



Mercy Chapter

Father Anthony Bellagamba, executive secretary of the U.S. Catholic Mission Council in Washington, D.C., addressed the Sisters of Mercy of the diocese at a General Chapter session May 26 and 27. He is shown with Sister Mary Judith Heberle, superior general. The weekend program centered on the congregation's fourth vow of service and a deepened understanding of mission.

The Church 1979

By Father Andrew Greeley

The Return Of the Irish Drifter

"I've got Irish Catholics falling over one another to get back into the church," said a priest, friend of mine, reacting to a recent column about the sudden upsurge of church attendance among American Catholics of Irish ethnic background. "Some of them are even offended that we dared to change the church a little while they've been away."

The priest's comments were fascinating because they provided the flesh for the statistical bones that our analysis had discovered. There were, according to my perceptive young priest friend, many different reasons for the return of the Irish drifters.

"First of all," he said, "they're getting old - not very old, of course, but at least they've turned 30, maybe even 35, and needed some kind of faith to cope with the fact that they've finally brushed up against their own mortality."

"Catholicism," said my friend, "seems to them as good as any other faith, and indeed better than any of the others that were available."

They were also concerned about passing some kind of world view on to their children who were beginning to ask what their religion was, as well as their awkward questions about the meaning of life. They were told that their religion was Catholic - that was the only available answer - and the life-meaning questions... well, how do you answer those questions? Even if you haven't figured out a world view for yourself, you've got

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

Heaven Will Never Be a Bore

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 28:16-20. (R1) Dt. 4:32-34, 39-40. (R2) Rom. 8:14-17.

The great revelation of the Old Testament is monotheism. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God!"

The great revelation of the New Testament is Fr. Shamon the Trinity. In this one God there are three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Monotheism frightened the pagans. Judaism had little attraction for them with the exception of its lofty morality. This attracted many pagan women. But in general pagans ignored Judaism, for to them a one God was an alone God, and an alone God was a lonely God, and a lonely God was an unhappy God - and man was made for happiness.

With the coming of Jesus, the unthinkable thought of God alone like a Buddha contemplating his navel for all eternity was scrapped once and forever with His revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - three Persons in the one God.

Plato once asked the question, "If God has a mind whom did he know; if he has a will whom did he love?" The answer is found in the Trinity. God knowing from all eternity generated a concept of God that has all the reality of God, for God can think only a perfect thought. Yet the thought is distinct from the thinker. So God's eternal thought is distinct from Himself. But a distinct divine reality is a divine Person. Since we express our thoughts by words, the Scripture calls God's eternal thought - the Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was God." Since the thinker begets his thought, Scripture also calls the Thinker "Father" and the Thought "Son."

But God has will as well as a mind. A love as well as a thought. The Father sees the Son as the perfect image of Himself and so loves Him. The Son sees the Father as the source of all He is and He loves the Father. Into this love both Father and Son pour all their being - the divine reality - for love gives itself, and divine love gives itself totally! But love is something distinct from both the lover and the beloved. So in God there is another distinct divine reality or Person. Scripture calls Him the Spirit of God. For love is not expressed by words, but by sighs. "The lover sighing like a furnace," is how Shakespeare described the lover. And the Latin word for sigh is spiritus. And since God has no body, His love is not carnal but spiritual - so Holy Spirit.

So the life of God is the life of Three Persons who live by knowing and loving each other for all eternity.

Bishop Kelly Honored

Bishop Thomas C. Kelly, OP, another prelate from the Rochester diocese, was honored May 21 by his alma mater, Providence College. He received an honorary doctorate in Sacred Theology.

Bishop Kelly, general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference, was cited for his "deep commitment to the spiritual ideals of St. Dominic," for his service to the Dominican order, to the Apostolic Delegation, to the Archdiocese of Washington, where he is an auxiliary, and to the bishops' canonical and action agencies.

The bishop is a native of Rochester and a graduate of Ithaca High School.

Others who received honorary degrees at the



BISHOP KELLY

Providence commencement included Arthur Fiedler, Boston Pops conductor; Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., speaker of the House of Representatives, and J. Joseph Garrahy, governor of Rhode Island.

THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

"Sharing"



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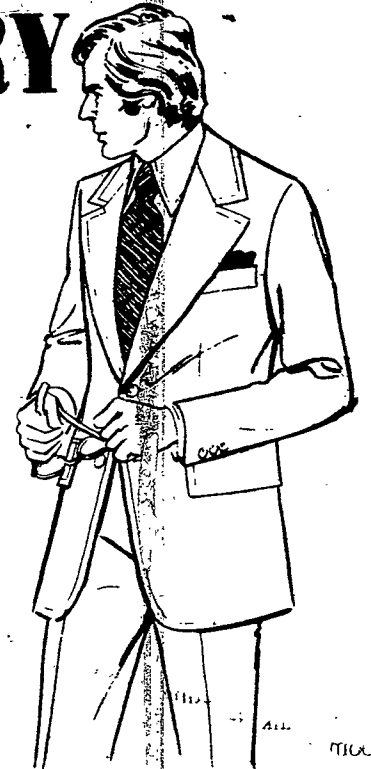
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