

Vocations a Duty of Whole Church

Following are excerpts from a letter by Pope John Paul II on the World Day of Prayer for vocation, May 10.

The celebration of the 18th World Day of Prayer for Vocations this year coincides with an important event, the opening of an international congress of bishops, religious superiors, directors of secular institutes and others to discuss the subject of pastoral care of vocations in local churches.



As we reflect on the theme, "Local Churches and Vocations," our thoughts and our faith encounter the mystery of Christ's holy church, which is present in every local Church, where a part of the People of God, in the pastoral care of the bishop assisted by his priests, lives and works. In each of these local churches, the Gospel is proclaimed, the Eucharist is celebrated, the sacraments are administered, the Lord is praised, loving service is given, human rights are defended, and the world is offered the witness of Christianity. As at the first Pentecost and in the first community of believers, the Holy Spirit is poured out within each local church, unites it in fellowship to make it "of one heart and soul," guides it in truth, enriches it with different

ministries and gifts, continually renews it, and leads it to ever more perfect union with Christ the Lord.

Even the liturgical season between Easter and Pentecost that we are now living with renewed fervor invites us and assists us to gaze with faith upon this great mystery of the Church, one in her universality, and yet fully present in each of the many local churches established among every people "to the end of the earth."

This gaze of faith gives rise spontaneously to various reflections and exhortations that I wish to address with cordial affection and esteem to every local church and to every community within it.

- Every local church must become ever more clearly aware of what it is, in the light of the mystery of the universal Church. For it is in this light of faith that the local Church finds the strength to live, strive and grow. Some believers may need to increase their knowledge in this regard. There must be clear understanding of the nature of the vocation and mission of the People of God, as it travels through the world towards its eternal homeland. There must be equally clear understanding of the identity of the bishop, the priest and the deacon; of the nature of their precise and irreplaceable mission at the service of the People of God; and of what distinguishes these persons, who have been consecrated through Holy Orders, from the other members of the People of God. There must be un-

derstanding, with no less clarity, of the identity and activity of the other men and women who are also consecrated, not through Holy Orders, but through religious vows or other forms of religious commitment, to the service of the People of God. This clearer understanding, in the light of faith, will impel us to thank and praise the Lord for the abundance of ministries and gifts with which he has enriched his Church. And it will also be very useful in helping each member of the Church to reflect on his or her personal responsibilities, to discover his or her own personal vocation, and to be ready to serve the ecclesial community generously with the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

- Each local Church, full of faith and conscious of its mission, should offer Christ the Lord all the collaboration of which it is capable, in order to live, grow and constantly renew its apostolic strength. The Second Vatican Council rightly emphasized that the duty of promoting vocations belongs to the whole Christian community. If the Lord has seen fit to give us such great responsibility for the life and future of the Church, can we reject the honor that he bestows on us and the confidence that he places in us?

Here there arises a problem of conscience. No one, before God, can say: Let others see to it! Of course, those who have received more must give more: priests and other consecrated persons are in the front line. They have special responsibilities for vocations, responsibilities which they cannot ignore or neglect or delegate. They must therefore, through their lives, their example, their words, and the joy and the quality of their apostolic work, teach others, especially the young, to acquire a taste for serving the Church. For a minister of God, for a person living a consecrated life, all of this is a question of honor, an act of fidelity to his or her own vocation and a proof of the "authenticity" of his or her own life. But the families and other teachers too have their own gifts of grace, and the responsibilities that flow from them. They too must therefore learn to create an atmosphere of faith, communicate a taste for helping others and serving the Church, and foster readiness to accept and follow the will of the Lord. In this way young people will find less difficulty in seeking and finding the way they are to follow.

- May each local Church hear in these words of mine a fresh invitation from Christ to pray the Lord of the harvest "to send out laborers into his harvest." And so, dear Brothers and sons and daughters, let us join in a prayer as wide as the world, as strong as our faith, as persevering as the love that the Holy Spirit has poured out into our hearts; through this prayer:

Let us praise the Lord,

Who has enriched his Church with the gift of Priesthood, with the many different forms of consecrated life and with numberless other graces, for the building up of his people and for the service of humanity.

Let us give thanks to the Lord,

Who continues to send out his call, to which many young people and others, in these years and in various parts of the world, are responding with growing generosity

Let us ask pardon of the Lord

For our weakness and infidelities which perhaps discourage others from responding to his call.

