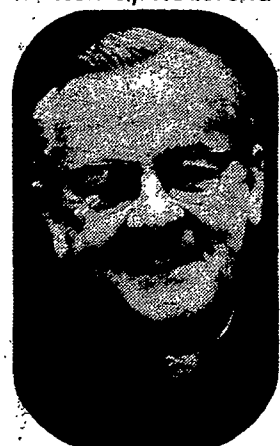


PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Christians Are Caring People

I suppose that every time I write this column I am sharing with you something that I have read somewhere before. But this week I know precisely the source of my thoughts. It is a book entitled, "Caring" written by Reverend Thomas Dubay and it presents a Biblical theology of community. The Chapter "Caring Makes Community" offers real challenges to us to examine the quality of our Christian commitment to love one another.



St. Paul writes to his beloved people of Corinth to remind them that while they surely have the variety of gifts given them by the Holy Spirit, yet they have nothing unless their lives are animated by charity. This was the sign that made their pagan neighbors take notice that there was something special about an authentic Christian: "See how they love one another."

I have read Chapters 12 and 13 of 1 Corinthians thousands of times and know that St. Paul makes clear the primacy of charity and the demands it makes upon those who possess it. It is far from a sentimental journey.

Father Dubay has some interesting reflections on Christian love which are worth our attention. There are certain primal realities which defy adequate definitions, he notes. Among them are existence, joy, life, beauty and love. These words are also subject to abuse by overuse. Love is such a term — degraded to refer at times even to human relationships that are anything but loving. In the Biblical sense love is really CARING.

TO CARE IS TO BECOME THE OTHER IN MIND AND HEART, to live the other's interests. St. Paul can assert that it is his heart's desire that his Jewish compatriots be saved. (Rom. 10:1) The Apostle's own peace of mind is possible only upon his hearing that the Thessalonians are still strong in their faith. "It is the BREATH OF LIFE to us that you stand firm in the Lord." (1 Thess. 3:8)

TO CARE IS TO LIVE IN EACH OTHER THROUGH THOUGHT AND LOVE. More than once Paul tells his brothers that they dwell in his heart and pleads with them to make room for him in their hearts.

TO CARE IS TO HAVE CONCERN for the community and for individuals in their uniqueness. The good Shepherd calls his sheep by name and if one strays away, the ninety-nine are left while the one is pursued and found. (Matt. 18:12-14) Paul sheds tears over each of the Ephesian elders and he treats each of the Thessalonians as a good father treats his children.

CARING NEEDS TO EXPRESS ITSELF VISIBLY. Caring is sincerely rejoicing when others rejoice and being sad when they are sad. If the sky in my life remains perfectly blue while my brother suffers depression, pain, anxiety, I may well question whether I am concerned with his interests rather than my own.

TRUE CHRISTIAN LOVE IS AFFECTIONATE. Gospel love is warmly expressed. In the early Church kissing seems to have been a common sign of love. We modern westerners who tend to be reserved in the expression of our affection will be surprised at what I am about to write.

Did you know that the Church in apostolic times was a KISSING COMMUNITY? This expression of love and respect WAS ADVISED. What other conclusion can you get after reading these passages?

"Greet all the brothers with the holy kiss." (1 Thess. 5:26)

"Greet each other with a holy kiss." (Rom. 16:16)

"Greet one another with a holy kiss." (1 Cor. 16:20)

"Greet one another with the holy kiss." (2 Cor. 13:12)

Peter has the same advice as Paul: "Greet one another with a kiss of love." (1 Pet. 5:14) Luke reports that this was the way the elders of Ephesus paid their farewells to Paul: "When he had finished speaking he knelt down with them all and prayed. By now they were all in tears; they put their arms round Paul's neck and kissed him." (Acts 20:36-37) Jesus had already



Father Michael J. Conboy, the bishop's secretary, preaches at a charismatic meeting at St. Lawrence Church.

spoken of the way a loving father receives back an erring but penitent son: "While he was still a long way off his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly." (Luke 15:20)

CARING FINDS EXPRESSION IN THE USE OF TERMS OF ENDEARMENT. The New Testament is filled with affectionate modes of address that reflect the warmth of the community. Rare are the Lord's harsh words and these were intended as kindness to pierce the sham of the dishonest and the hypocrites. The term of address most common in the New Testament (209 times) is simply — MY BROTHER, MY SISTER.

TO CARE IS TO BE SINCERELY INTERESTED IN ANOTHER. It is not curiosity nor meddling in another's life. A sure sign of sincere interest is our eagerness to listen and our slowness to speak. Perhaps the reason most of us would rather speak than listen is that we are more interested in ourselves than in others. A caring community is a listening community.

