

Unity Is a Mark of the Church

Early last month, Pope John Paul II received in audience the bishops of the Antilles. Following are excerpts from his address to them.

I believe that the emphasis of the Second Vatican Council on the mystery of the Church as "a sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race," has a particularly deep meaning for all of you. And because reflection on this theme is both a cause of immense joy and of pastoral strength, I present it to you this morning, asking the Holy Spirit, by whose power the Church is unified in her ecclesial communion and her ministry to bestow on us the grace for which Christ prayed: that we may be "consummati in unum."



Communion and ministry are indeed two great aspects of the Church's unity, of which we are the servants and guardians. To see the Church as a communion is to gain insight into the heart of her mystery, and into the identity of our ministry as bishops, who are called to proclaim that "our fellowship is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ."

The communion that we promote and foster is a communion of faith in God. We believe in the Father who out of his infinite love reveals himself, and who through the power of the Holy Spirit gives us salvation in his Incarnate Word. We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, who by his death gathers together in the unity of his Church the scattered children of God.

For us bishops this communion of faith is the basis of our apostolic task of building up the Church by proclaiming the Gospel, each of us finding solidarity with St. Paul as he says: "For this Gospel, I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher..." Our communion of faith also sheds light on the unity of our ministry, in which, with the universal Church, we announce the unchanging message of salvation in Christ.

Our communion of faith imposes on us the great responsibility, in which we are sustained by God's power, of giving to our people the fullness of Christian doctrine. In his last talk, on the very day he died, my predecessor, John Paul I, spoke of this from the standpoint of the People of God, saying: "Among the rights of the faithful, one of the greatest is the right to receive God's word in all its entirety and purity, with all its exigencies and power."

The unity of the Church is likewise manifested in our communion of love, a love that is greater than our own powers and that is infused into us at Baptism, a love whereby we love God with all our heart and soul and mind, and our neighbor as ourself. St. Augustine presents us with a great insight of truth when he says: "Loving God comes first as a commandment, but loving our neighbor comes first as an activity."

On the basis of this understanding, our ministry takes on a new vigor as we reach out to all people to bring them Christ's love, to put into practice his commandment of love. In the communion of love we find the sustaining force for serving humanity. From the Gospel message we learn to honor man and promote the inescapable exigencies of human dignity and to help humanity pursue the task of building the civilization of love.

In the expression of the Second Vatican Council, the great unity willed by Christ for his Church is modelled on and finds its source in the unity of the Blessed Trinity and subsists in the Catholic Church. And yet we know that the task of promoting the restoration of unity among all Christians is far from complete. It is a task that we have received from the Lord. Fidelity of Jesus Christ requires that we should pursue with vigor the cause of Christian unity.

In our own day the Holy Spirit has powerfully communicated to the world the urgency of this matter: That all may be one. This goal of the Ecumenical Council is clear, and as pope, I have stated that "since the moment of my election I have formally committed myself to promote the carrying out of its norms and guidelines, seeing this as one of my first duties."

At the same time we must be willing to commit ourselves to making the effort and to adopting the means which lead to Christian unity. The Council makes detailed suggestions. Of particular importance is the question of examining our own fidelity to Christ:

we are constantly called to conversion or change of heart. It is useful today to repeat the Council's emphasis that "this change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayers for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and can be rightly called 'spiritual ecumenism'."

It is inevitable and indeed salutary that as Christians strive toward the restoration of unity they should feel the pain of existing divisions. As I pointed out in the above mentioned talk: "A sickness is not healed by giving painkillers but by attacking its causes."

We must continue to work humbly and resolutely to remove the real divisions, to restore that full unity in faith which is the condition for sharing in the Eucharist.

Of great importance is the fact that "in every Eucharistic celebration it is the whole faith of the Church that comes into play; it is ecclesial communion in all its dimensions that is manifested and realized."

Sharing in the Eucharist, therefore, presupposed unity in faith. Intercommunion between divided Christians is not the answer to Christ's appeal for perfect unity. God has set an hour for the realization of his salvific design for Christian unity. As we yearn for this hour, in common prayer and dialogue, and endeavor to offer an ever more purified heart to the Lord, we must also wait for the Lord's action. It must be said and said again that the restoration of Christian unity is above all a gift of God's love. Meanwhile, on the basis of our common Baptism and the patrimony of faith that we already share, we must intensify our common witness to the Gospel.

