

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Light the World with Christ!

We Christians are only gradually coming to the recognition that we belong to a Missionary Church. Yet, mission is centered at the very heart of the Church founded on a charter and mandate which admit no boundaries or confines. The possessiveness of leadership that stakes claim to MY parish and MY diocese is totally alien to the concept of a Church that professes to be catholic. Stephen, protomartyr, died because he threatened the parochialism of the Church of Jerusalem and dared to preach the Gospel of universalism.



Mission Sunday which we just celebrated offers us each year a moment of special grace which challenges our common temptation to live in a small and comfortable and selfish world of personal security. It asks us: How large is YOUR world? How broad is YOUR vision? How deep is YOUR concern for others?

The challenge of the liturgy of each day of the year takes on added meaning on Mission Sunday — "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith — and shout it from the housetops — Christ has died — Christ has risen — Christ will come again." It takes a Mission Sunday to remind us that our shouting has been more like a whisper and our proclamation has not been heard. For, in a world of nearly four billion people only one billion share our faith in Christ.

A missionary tells the story of an old woman in the

Orient who, on her deathbed, finally heard the Good News of the Gospel. She felt great relief and comfort in the news of a loving God with whom she would spend eternity. Nevertheless, a bit of impatience showed in her voice as she asked the missionary — "But where have you been these past 2000 years?"

The missionary vocation belongs to all of us who have been baptized. On the day of our rebirth through the saving water, we were commissioned to share our faith — to place its light on a candlestand for all to see. We cannot fulfill this vocation by proxy. In other words, we cannot pay and pray for 250,000 men and women working as missionaries throughout the world and feel that we have responded to our vocation. Mission Sunday does ask us to support those whose lives are spent in areas of the world called Mission territory. But its greatest challenge comes to each of us to share that great gift of our faith with those who do not have it.

All of God's gifts are given to be shared. Have you ever heard the expression: "Keep the faith"? As with all His gifts, WE CANNOT KEEP THE FAITH UNLESS WE SHARE IT.

I believe the greatest blessing of days dedicated to the missions is the challenge they offer us to reflect on the priceless treasure of our faith. It is our greatest comfort in times when we are burdened to know that God is listening and caring and solving our problems in His own good way. This way may not be ours, but we know that His answer to our prayers will always leave us consoled and strengthened. Faith is the bedrock of our lives. Sometimes we quietly realize it

in the events of each day; sometimes it is realized in times of great stress and affliction; sometimes it is appreciated only when we are reminded of the vast numbers who have not heard the Good News because no one has shared it with them.

The basic work of our Mission Church is summed up in this year's theme, "LIGHT THE WORLD WITH CHRIST." Christ came into this world to be the Light that would dispel the darkness in the hearts of men, to liberate people from every form of bondage. He willed that we, His people and His Church, be a visible sign of His presence everywhere. He could have bypassed us in the process of Evangelization but He did not. He chose, rather, to use our lives and voices to proclaim the Gospel. He willed that we venture forth to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free and to proclaim the Lord's year of favor.

Pope Paul reminds us of the importance of our missionary vocation:

"And we are to preach the Gospel in this extraordinary period of human history, a time surely without precedent, in which peaks of achievement never before attained are matched by similarly unprecedented depths of bewilderment and despair. If ever there were a time when Christians were challenged to be, more than ever before, a light to illumine the world, a city on a hill, a salt to give savor to men's lives, surely that time is now. For we possess the antidote to the pessimism, the gloomy foreboding, the dejection and fear, which afflict our time. We have Good News."

vatican news

Importance of Catechesis

Pope Paul delivered the following address during the general audience on Wednesday, Oct. 5.

The Synod of Bishops, as you know, is gathered in Rome, in Vatican City, these days; it lasts about a month, the month of October. But what is this synod? It is a new institution that emerged from the second Vatican Council. It is a question of a meeting of bishops, chosen by the local episcopal conferences, representing the whole episcopate of the world, to collaborate with the Pope, by way of information and advice, in the direction of the whole Church. In the synod now gathered, three years after the preceding one, 234 members are convened, nearly all of whom are present; the bishops elected by the national episcopal conferences are joined by the patriarchs of the Eastern Churches, some religious, and the cardinal prefects of the congregations of the Roman Curia.

A really representative assembly, with its Secretary General and some auxiliaries and experts!

And with what is a synod concerned? It is concerned with general subjects, usually one at a time, which interest the life of the Church. A synod has, therefore, an extraordinary importance. And this time everyone knows what is the subject, chosen in advance to make it possible to study it not only doctrinally, but above all concretely in its relations with the experience and the problems of the real life of the Church and of the society contemporary with her. The subject is catechesis, especially for children and young people, without forgetting that also adults need catechesis and at a proportionate level.

