

Justice Is a Reflection of Divine Charity

Following is the text of an address given by Pope John Paul II to a group of canon lawyers and judges in ecclesiastical courts.

Dear sons,

It gives me great joy to receive you all today, judges and officials of tribunals as well as the professors and others who are giving the seventh renewal course. We extend a fatherly greeting to you. As we are about to speak freely to you, we do so willingly in response to your desire "to see Peter."



We have always regarded as important the work of justice in the Church. Its influence and importance are increasing from day to day. Because of this and following the example of our venerated predecessor Paul VI, who on several occasions addressed those taking part in this renewal course, we wish to confirm this especially in his very own words. Together with him "We admit that we are very pleased that such men as yourselves, students of Canon Law, coming from various parts of the world, have followed this course so attentively and so diligently. Hence the confidence which we have in this institute of yours, providentially founded in our own Gregorian University, is clear to you: We see, not without fatherly consolation, that it is being even more effective."

On this occasion we are very pleased to approve of and praise the new development of the faculty of canon law which has recently begun a special course in jurisprudence to encourage the practice of justice. It is right to support this venture with a word of praise and in a fatherly way to wish this special school and

art of jurisprudence every success.

Finally allow us to impress on your mind this sacred principle: your office and your administration of justice is truly priestly and pastoral as the memorable Pope Paul VI affirmed. You are "priests of justice" for in your noble ministry the light of God, who is absolute justice, shines forth and your work as ecclesiastical judges serves and assists the members of the people of God who are experiencing difficulties.

But this ministry is not really effective if canon law is not seen as hidden in the ministry of the Church, if it is not cultivated as an element in the life of the Church, if it is not put at the service of redeemed man, if it is not proposed for the advancement of human dignity, and if it is not understood in a manner that is in keeping with its proper character. For ecclesiastical law is not only a sign of human justice, it is also the expression of a deeper communion of life in Christ, in such a way that all canonical justice reflects charity just as canonical equity is itself the fruit of mercy and charity.

This divine charity, which regenerates redeemed man, reveals and throws light upon the true image of man. For man, created by God, is raised to the divine level so that he may recognize himself in God and portray his image in the love of the Trinity.

It is necessary for all these things, which are illumined by a living faith, to shine forth in the life of the Church and also in your ministry. What would the Church law be without charity?

What would justice be without the defence of rights? What good would the defence of rights be if these rights were not applied sincerely and effectively? Apart from the solemn declaration of fundamental rights, what is more desirable today than the full recognition of these very rights? What more must

one work for if not the true and genuine application of these rights?

Great importance must be given to the protection of rights especially in this age of ours in which the Church seems to be the sole guardian of redeemed man. "Christ the Redeemer...fully reveals man to himself. If we may use the expression, this is the mystery of the redemption."

This truth concerning redeemed man must be preserved and protected especially in Christian marriage and in the Christian family. You especially are guardians of this holy matrimony. You do not allow the indissoluble bond of love to be broken. You strive to keep intact the loving consent. You defend marriages that are valid. You respect marriages that are fruitful. You support spouses who are faithful so that you may not see their children scattered and abandoned.

Let this be your administration of justice which is a reflection of divine charity. For in matrimony God has placed these relationships of love which mutual love in the very fruit of love reflects upon and understands its threefold purpose. For God created man, that is man and woman, in his own image, and he said to them "Be fruitful and multiply." Let no one destroy such a unity of love, for what God has joined together let no man put asunder, and let no one abandon those whom mutual love has generated when they are deprived of their parents by death. This is a great sacrament which reveals the divine life by which man becomes an image of God.

This dignity of marriage is entrusted to you as ministers of divine justice in a special way so that it may be kept spotless, so that the Church may always see in this great sacrament a reflection of her own life in which Christ is the spouse of the Church.

More Opinions

Pro-Family Advice

Editor:

Pro-family Americans who understand that our country's policies should reflect the values, beliefs and principles of the nation's Judeo-Christian majority can do something positive.