Dear brothers in the Episcopate, this mystery of unity in Christ must be lived to the full by the People of God; and the basis and center of every Christian community is the celebration of the Eucharist. I ask you to remind your faithful of the real privilege that is theirs to assemble for Sunday Mass, to be united with Christ in his worship of the Father. Sunday Mass is indeed of primary value in the life of the faithful, not in the sense that their other activities lack importance and meaning in Christian living, but rather in the sense that Sunday Mass sustains, enlivenes and sanctifies all that they do throughout the week.

Four from Diocese Ordained Order Priests

Rev. D. Kauffman

Rev. Mr. Dennis J. Kauffman, CSB, will be ordained a priest in the Congregation of St. Basil (Basilian Fathers) by Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey at Christ the King Church, Kings Highway South, on Saturday, June 9, at 2:30 p.m.

The ordinand has been a deacon at Christ the King during the past year.

A native Rochesterian, Rev. Mr. Kauffman is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred G. Kauffman of Lake View Park. He attended Holy Rosary grammar school, Aquinas Institute and received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from St. John Fisher College in 1972.

He taught for a year at Andean High School in Merrillville, Ind., before entering St. Basil's Novitiate in 1973.

Rev. Mr. Kauffman studied Theology at the Toronto School of Theology, receiving the degree of Master of Divinity



FR. KAUFFMAN

from the University of St. Michael's College in 1978.

Following ordination, Father Kauffman will serve at Andean High School as guidance counsellor and director of student religious activities.

He will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving at Christ the King Church at 12:15 p.m. on Sunday, June 10.

Rev. J. Loiacono

Father James A. Loiacono, newly ordained to the priesthood as an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, will offer a Mass of Thanksgiving Sunday noon, June 10, at the Church of the Assumption, Fairport. He is the son of James and Elena Loiacono of Sunset Trail West.

Father Loiacono was ordained May 19 at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., from the Oblates' Washington seminary. He will continue his studies in Sacred Theology for two semesters and then will work with Hispanic peoples in the nation's capital. He celebrated Mass June 3 for the Spanish community of Lowell, Mass.

In the course of his education for the priesthood, Father Loiacono did field work in Puerto Rico and Bolivia. He entered the Oblate novitiate in September 1973, after seven years as a biology teacher and clinical psychologist in Buffalo public schools. He attended high school here—Franklin—and in Anaheim, Calif. He has a BA in psychology from the



FR. LOIACONO

University of Windsor (Ont.), and an MA in psychology and anthropology from the University of Buffalo.

Rev. John McCarthy

Father John McCarthy, CSB, an English teacher and associate chaplain at St. John Fisher College, was ordained a priest in the Congregation of St. Basil on May 5 at St. Pius X Church.

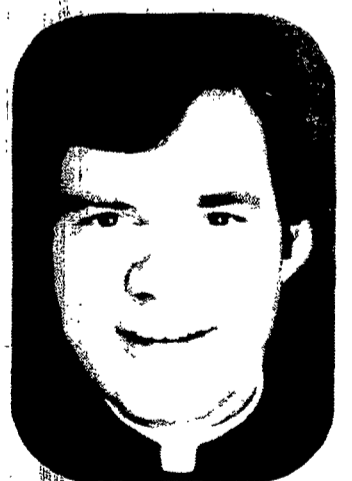
Bishop Joseph L. Hogan

Rev. G. Gurtler

Rev. Mr. Gary Gurtler, SJ, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Gurtler of Rochester will be ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Terence Cooke on June 9 in the Fordham University Church in the Bronx.

Father Albert P. Bartlett, SJ, former rector of McQuaid Jesuit High School, now Provincial for Formation for the Jesuits, will assist.

The ordinand is a graduate of St. Andrew's Seminary and St. John Fisher College. After he completed his novitiate and philosophical studies, he taught at Canisius High School in Buffalo. Rev. Mr. Gurtler studied Theology at the Weston School of Theology in Cambridge,



REV. MR. GURTLE, SJ

Mass. Father Gurtler's Mass of Thanksgiving will be celebrated at Mother of Sorrows Church, Rochester, on Sunday, June 17 at 12:30 p.m.

He has ministered at St. Pius X Church as well as at St. John Fisher.

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