Let us fervently ask the Lord

To grant to pastors, to religious, to missionaries and other consecrated persons the gifts of wisdom, counsel and prudence in calling others to the total service of God and the Church; may he also grant to ever more numerous young people and others not so young the generosity and courage to respond and to persevere.

Let us all offer this humble and trusting prayer, entrusting it to the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, Queen of the Clergy, the shining model for every person consecrated to the service of the People of God.

At Your Parish . . .

Sacred Heart Cathedral

Parishioners at Sacred Heart Cathedral will honor Father Robert Miller, rector, on his 25th anniversary as a priest with a dinner dance beginning at 6:30 p.m., Friday, May 22 at the Mapledale Party House.

Those interested in attending the celebration should make reservations by Friday, May 8. Tickets are \$10 per person. To make reservations, send a check and your choice of a roast sirloin or chicken cordon bleu dinner to Mr. and Mrs. Gary Yantz, 111 Knickerbocker Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14615.

Also at the Cathedral, the Rosary Guild will sponsor its 29th annual Banquet of the Sacred Heart starting at 6 p.m., Monday, May 11 at Barry's Restaurant on Dewey Ave., Greece. Four menus are available and ticket deadline is May 4.

For reservations or further information those interested in attending may call Anne Budney, 254-9064; Betty Clarke, 458-3012; or Thelma Stahlecker, 254-4495.

Holy Family

The Installation Dinner for the Rosary Society at Holy Family parish will begin at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 12 at Little Anthony's Restaurant, 2389 Lyell Ave (formerly Ackerman's).

The new officers are Mary Ann Walter, president, and Mrs. Donald Mayeu, vice president. Retiring officers are Mrs. Anthony Mastrella and Ann Piano. For reservations those interested may call Mrs. Mastrella, 235-2761, or Mrs. Robert Spahn, 235-3136. Reservation deadline is Tuesday, May 5.

St. Cecilia

The Ladies Guild at St. Cecilia's will "pay tribute to the charter members of the Legion of Mary and crown a May queen," at 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 5 at the Church. All are invited.



Rosary Seminar

Representatives of more than 20 diocesan parishes attended the third annual Rosary Society Seminar at Guardian Angels Church recently. On the agenda for the event were discussions of both Our Lady of Fatima and Our Lady of Guadalupe. An observer said, "The seminar was a great success. This learning and sharing workshop gave each organization new hope and ideas for planning its future programs."

St. Jerome, E. Rochester

Melita House, a facility which provides housing, meals, health care and counseling for unwed pregnant women, got a helping hand recently from St. Jerome's parishioners. The Human Development Committee for the parish has organized a food collection

program for Melita House.

Parishioners donate canned goods, paper products and other material which the committee delivers to the facility. Melita House is operated by Sisters Susan Altpeter and Kate Vaeth, RSM, and Mr. Victor Wilkins.

Immaculate Conception

The 60th reunion for graduates of Immaculate Conception School is now being planned for this June. All class members are asked

by the reunion committee to contact Ruth Provost Hemmerich, 392-8263, for further information.

St. Francis of Assisi

St. Francis of Assisi will hold its annual parish card party at 7:30 p.m., Friday, May 8 in the parish hall. The annual fund raising event is open to all. There is a \$2.50

donation. For reservations or further information call the rectory, 436-6693, or Angie Madalena, 227-1539. Refreshments will be served.

St. Jude, Gates

A seminar for Parents of Teens will be presented at St. Jude's parish, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on May 16-17. The weekend workshop is designed to provide an "opportunity to improve relationships and communications with your

teens and pre-teens," according to a release. It is open to all parents. To register for the seminar those interested should contact the parish by May 4. St. Jude's is located at 4100 Lyell Road; the phone number is 247-5275.

St. Thomas More

Parishioners at St. Thomas More will present a "delightful English farce" titled "Relatively Speaking" at 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 5 at the Rochester Community Playhouse, on the corner of Meigs Street and Clinton Avenue. Tickets are \$6 per person. Monies raised will be used by the parish refugee program. For reservations or further information those interested may call Susan Kennedy, 381-1144; or Mary Jo Barone, 586-3009.

St. Charles Borromeo

Registrations for Summer School at St. Charles Borromeo School will be accepted between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., weekdays during May. The Summer School program will include classes in reading and math for grades 1-3; reading, math and English for grades 4-6; and math and English for grades 7-8.

The Summer session will begin June 29 and end July 24.

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