Please contact your U.S. congressmen and senators about the following bills:

S.1808 -- the Family Protection Act -- this legislation is designed to weaken government and secular-humanist interference in family life and to restore family unity, parental authority, and a climate of traditional morality; H.R. 4395 -- Public disclosure of Lobbying Act -- supposedly designed to curb the influence of big lobbies (oil, etc.) its effect would be to put organizations representing the grassroots out of business; H.R. 2977 -- the Domestic Violence Prevention and Services Act -- passage of this bill would result in perhaps the most massive interference to date of the federal government into the most intimate details of the life of every family in America.

Through prayer and action we can achieve "one nation under God."

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Hasty Change?

Editor:

The silent faithful who found much beauty and

loved the Mass in Latin, humbly accepted Vatican II change to the vernacular.

How quickly the diocese spoke out in the news media about the use of the Tridentine Mass, declaring it was forbidden by the Holy See and that those Catholics who attended it were not fulfilling their Sunday obligation. I say amen to that and so it should be.

With the approval of Pope John Paul, the Holy See has confirmed its controversial decision to ban the modernist theologian Prof. Hans Kung from his post at Germany's Tuebingen University as announced Dec. 30.

Prof. Kung is accused of questioning among other things such central Catholic teaching as papal infallibility, and dealing ambiguously with the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Christ.

Members of three Catholic institutions, Nazareth College, St. John Fisher and St. Bernard's Seminary, have made public announcements with unholy haste that they would continue to use Kung's books, as if to demonstrate their support of the professor against the Vatican decision.

The diocese's silence on these grave issues is close to scandal to many of the faithful.

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Editor's Note: The Tridentine Masses were being conducted here for at least two years before the diocese made its statement concerning them. Obviously it tries to avoid acting in "unholy haste."

Church Pledges New Efforts For Alternatives to Abortion

Washington (RNS) -- Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York, chairman of the Roman Catholic hierarchy's Committee for Pro-Life Activities, pledged new efforts by the church to provide moral alternatives to abortion.

"Behind each abortion statistic is a story of human tragedy," the cardinal declared in a statement marking the seventh anniversary of the Supreme Court's original pro-abortion rulings of Jan. 22, 1973.

"A nation with the resolve to have a man set foot on the moon must not be afraid to let a child set foot on the earth. A nation willing to celebrate the Year of the Family must not overlook protection of the unborn members of the human family. A nation willing to protect natural resources must not neglect the greatest natural resource, the child," the cardinal stated.

Meanwhile, that day in Washington, D.C., tens of thousands of anti-abortion

activists made their way from the White House to the Capitol in a "March for Life."

The march has become an annual event and participants vowed to continue their crusade until they achieve a "human life amendment" to the Constitution, outlawing abortion under all circumstances.

And Bishop Ernest L. Unterkoefler of Charleston, S. C., charged in a pastoral letter that the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion-on-demand has brought about a new holocaust for the unborn, led to the exploitation of women by profit-seeking abortion clinics and sparked a drive for euthanasia of "unwanted" adults.

"It is time for each Christian," he said, "to lend his assistance to efforts to provide real help to women troubled by pregnancy, to restore legal protection for the right to life of every person, to offer genuine care for the

dying and to return the Christian family to its deserved place of eminence."

In Washington, Dr. Mildred F. Jefferson, founder and past president of the

National Right to Life Committee, told a symposium at Catholic University that the right-to-life movement has become "the strongest new political force in the country today."



Remembering

Coretta Scott King and Rosalynn Carter join hands in prayer during a ceremony at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, marking the 51st anniversary of the birthday of the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., slain civil rights leader. Mrs. Carter said, "The president and I are committed that we must have a national holiday to commemorate this great man." (RNS)

Scholarships For Handicapped

Monroe County residents who plan to attend college and who are physically handicapped are eligible to apply for an Easter Seal Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000, the Easter Seal Crippled Children's Society has announced. The annual scholarship will be awarded on the basis of academic achievement and potential and financial need.

The grant will be awarded for the academic term 1980-81. Eligible students should write or call the Crippled Children's Society of Monroe County for an application form.

Marian Film

A film, "Once on a Barrer Hill," a 30 minute presentation recounting the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe, is being offered for showing to groups in the diocese by Mrs. Mary Kelly, president of the local chapter of the Blue Army. Mrs. Kelly said that groups wishing to see the movie should call her at (716) 586-1664 to arrange for a showing.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier Journal is noon on Thursday preceding the following Wednesday's publication.