

# Bow with Devotion to Age

Following are excerpts from the text of a recent address given by Pope John Paul II to a group of senior citizens.

Holy greetings to all of you who longer than I have "endured the work and heat of the day," who longer than I have exerted yourselves to meet the Lord and to serve him in all fidelity, in the great things and in the small ones, in joy and in suffering;



The pope bows with devotion before old age, and he invites all people to do the same with him. Old age is the crown of the steps of life. It gathers in the harvest, the harvest from what you have learned and experienced, the harvest from what you have done and achieved, the harvest from what you have suffered and undergone. As in the finale of a great symphony, all the great themes of life combine to a mighty harmony. And this harmony bestows wisdom — the wisdom which young King Solomon is praying for and which means more to him than power and riches, more than beauty and health — the wisdom about which we read in the rules of life of the Old Testament: "How attractive is wisdom in the aged, and understanding and counsel in honorable men! Rich experience is the crown of the aged, and their boast is fear of the Lord."

To today's older generation, this crown of wisdom is due in a very special way: some of you had in two world wars to see and to endure immense pain; many of you have thereby lost your relatives, your health, your profession, your house and your home country; you have come to know the abyss of the human heart, but also its ability for heroic willingness to help, and for loyalty to the faith, as well as its power to dare a new beginning.

Wisdom confers distance, but not a distance which stands aloof from the world; it allows people to be above things, without despising them; it allows us to see the world with the eyes and with the heart of God.

It allows us to say "yes" even to our limitations, even to our past — with its disappointments, omissions and sins. For "we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him." From the conciliative power of this wisdom spring up kindness, understanding, and — that precious ornament of old age — a sense of humor.

You yourselves know best, my dear sisters and brothers, that this precious harvest of life which the Creator has apportioned you, is not an uncontested possession. It requires vigilance, carefulness, self control and sometimes even a resolute battle. Otherwise it is endangered, easily to be eaten away or to be corroded by idleness, by moods, by superficiality, by arrogance or even by bitterness. Do not lose heart; with the grace of our Lord start over and over again, and use the sources of power which he offers you: in the Sacraments of the Bread and of Forgiveness; in the Word which comes to you in sermons and in reading and in spiritual conversation.

Indeed, old age deserves our devotion, a devotion which also shines forth from Holy Scriptures which it places before our eyes Abraham and Sara, when it calls Simeon and Anna to the Holy Family in the temple, when it calls the priests "elders," when it sums up the worship of the whole of creation in the adoration of the 24 elders and when finally God calls himself: "The Ancient of Days."

What is awaiting all of us is a birth, a transformation whose pains we fear with Jesus on the Mount of Olives, but whose radiant exit we already carry within ourselves since at our baptism we have been submerged into the death and victory of Jesus.

"Upon thee I have leaned from my birth; forsake me not when my strength is spent.

"Come to our aid with your mercy and keep us safe from temptation and sin, so that we may be full of confidence as we await the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

## 'Celebration of Life' Dinner Jan. 16

The Rochester Area Right to Life Political Action Committee is sponsoring a "Celebration of Life" dinner at 7:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 16, at Arena's Partv House, 1335 E. Ridge Rd.

The guest speaker will be Sandy Faucher, project director of the national Right to Life Committee, PAC. Mrs. Faucher also serves on the national Right to Life Board as director from Maine.

Once an abortion proponent, she says that events in her own life led her into the pro-life movement.

"My true commitment to this cause came when I realized — our children are growing up in a society which is trying to solve the problem of birth defects by eliminating the defective children," she said.



SANDY FAUCHER

The public is invited; dinner is \$15 a person or \$25 a couple. Reservations may be made by contacting George C. Wiedemer, 244 Hillary Lane, Penfield, N.Y. 14526. Further information is available from Jeanne D. Sweeney at 342-0404.

## Pro-Lifers Set Capital Trip

The Geneva Area Right to Life group is sponsoring a bus trip to Washington, D.C., to join thousands of other pro-lifers in the annual March for Life on Jan. 22.

The march has taken place every year on the same date since the Supreme Court decision in 1973 legalizing abortion on demand. The march is significant because it is an attempt to influence congressmen to propose a Human Life Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. One Human Life Amendment reads: "The paramount right to life is vested in each human being from the moment of

fertilization without regard to age, health or condition of dependency."

Right to Life leaders expect this to be the largest protest ever, especially after the election of a pro-life president, Ronald Reagan, and the pro-life successes in the November election in the House and Senate.

Any individuals who wish to go on the bus which leaves the night of Jan. 21 and returns the evening of Jan. 22 should call Kathy Peters, GARTL chairperson, at 539-8006.

Sr. Mary Smith, SSND



Viewpoint: Sisters Reflect

## Religious Role in Today's World

In his Pastoral, "You Are Living Stones," Bishop Joseph L. Hogan sets forth the qualities of leadership which he sees as most important in the life and activities of Church leaders today.

These special qualities of hope, abiding trust, gratitude, patient endurance and active listening are the hallmark of today's religious women, whose role in the Church is one of educator.

In looking at the schools today, we see far fewer religious women as teachers than we did five years ago, but when we use the "wide-eyed" look we see religious women involved in every facet of total education. In response to the need of our people, religious women are a part of Catholic education in its totality: schools, parish catechetical programs, campus ministry, hospital ministry, young adult education, family life education, adult education.

The role of "teacher" has indeed changed, it has become an all-encompassing

challenge to greatness. We can no longer be satisfied with teaching content, but rather we must, through example and direction, expose our youngsters, parishioners, friends and family to the real role of the Church which is Peace through Justice.

As religious educators we see justice as an integrated part of education, itself, not as a subject taught or a project to be done after school. The curriculum, "Seeking a Just Society: an educational design," is being effectively piloted in several diocesan schools at present and will, hopefully, better prepare our youngsters for the future and for the role they must play in that future.

A quotation taken from the Constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame sums up the role of Religious Sister in education today:

"Our mission... is 'to make one,' to form Christian community wherever we are sent — in this city, in this neighborhood, at this hour of salvation history. Our response to assignment is a response to a personal call. To the Lord's word, 'Whom shall I send?' we answer with Isaiah, 'Here I am' — send me!"

## Asian Refugees Need Sponsors

By John Dash

There is a critical need for sponsors for Indochinese refugees.

Anna Humaydan of the Refugee Resettlement Office of the Catholic Family Center said last week that since last summer only three parishes have offered sponsorships in the diocese. Refugees in Thailand from the Cambodia conflict alone number more than 200,000, she said.

She begged parishes to consider sponsorships, noting that the U.S. is accepting 14,000 Indochinese refugees a month, largely on the assurance of religious groups that they would act as sponsors.

She said that persons or institutions wishing to sponsor refugees are guaranteed assistance in their efforts from her office and the Inter Church Refugee Assistance Project and a newly started, state-funded program of job development and interpreter service. In addition, monies are available for housing and food for the refugees.

She asked that anyone wishing to offer a sponsorship or seeking further information contact her at (716) 546-7220, ext. 46; 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

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