

Proclamation Marks Authenticity of Faith

Following are excerpts from an address given by Pope John Paul II to a group of pilgrims from the Emilian diocese of Carpi.

"A diocese," the Second Vatican Council states, "is a section of the People of God entrusted to a bishop to be guided by him with the assistance of his clergy so that, loyal to its pastor and formed by him into one community in the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes one particular Church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is present and active."



In these few lines there is a deep theological presentation of that "particular Church," the diocese, which is a "section" of the universal Church. In it the bishop, priests and the faithful, all animated by the Holy Spirit, have in the Gospel message the fundamental guide for their behavior, and in the Eucharist the spiritual food for the way and the pilgrimage that they must carry out together in the midst of the vicissitudes of the world.

The Christian is he who "believes in Christ;" he believes, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth is the incarnate Son of God; he is the Savior of man; he is the one who gave himself entirely for our true freedom; who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. The first, fundamental proclamation of Christianity is this: our first great profession of faith is this. That is why the Gospel, which presents to us the life and teaching of Jesus, always remains for one who intends to follow Christ the constant point of reference and orientation for the whole of life. It is the Gospel that must change our mentality, our tendencies, our inclinations, our desires. To preserve, to nourish, to increase, to protect, to manifest faith is, therefore, for the Christian a constant requirement which cannot be eliminated.

You, beloved brothers and sisters, have come to Rome to pray at the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul and of the Martyrs, who, to remain faithful to Christ, preferred death.

You have come also to receive from Peter's successor encouragement and comfort for your faith, which must often be expressed and realized in situations of particular difficulty, either because of the spread of ideologies which proclaim indifference or open hostility to any religious concept, and in particular to the Christian one, or because of

the constant and distressing growth of practical patterns of behavior, dominated by individualism, selfishness, pursuit of prosperity and earthly success at all costs.

In these situations, which may cause the temptation of dejection, discouragement, or psychological surrender, I which to exhort you today, recalling the great Christian tradition of your fathers, to reaffirm your faith courageously, and with commitment; to guard it in your heart; to profess it publicly, without fear or weakness, by word and by example, always in radical consistency with the requirements of the Christian concept, sometimes hard ones. "The Christian," St. Augustine wrote, "does not believe just with his heart, while, because of fear, he prevents his lips from proclaiming what he believes. There are Christians who have faith in their hearts . . . but are afraid to profess it with their lips, as if they forbid their lips to echo what they know, what they have within them . . . Let the lips say, therefore, what is in the heart: so much for fear. Let the heart say what the lips say: so much for pretense. . . . Let your lips always be in harmony with your heart."

For the Christian, consistency is the finest manifestation of the authenticity of his faith.

Insights In Liturgy

By Mary C. Fitch



Reflections of A Pastoral Musician

The pastoral musician is one who is fortunate enough to bring music to life as his/her community worships. He/she is the one who gives expression to the content of faith statements, and enables faith to grow by this expression in music.

I am one of those fortunate persons called a pastoral musician. And the following is how I came to this ministry.

Being a Pre-Vatican II baby, I experienced the Church's beautiful chants as positively inspired from heaven. A sense of awe at those early Masses transported me right up to the heavenly home of my favorite saints and angels.

When Vatican II arrived, actually being able to understand the Mass was exciting, yet the music had lost some of its power.

High school provided many musical opportunities, and I joined any choir possible. As our glee club learned Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus," I again felt that childhood awe and transcendence, and I could help others sense the glory of God by joining my voice to that of the singing group. Pop music seemed much less satisfying. My college experiences again made me stronger and more secure in the promise of the Kingdom as we sang the great Sacred Choral Works.

I then began a career as a vocal music teacher in the Catholic schools. That inevitably led to planning school liturgies and my first taste of folk style music, songs that made you "feel good" (e.g. "Shout from the Highest Mountain"). Fortunately for all of us, Church music composers grew beyond these early stages.