CARING IS REVERENT COURTESY — not simple politeness. One does not have to be a Christian to be polite. Courtesy as found in the Gospels is born out of a reverence for the sublime dignity of one who has been made in God's image

CARING FINDS EXPRESSION IN ACTIVE MERCY. St. Paul describes our vocation as serving one another with works of love. St. James speaks of a faith that is dead in one who wishes well to an ill-clad or hungry brother or sister but does nothing to give them

clothing and food. (James 2:14-17) And St. John reminds us that love does not consist merely in words but in deeds. (1 Jn. 3:17-18)

TO CARE IS TO AVOID ANYTHING THAT MAY PAIN ANYONE WITHOUT NECESSITY. A caring person is never rude, arrogant, irritable or resentful (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

CARING MEANS OFFERING ENCOURAGEMENT AND EXPRESSING OUR APPRECIATION. Paul's letters are filled with compliments. We could all well afford to examine ourselves on this point. We generally are silent about the many good things that happen and spend all our energies denouncing evil

CARING IS INCARNATED IN WARM HOSPITALITY, IN CHEERFUL GENTLENESS, IN COMPASSION THAT GIVES COMFORT TO THOSE WHO SORROW, IN THE SINCERITY OF OUR GREETING.

Father Dubay concludes that caring is so crucial to community that without it we may have a gathering but we cannot have a community. And may I add with St. Paul that caring is so crucial to our personal Christian life that without it we are a "sounding gong or a clanging cymbal," which translated means shallow people whose lives add up to sound and tury signifying nothing

PS I dedicate this column to the beloved brother pictured above, who is a deeply caring person and one who is unashamed to express his love and concern. Note the warmth of the gesture!

COURIER-CALENDAR

Fall Festival— At St. John's, Spencerport, 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 4, 1 p.m. Saturday; until midnight both days

Holiday craft bazaar— In school hall at Holy Trinity, Ridge Road, Webster, Nov. 5, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.; Nov. 6, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Handmade gift items, home-baked bread and apple pie

Election Day Dinner— Nov. 8, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 5-7 at St. Bridget's parish hall, Church Street, East Bloomfield, bake sale also

Scholarship Card Party— At St. James parish hall, Brockley and Brett roads, 8 p.m. Monday, Nov. 7; proceeds for eight high school scholarships

Archfraternal Breakfast— Women of Our Lady of Victory-St. Joseph's, 9 a.m. Mass followed by breakfast in Holiday Inn, Sunday, Nov. 6

Holy Family Rosarians— Mass for deceased members, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9, followed by business meeting and bazaar

St. Salome's Womens Club— Open meeting with Mrs. Lois Bircher, immediate past president, Business and Professional Womens Clubs of New York State. Reservations by Nov. 7 through 342-7906 or 544-6033.

Dante Ball— Sponsored annually by Italian Womens Civic Club to raise scholarship money; 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 5, Downtown Holiday Inn. For tickets: Mrs. Lawrence Arcarese, 266-4572; Mrs. Peter Carrillo, 266-7274

Christmas Bazaar— At St. Mary's of the Lake, 139 Walworth Road, Ontario, Saturday, Nov. 5, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Hand-made gift items, religious articles, plants, pickles, preserves and baked goods.

Macaroni Dinner— Twelfth annual, at Holy Apostles School, Lyell Avenue at Austin, noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 6

Books Sandwiched-in— The Thorn Birds by Colleen McCullough, reviewed by Desmond Stone, Tuesday, Nov. 8, 12:00 p.m., Rundel library, South Avenue in Brighton; The Path Between the Seas, by David McCullough, reviewed by

Dr. Henry P. French, tomorrow noon, Twelve Corners Presbyterian Church

Forum on Justice— This noontime at 101 S. Plymouth an explanation of the three court reform amendments on the Nov. 8 ballot by Deputy Administrative Judge Robert J. Sise of state Office of Court Administration

Rochester Academy of Science— Scientific papers presentation, panel discussion on protecting people from chemical hazards in this area, Saturday, Nov. 4, Eastman Theatre, Donald Hunsberger conducting New Jazz Ensemble, directed by Bill Dobbins, 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9, Eastman Theatre. All free, no tickets

Brighton Symphony Orchestra— At Council Rock School, 600 Grosvenor Road, Brighton, 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 4, Lois Svard Burge, piano soloist, Barbara Gross, conductor. Free

Eastman Student Concerts— Eastman InterMusica, directed by Philip West, 8 p.m. Monday, Nov. 7, Kilbourn Hall. Eastman Wind Ensemble, 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 4, Eastman Theatre, Donald Hunsberger conducting New Jazz Ensemble, directed by Bill Dobbins, 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9, Eastman Theatre. All free, no tickets

Guest Recital— Concert pianist Leonard Shure plays music by Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, 8 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 6, Kilbourn Hall. Free, no tickets

Rochester Oratorio Society— Opening 33rd season with the Berlioz Requiem, 8:15 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12, Eastman Theatre. Box office 232-7837

Alice in Wonderland— Performed with sign language, voice and music at National Technical Institute for the Deaf, RIT campus, 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 4 and 5, 11 and 12. Box Office 464-6254

Gallery Concert— Chamber music by members of Eastman artist faculty, advanced students, 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 6, Memorial Art Gallery, admission fee waived

Job Services— Government employment discussed by civil service people, Manpower representative, 12:05-1 p.m., tomorrow, Rochester Public Library, Rundel Building, South Avenue.