

Pastoral Perspective

By Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

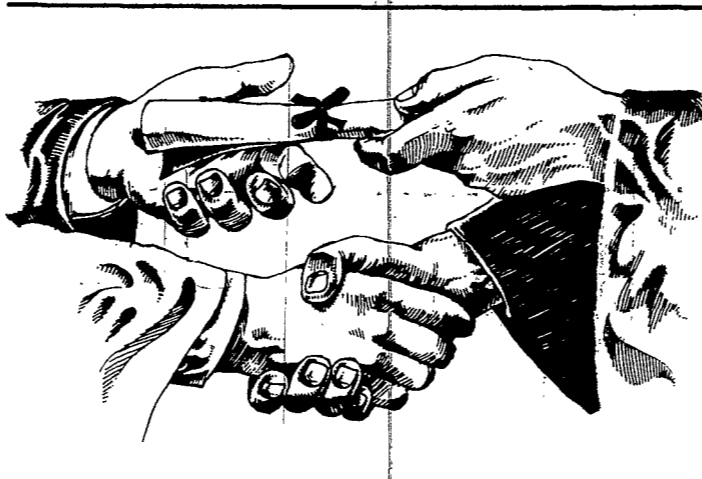
A Valedictory to the Class of '78

Lacking the power of multilocation I am forced to resort to the presence that this column affords me each week to speak to thousands of people in the Diocese of Rochester. This is the time of year when a word is in order, belated as it is, for our graduates of 1978 be they



beloved at Colosse, Paul uttered years ago to his

of grammar school, high school or college vintage. My Auxiliary Bishops have shared with me this year this opportunity to offer a message of congratulations and challenge to our graduates. My theme this year to the students at St. John Fisher College, at Cardinal Mooney High School and to Corpus Christi Grammar School has been basically the same — the message that St. Paul uttered years ago to his



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any gift in a responsible way. But this is especially true of the gift of power. Power used without principle is a dangerous thing. The events of recent years have taught this lesson anew to us as Americans. It is most important that our graduates learn the lesson; the power of an education must be used with wisdom, sensitivity and a sense of service.

The experience of Jesus is a good example for us. Matthew's Gospel tells us how Satan asked Jesus to use this power for His own comfort. "Tell these stones

to become bread." Jesus would have none of it. Then he invited Jesus to challenge God. "Throw yourself down." Again, Jesus would not comply. Finally, he urged the Lord to use his power for amassing wealth, prestige, more power. "All these I will give you, if . . ." But the "if" part was unsatisfactory; Jesus had been given His power for other things.

Our graduates, too, are faced with options. The power of education can be used for selfish purposes, or as an excuse to think God is no longer involved or necessary in our lives, or it can be used to pursue further prestige and power. How, in fact, that power gets used will in large measure depend on the personal principles and values that motivate its use. Our young men and women will go into a variety of vocations. Many who have been classmates will never see each other again. Yet, in the providence of God, their use of their talents, the power released by their education, will contribute to one another and the whole community. It is bigger and more profound than simple economics; it is Paul's vision of the body of Christ made whole by the variety of its members.

I wish our graduates every blessing and pray that, as they have been gifted with power, they will indeed use it with principle.

I ask God's blessings also on the parents and teachers who brought these young people to this milestone in their lives. So many people have collaborated for so many years to nurture the gift which is their education. I congratulate them all.

In a special way I commend those parents, teachers and benefactors who have made the sacrifices which continue to make our Catholic schools a reality. This generosity is testimony to the concern we share that the values of the Gospel will direct the lives of our graduates whom we salute with deepest affection and love.

My valedictory is belated but be assured of its timeless sincerity.

When I was Principal of De Sales High School, graduation was a time when school life was "changed — not taken away" (to accommodate a phrase from the Resurrection Mass preface). Classes and discipline cases and the details of administration fell away to be replaced by cleaning and painting and working out new schedules in preparation for the beginning of a new scholastic year.

