

Delights and Disappointments

I have asked the management of the Courier-Journal to print this message of Brother Brian Walsh, the president of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, delivered to the membership of the three diocesan consultative bodies on Sunday, Oct. 29. I recommend that it be read regularly before meetings of our parish diocesan consultative bodies. We all can profit from its inspiration and its perspective. — Bishop Joseph L. Hogan.

By BROTHER BRIAN WALSH, CFC

In the eighteen months that I have been a member of the Pastoral Council, I have come to a better appreciation of the fact that the Church is a pilgrim people, journeying over terrain that is rough and rocky: journeying through environments that are hostile and sterile. Many have been the occasions after a D.P.C. meeting, or an executive meeting, or a meeting of the Teaching Mission Standing Committee of the D.P.C., when my prayer has been:

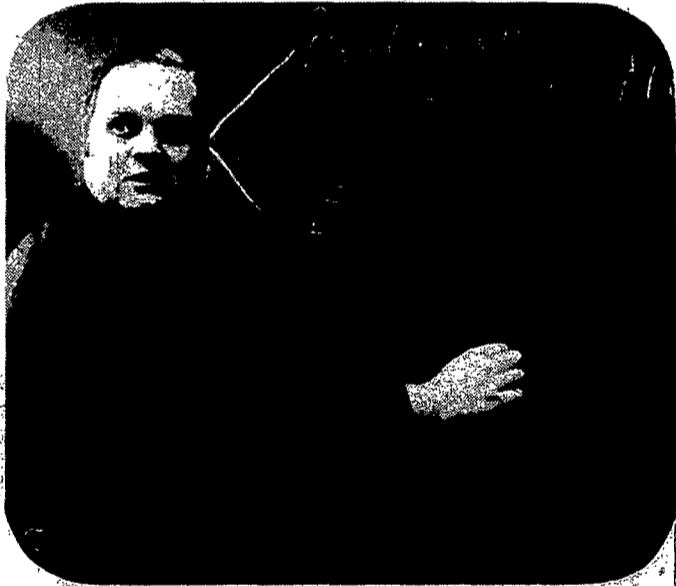
Thanks a lot Lord.

Before You came amongst us, as a pilgrim, You knew how difficult it would be, to be on pilgrimage: So, You had Your prophet Isaiah cry:

"Prepare in the wilderness a way for Yahweh,
Make a straight highway for our God . . .
Let every valley be filled in,
Every mountain and hill be laid low,
Let every cliff become a plain,
And the ridges a valley;
Then the glory of Yahweh shall be revealed
And all Mankind shall see it."

And Lord, then You hedged Your bet even further, You raised up John the Baptizer. Was this fair, Lord? What aids to journeying have You given us on our pilgrimage as a pastoral council?

After each time I prayed thus, I heeded the word of the psalmist to be still and know your God, and the Lord answered. In my heart of hearts I knew that the help for our pilgrimage as we try to make Christ more luminous to the world, is the people with whom we share the pilgrimage, Joseph, our bishop and each other.



Brother Walsh in the classroom at Bishop Kearney High School.

The passing, that we are sharing together as a pastoral council, is a strange blend of delights and disappointments; of brief ecstasies and lingering exasperations.

Perhaps this blend of delight and disappointment experienced in the Pastoral Council of the Diocese of Rochester, is a reflection of the delights and disappointments experienced by the Pilgrim Church throughout the world.

Did not the Church Universal delight in the person and in the ambiance of the reign of John Paul the First? Was not our delight tempered by disappointment at the shortness of his reign? Were we not tempted to focus in on the disappointment of his sudden death, rather than on the delight, that because of his reign, the relationship of the Pope to the Church and the world has been profoundly changed? Did he not in word and in deed, convey in a preeminent way that we are on this journey to the Father together? And that our pilgrimage is to be a sacrament (a sign) of God's saving deed in Jesus Christ?

As with our view of John Paul the First, so with our deliberations as a pastoral council (and I'm sure it may be true of any of the consultative bodies), do we not tend to focus in on our disappointments rather than our delights?

Is our delight at being given a chance to share our vision of faith, blurred by our disappointment that the faith vision has so many incarnations?

Is our delight at being able to serve the Church of Christ in Rochester, tempered by our disappointment that the results of our service are often intangible?

Is our delight that our deliberations and discussions (long and difficult though they be) result in recommendations to the Bishop, that we feel are the best we can give, to enable us as a pilgrim people to center our lives on Christ and ground our existence in the God who raised Him from the dead; is this delight overshadowed by our disappointment that we may appear to be long on talk and short on action?

