

The Thoughts of God

Following is the text of an Angelus address given recently by Pope John Paul II.

After the generous but somewhat short-sighted reaction of Peter, who wanted to prevent Jesus's supreme sacrifice in Jerusalem, the Lord rebukes the Apostle, telling him that "you are not judging by God's standards, but by man's."



Beloved, behind these words there is a pressing invitation, made also to us, that we try always to attune our thoughts to God's. In fact, the greatest risk is that of planning our life and giving it meaning independently of the plans and the will of God. But "the Lord knows the thoughts of man" and the prophet Isaiah already proclaimed: "Let the wicked man abandon his thoughts; let

him return to the Lord who has mercy on him... because my thoughts are not your thoughts." Therefore the thoughts of God are on the one hand those of pardon, and on the other, of salvation achieved through the gift of himself, as we see in Jesus.

If indeed men were to adopt this Gospel "consistency" there would already begin the peace, the joy, the prosperity that we know are reserved for the last days. Unfortunately, oftentimes "the nations do not know the thoughts of the Lord." We pray to God, then, who is "great in his thoughts and powerful in his works" that he effectively illumine each one of us and all the peoples with their leaders.

And let us recommend one another to the intercession of Our Lady, whom we invoke by recalling the great mystery of the incarnation of the Word in her immaculate womb.

Synod to Study Sacrament of Reconciliation

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope John Paul II has chosen the sacrament of reconciliation as the theme of the 1983 Synod of Bishops meeting.

The announcement here by Bishop Joseph Tomko, secretary of the biennial synod, that the focus would be on penance and reconciliation cheered those in the Church who are concerned at the way Catholics have stopped going to confession in the past 15 years.

Before Vatican Council II, monthly and even weekly confession was standard practice for most devout Catholics. Generations of nuns taught their pupils that going to confession and Communion once a year was the test of a true Catholic — as important as going to Mass on Sunday.

Today, even Catholics who regularly receive Communion rarely receive the sacrament of Penance, or they go to confession less often than they used to. And many young Catholics haven't gone to confession since their first Communion.

The change is generally ascribed to a lessened emphasis on sin, death and judgment that marks the Church's teaching at the parish level and a general easing up of the Church's strict rules since Vatican II.

Another reason frequently cited is growing use of general confession, permitted in the past only when it was physically or morally impossible for people to confess individually and receive absolution.

Some local bishops in recent years have used general confession as a means of allowing persons estranged from the Church to be reconciled and then make an individual confession later when they feel more at home with their religion.

In L'Osservatore Romano, Bishop Tomko explained that the decline of the sacrament was also due to the world's "galloping tendency to secularize and desecralize everything beginning with God."

He observed that the 1979 conference of Latin American bishops at Puebla, Mexico, showed that practical materialism, a movement widespread throughout the world, is tending "to create new golden calves, new idols of possession, power and pleasure.

"The loss of the sense of God has been noted in many places. Even inside the Church, a loss of the sense of sin is reflected in the decline in sacramental confession.

"Penance as a Christian lifestyle and as a road to sacramental purification truly requires austerity, sobriety, simplicity and self-control."

I am happy to greet all the English-speaking visitors and pilgrims who are present here today. To you and to your families at home I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

My special welcome goes to the Daughters of St. Paul from Boston. May God sustain you in your generous service of the Gospel, in the great task of helping to spread Christian doctrine. I am very grateful to you for your devoted collaboration in publishing and diffusing papal teaching. I pray that through your apostolate "the word of the Lord may speed and triumph." Praised be Jesus Christ!

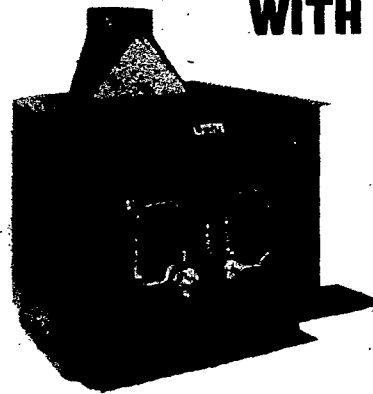
I extend a warm greeting also to the Irish National White Plane Pilgrimage to Rome and Loreto. It is my hope that your visit will be the occasion for you to renew your dedication to Christ and his Church. May Mary, the Mother of Jesus, be with you on your journey.



Enters Novitiate

Karen Ann Yastremski, a nurse at the Rochester Friendly Home infirmary for the past year, will be received into the novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy during a prayer service at 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 18, at the Motherhouse chapel. One of 9 children, Ms. Yastremski is the daughter of Peter Yastremski and the late Mrs. Yastremski, parishioners at St. Gabriel's in Hammondspoint

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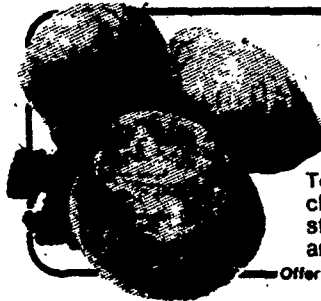
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