Now, as bishop, as I attend graduations and present diplomas, I am struck by how dramatically the lives of these young men and women will be changed at a moment we call "commencement." They will go on to High School or to jobs, to special career training, to marriage — to the many directions their lives will take them. And they will go with power, and the power they take with them will be the power of education — information, understandings, concepts, skills, talents developed and all that is implied in the word, "education."

Obviously, the Christian sees an obligation to use

The Holidays of the Spirit

Following is the text of the address of Pope Paul given at the general audience of July 5.

We will speak again about the holidays. They are of great importance, even if they are only for a limited period, in the normal course of life, especially of growing life, in childhood and youth. This is particularly as regards the physical and spiritual development of a subject in the early stages of life. In the spontaneous use of his faculties, he treasures up his energies, physical and mental, no less, perhaps, than when they are guided by a binding discipline. Everyone knows it; and so we once more wish a "happy holiday" to all those who have the good fortune to be able to enjoy them in a wholesome way.



But we should recall that holidays, especially for those who are entering upon, or already enjoy, physical maturity, and feel the potential riches of their own spiritual faculties have a very great importance, often a decisive one, for man's intellectual and moral development. The reading of a book, going to the theater, a journey carried out in an intelligent way, the birth of a friendship, and even, in certain cases, the experience of a misfortune or an illness, can have a pedagogical efficacy equal to that of normal education.

We will confine ourselves here to observing that holidays have not only a useful and wise purpose for

the restoration and development of physical strength, not merely an incomparable formative value by means of contact of the senses with the physical world, which the holidays unfold before the human subject, revealing nature to him like new pages, in their beauty, their extension, their complexity and even their awesomeness, but they have also a spiritual purpose.

For when does man think of himself, when does he recognize himself as a person, when does he touch on the depth and the problematical nature of his own being, feeling exhilaration of fear, unless in the free and solitary moments of his own conscience? The holidays are not just a beautiful pause, which interrupts with physical and exterior enjoyment the occupational monotony of work; they are also and even more a meeting of man with himself, with his own profession, with the value of his own existence.

We wish to say a word about this second aspect of the period of rest and refreshment characteristic of the holidays, the personal aspect, the interior aspect, the spiritual aspect. We do not wish to make the holidays dull, but to open them up to the breath of the Spirit.

For example, and as the first point, is not this blessed period of freedom from the hundred things that harass our mind a propitious moment for fundamental reflection on the manner of our life? Is it developing along the lines of that imperative, which classifies its intelligence, merit and hope, that is, according to the line of duty, of God's law, of the first and complete love which ensures it wisdom here and salvation

beyond time? He who solves this deep and tormenting problem has already made his own holidays good.

Second point. Would it not be possible to find room in the program of the holidays, for a moment — two or three days — of spiritual meditation? Reflection? A spiritual retreat? An excursion/pilgrimage to some sanctuary, or to some prayer-meeting, and let us also say, a moment of repentance? A moment of renewal? How many lofty memories, how many generous promises with which everyone is endowed, but which remain void, forgotten, belied! Could not these deeply personal instants come to life and bloom again, for the life of tomorrow, and change its flat, vulgar prose into poetry of strong energy and goodness lived in joy?

Third point. But this would call for separate treatment. Are not the holidays made for reading? On rainy days, when excursions are not possible, or on days of rest, to recover from long walks, does not a book, a good book, fill up well these margins of the holidays? Yes, a good book, easy to read, is a friend that can give the holidays a new value. But provided it is really a friend, that is, a book which offers the mind welcome rest and a fertile seed of wholesome, pleasant and strengthening thoughts. Unfortunately the book market is not always in conformity with the needs of the spirit, on the contrary . . . ! But let us try to choose; today choice is possible.

Also this choice, proportioned to the age and the temperament of readers, is included in our wishes for a happy holiday, with our Apostolic Blessing.