards and committees and does not attempt to become a church itself. It supports all churches.

Last October, in London thousands of Christians from all parts of the world took part in the 11th Pentecostal World Conference, at which a special welcome was extended to "all our evangelical friends and all associated with charismatic and renewal groups."

Earlier this year, 5,000 charismatics of various denominations made of the largest indoor gathering ever held in Australia as they jammed Sydney's Hordern Pavilion. Among those taking part were a

Catholic cardinal and three Catholic bishops, an Anglican bishop, a Presbyterian moderator, and a Full Gospel Pentecostal minister. Said Cardinal James Freeman of Sydney: "This renewal in prayer is spreading right around the world..."

Growth of the movement is evidenced in gatherings and prayer communities springing up throughout Europe, Africa and the Americas

Dr. Peter Berger, a well-known sociologist from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., perhaps summed up the situation when he observed that not only is the charismatic movement out of continuity with American history but, "I can't think of something quite like today's charismatics in earlier periods"

Vatican Decree Deals With Vasectomies

Vatican City (RNS) — According to a Vatican decree, the fact that a man has had a vasectomy does not necessarily preclude a valid Catholic marriage

completing conjugal intercourse"

The decree, published by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said the simple fact of vasectomy is not to be equated with impotence, which prohibits a valid marriage

On a second question, the congregation ruled that "the ejaculation of semen produced in the testicles" is not "necessarily required for conjugal intercourse" Vasectomy involves severing the tubes that transport sperm from the testicles to the ejaculatory ducts

The short (200 words) decree, dated May 13, says The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith holds that those who have undergone vasectomy, and others in similar conditions, insofar as their impotence is not certainly determined, should not be prohibited from marrying"

Until now, the Roman Rota, the Church's highest marriage court, has cited vasectomy at the time of marriage as grounds for annulment. The current decree indicates that a vasectomy in itself is no longer sufficient cause to rule a marriage invalid

Vatican observers noted that the ruling, published Aug. 5 in the Acta Apostolicae Sedis, the official Vatican journal, has a limited application. It is not a comprehensive statement on procreation, marriage, or birth control. It leaves unchanged the Church's condemnation of the use of vasectomies as a means of birth control

The decree does not change the Catholic teaching that men who are "antecedently and permanently" impotent, or incapable of conjugal intercourse, may not be validly married

The statement said the congregation ruled on two questions. It agreed that "the impotence which prohibits marriage consists in the prior and permanent inability — either absolute or relative — of ac-

One Roman theologian said that the decree might apply to a person who had been forcibly sterilized or it might be a man who has had children before he has a vasectomy. If his wife dies and he then wants to remarry with the intention of having a family, if possible, he might benefit from the decree

The decree did not speak to the issue of women who have been sterilized