For me, it was the Saint Louis Jesuits who began to touch the many depths of moods one feels when encountering God. My enthusiasm bounded from then on. And after many

workshops and courses I am still enthusiastic! There is an incredible feeling of the power of the Spirit when standing before the praying assembly united in song to the Lord.

A musician has many career options (teaching, performing, etc.). Pop music performers and writers today seem to be constantly searching for the perfect love, but only in heaven are we complete and able to love perfectly. Prayerful music fills in the gaps of our incompleteness, and momentarily we are one with God.

This is the best possible time to choose pastoral music as a ministry and as a career. First of all, women are recognized in leadership positions. Second, the musician is recognized more as a leader of prayer and less and less as one who volunteers his/her talent. Third, vernacular music is no longer a baby, but a

Deaths

M.E. Lesch

Auburn — Funeral services were celebrated at St. Mary's Church Dec. 30 for Mary E. Lesch, a parish volunteer office worker who died Dec. 25, 1980, while vacationing in New York City.

Miss Lesch, a lifelong member of the parish, was a graduate of Nazareth College and Syracuse University. She served as secretary for her brother, Dr. Gerard A. Lesch, for many years, retiring in 1979.

Msgr. H. Conner, Pastor in Texas

Auburn — Funeral rites were celebrated at St. Mary's Church Jan. 19 for Msgr. Francis Harold Conner, who died here Jan. 16, 1980. Msgr. Conner, an Auburn native, was pastor of St. Mary's Church, Hempstead, Tex. He had celebrated the Funeral Mass for his mother two days before his own death.

Msgr. Conner was ordained in 1946 by Bishop Christopher E. Byrne of

maturing form. Great music is being composed for our praying assemblies, and the variety in styles is endless.

But the best part of being a pastoral musician is serving the congregation and facilitating their prayer. This is not always an easy task! In a congregation of 200, there may be 200 different ways that God's presence is encountered. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the pastoral musician strives to find music that is intrinsically good in quality. He/she must use integrity in choosing texts that enable 20th century Christians to pray, and feel their yearning for God fulfilled. Because music expresses inexpressible truths, and reaches into those multi-layered fibers of our whole person, the pastoral musician must be a person of prayer. A person proud enough to be a musician, and humble enough to be your servant.

Why not thank your parish musician(s) this Sunday?

(Mary Fitch shares her ministry as pastoral musician as the Parish Music Coordinator at Our Lady of Mercy Church, Greece, N.Y.)

The parish noted her death with the words: "We cannot thank her for all she did for us; but we do want everyone to know how much we appreciated her work and dedication. We will miss her. She was a true Christian."

Besides Dr. Lesch, she is also survived by another brother, Father Albinus Lesch, CP, a missionary to the Philippines; six nephews; a niece; and ten grandnieces and grandnephews.

Galveston, Tex., at St. Mary's Seminary in LaPorte, Tex.

Concelebrating the Jan. 19 rites were Msgr. James D. Cuffney; Msgr. Joseph J. Sullivan; Father Dan Scheel, chancellor of the Diocese of Galveston; Father Paul J. Freemesse; Father Felix Mazur, OFM Conv.; Father James Enright; Father Foster Rogers; and Father Herbert Baloga, OFM.

State's Bishops Reiterate Death Penalty Opposition

Albany — To demonstrate its clear conviction that capital punishment should not be part of state laws, the State Catholic Conference has sent each legislator a copy of the U.S. Bishops' statement opposing the death penalty.

Citing six major difficulties that our society faces in achieving justice through law with capital punishment, the bishops' statement says that in

the long run removing capital punishment from our society will have greater benefits than its return.

The Catholic Conference has consistently opposed the reintroduction of capital punishment in New York State. J. Alan Davitt, conference executive director, in a letter accompanying the statement, told the legislators, "The question we in New

York face is whether we should, as a matter of public policy, determine that anyone who takes another person's life in an act of violence will, in turn, be killed by the state in response to his crime."

The conference urges that the justice can be achieved by changes within the correctional system and not through the imposition of capital punishment.



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