Is our delight in having a bishop who is so in tune with the thinking of Vatican II on collegiality, on broad-based decision making, on a pastoral approach to shepherding, lessened by our disappointment that our consultation is advisory rather than deliberative?

Is our delight in uniting with each other in prayer weakened by our disappointment that sometimes we appear to have a fragmentation of purpose?

Is our delight at having a Priests' Council and Sisters' Council to share vision and lend expertise, diminished by the disappointment that sometimes we appear to work against each other than with each other?

In the past eighteen months have we not sometimes let our disappointments outweigh our delights? Has not each of us been tempted to say, or at least to think, that this Pastoral Council isn't much of what a pastoral council should be?

Let us scrutinize our delights and disappointments,



BROTHER BRIAN WALSH

Let us examine the concept of pastoral council found in other dioceses,

Let us focus on the potential for improvement contained in our on-going study of Evangelization, and after our scrutiny, and after our examination, and after our focusing, I know we will conclude, that while it may not appear to be much, it is simply the best that there is.

As we continue our pilgrimage with Joseph our Bishop, and with each other, with its attendant delights and disappointments, let us remember that Peter was writing to us when he said in his first letter:

"You have great cause for rejoicing. You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many delights and disappointments; But this is so that your faith, which is more precious than the passing splendor of fire-tried gold, may by its genuineness lead to Praise, to Glory, and to Honor, when Jesus Christ appears. Although you have never seen Him, you love Him, and without seeing, you believe in Him, and rejoice with inexpressible joy touched with glory, because, you are achieving Faith's goal your salvation. This is the salvation which the prophets carefully searched out and examined. They, as you, know that you are not providing for yourselves but for those who will be called to the Gospel in the future."

And I'm sure he would add the next line of his first epistle as a postscript to his message: Into these things that you are doing the angels long to search. And if we've captured the interest of the angels, we must be doing something beautiful for God. May He continue to bless our work.

Gathering

Alumnae and friends of the Academy of the Sacred Heart will gather for their annual fall meeting on Saturday, Nov. 11. The day will start with Mass at Becket Hall at 11 a.m. and will include a noon luncheon at Oak Hill Country Club. Religious of

the Sacred Heart who taught at the former Prince Street School will join the reunion. The featured speaker for the day will be Sister Margaret Mary Canty, RSCJ, of Kenwood. Persons wishing to attend are asked to call Mrs. Robert O'Kane at 467-9628.

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Special Mass Will Feature Polka Music

A special celebration of the Mass, featuring folk music set to the rhythm of polka and waltz melodies, has been slated at St. Stanislaus Church on Saturday, Nov. 11 at 7 p.m.

Father Joseph Jankowiak, pastor, will be the principal concelebrant of the rites. The Mass hymns will be led by a choir of parishioners accompanied by Ray Serafin and his orchestra.

Following the Mass, the parish Holy Name Society will hold a dance, featuring Chicago-based recording artist Marion Lush and his polka band. Admission to the dance is by reservation only. Persons who wish to attend are asked to call 467-0930.

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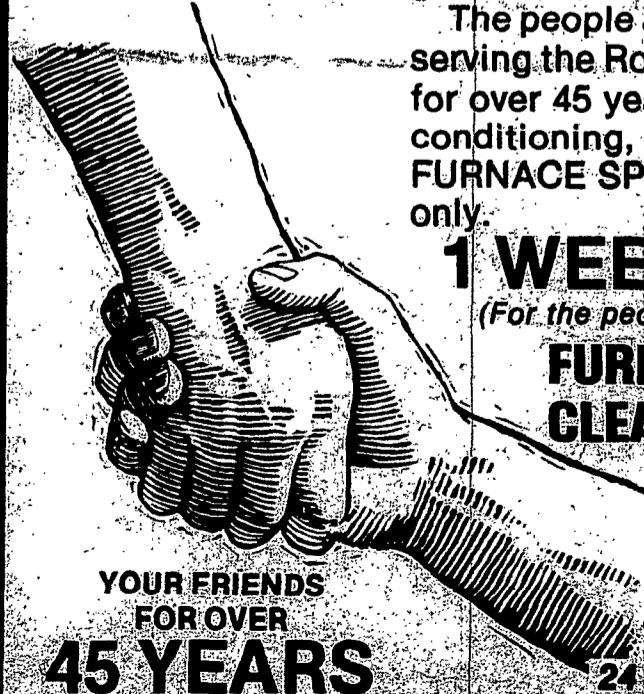
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