To anyone considering the Church in her wide and complex doctrinal and social proportions, it may seem too particular a subject, which limits the overall view of the religious, historical and moral problems in which the life of the Church is involved. But this is not so. It is, indeed, a question of a specific problem, catechesis; but a fundamental problem, a seminal problem, on the solution of which the whole vitality and efficiency of the Church herself depends. Above all, this is because the religion of Jesus Christ is based on the faith, that is, on the Word of God. This is so, both in its phase of enunciation, in its magisterium, and in its diffusion, in its pedagogy, in its phase of acceptance; not to mention that which is most important, in its content, whether doctrinal, theological or moral.

Let us recall the origin and nature of Christianity, which is generally accompanied by a world that is

ordinary, but always august and mysterious: Gospel Jesus, from whom all our religion derives, is the "Word", who became Man; the divine Word made flesh, who came into the world to proclaim the "kingdom of God." Jesus is the Teacher of mankind. The plan of his work is based on listening, acceptance, and application of his word. If man's destiny depends on this meeting with Christ — from one part, that of Christ — by way of teaching enunciated; from the other part, that of followers of the faith, by way of teaching received as a rule of life — one can catch a glimpse of the primary importance of man's contact with catechesis.

But what is catechesis? It is precisely the fundamental teaching of religious truths — such as Jesus Christ taught with his preaching, with his example, with his Gospel — by means of the "education of the Faith" of the responsible Church.

And in this way one realizes how catechesis is needed for everyone, always, with the didactic requirements of a truth formulated with scrupulous accuracy, with the liveliness that its very content inspires and recreates, and with the zeal, that is, the love of those who know and feel that they are disciples and are not afraid to take up again, from the beginning, the doctrine which is never taught enough and never learned enough.

It can be seen how relevant interest in catechesis is today, in a phase of the development of human thought which is under the illusion that it can generate by itself, if indeed it still has esteem and taste for it, a subjective spiritual and religious emotion; or, as unfortunately happens today, that it

Pope Offers Self As Hijack Hostage

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul, only hours before the rescue of 86 hostages in Somalia, offered himself as a hostage to obtain the release of the captives on a hijacked Lufthansa jetliner.

"With agitation and great sadness, we follow the terrible suffering anguish of so many innocents," the Pope said in a telegram to Cardinal Joseph Hoeffner of Cologne, head of the German Bishops Conference, adding: "If it would be of use to the world, even

offer our person for the liberation of the hostages."

Ninety minutes before a threatened massacre deadline on Oct. 17, a 60-man West German commando unit stormed the German airliner on an airport runway in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, an East African nation, and ended a five-day, 6,000-mile hijacking episode by shooting the four terrorists and freeing all 86 hostages unharmed.

can exclude the truth that saves, that is, the Gospel, and can make up for lack of Christ's light with the madness of permissiveness.

Let us all return to catechesis, that is, to the school of the divine Master, both to echo, as humble apostles, his beatifying voice, and to let ourselves first of all be penetrated, and then intoxicated, by the truth that ensures life.

Bishop's Public Appointments

NOVEMBER, 1977

- 3 — GEM Luncheon Meeting, Denominational Executives, Rochester Club, 12 Noon
- 3 — Conterral of Degrees Ceremony, St. Bernard's Seminary — 7:30 p.m.
- 5-6 — Pastoral Visitation, St. Patrick's Parish, Elmira
- 7 — Priests' Council Meeting, Becket Hall — 10:30 a.m.
- 8 — Clergy Conference, Becket Hall — 10:00 a.m.
- 10 — Confirmation, St. Cecilia Church, Elmira — 7:45 p.m.
- 12 — Diocesan Sisters Council Meeting, Nazareth Motherhouse — 11:00 a.m.
- 12 — Radio Message, Family Rosary Network — 7:00 p.m.
- 13 — Celebration of Eucharist and Homily and Administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, Catholic Community of R.I. — 10:30 a.m.
- 14-17 — Annual Fall Meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Statler Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.
- 19 — Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting, Sheraton Inn, Canandaigua, 11:00 a.m.
- 19 — Twenty Second Annual Seton Charity Ball, Holiday Inn Downtown — 7:30 p.m.
- 21 — Becket Hall Board of Trustees Meeting — 10:00 a.m.
- 21 — Confirmation, St. Jerome's Church, East Rochester — 7:45 p.m.
- 22 — Regional Coordinators Meeting — St. Mary's, Canandaigua — 10:30 a.m.
- 24 — Eddie Meath Show, WHEC-TV, Channel 10 — 7:00 a.m.
- 29 — Confirmation, St. John's Church, Humboldt Street — 7:45 p.m.