

THE POPE

Suffering Is a Reality with 1000 Faces

Lourdes, France (NC) — Following is excerpted from an NC News translation of the Vatican text of Pope John Paul II's talk in French to the sick at the grotto of Lourdes on Aug. 15.

Very dear sick people, suffering members of the Lord Jesus:



Is there need to remind you that Jesus of Nazareth accorded priority to persons afflicted by suffering, both physical and moral? He did so during the years of his itinerant preaching, before going up to Jerusalem to consummate his mysterious sacrifice of universal redemption, in almost complete abandonment by his own.

The history of Christianity has, often in striking manner, illustrated such service to the sick and the poorest inaugurated by its divine founder. For its part, your land of France has seen the rise of many hospital congregations. How not mention the Daughters of Charity instituted by Vincent de Paul, a native of the Landes, quite near here? How could we forget that Bernadette Soubirous entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity and Christian Instruction of Nevers, founded in the 17th century to run little schools, visit the poor and sick and serve in hospitals? And is not the city of Lourdes the place par excellence where the sick are really at home, on the same level as the healthy, with services and organisms fully adapted to them?

Suffering is always a reality, a reality of a thousand faces. I am thinking of the miseries caused by certain quite

unforeseeable geological phenomena, the moral distresses multiplying in a society which thought that it had come to the end of them. I am thinking of all the infirmities and maladies: some curable after a time, others, alas, still incurable. Suffering is objective, but it is even more subjective. It is unique, in the sense that each person reacts in a different way to the same suffering, sometimes in a very different manner. There is the mystery of the imponderable sensibility of each one. It can even happen — in this secret domain of consciences — that persons suffer disquiet or remorse without real grounds.

The healthy have a prime duty in the face of all suffering: that of respect, sometimes even of silence. Was it not Cardinal Pierre Veillot, archbishop of Paris, so rapidly borne off by an implacable malady 15 years ago, who asked some priests who visited him to speak of sufferings with much more circumspection? Neither just nor unjust, suffering remains, despite partial explanations, difficult to understand and difficult to accept even for those who have faith. Faith does not remove the pain. It links it invisibly to that of Christ the redeemer, the lamb without stain, who as it were immersed himself in the sin and misery of the world to be fully in solidarity with it, to give it another significance, to sanctify in advance all trials and death itself, which was gripping the flesh and the heart of his human brethren. "It is through Christ and in Christ that light is thrown on the riddle of suffering and death which, apart from his Gospel, overwhelms us." This statement comes from the admirable "Constitution on the Church in the Modern World."

The prophet Isaiah, who was read just now, had every reason to say to the people of his time: "Be strong, fear not. Here is your God. He comes himself, and is going to save you," and Jesus could say in truth: "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you."

Dear sick people, I would leave three little lights in your memories and in your hearts. They seem precious to me.

First of all, whatever your suffering may be, physical or moral, personal or family, apostolic, that is, ecclesial, it is important for you to become conscious of it lucidly, without minimizing it and without inflating it, no matter what disturbances it arouses in your human sensibility: failure, the uselessness of your life, and so on.

Then, it is indispensable to advance along the way of acceptance. Yes, accept that it be so, not through more or less blind resignation, but because faith assures us that the Lord can and will bring good out of evil. How many here present could testify that trial accepted in faith has caused serenity to be reborn in them, and hope? If the Lord wills to draw good out of evil, it means that he calls upon you

yourself to be as active as you can, in spite of the malady. And if you are handicapped, take charge of yourselves with the powers and talents which you have, in spite of the infirmity. Those who surround you with their affection and their aid and the associations to which you belong, such as the fraternities of the sick, rightly seek to get you to love life and to develop it more in you, so much as possible, as a gift of God.

Finally, the best thing of all remains to be done: oblation. The offering up brought about through love for the Lord and our brothers permits attainment of a sometimes very lofty degree of theological charity, that is to say, of losing oneself in the love of Christ and the most holy Trinity for humanity. These three stages, lived by each sufferer according to his rhythm and grace, bring him or her astonishing interior liberation. Is this not the paradoxical teaching reported by the evangelists: "He who loses his life for my sake shall find it?" Is this not the evangelical movement of abandonment, so profoundly experienced by Bernadette of Lourdes and Therese of Lisieux, who were sick for almost the whole of their lives? Dear suffering brothers and sisters, set off again fortified and renewed by your "special mission." You are Christ's precious collaborators in applying the redemption through time and space, the redemption which he gained through the historic mysteries of his incarnation, passion and resurrection. And Mary, his mother and your mother, shall ever be near you.

Permit me, finally, in your name and in the name of the Church, to thank and encourage the "hospitalite" of Lourdes, as well as the diocesan "hospitalites" of France and other nations here represented. I prize the evangelical labor and the merits of laymen and priests engaged in service to suffering pilgrims. I know that some of them sacrifice part or even the whole of their annual vacations to be at your disposal with all their hearts. Dear chaplains, men and women Religious, medics and nurses, stretcher bearers and other auxiliaries, give thanks for the call you heard one day to give your lives to those who suffer. Ceaselessly deepen the spirituality and practice of your Church mission at your diocesan or religious retreat days. Invite many young people to join you. Remain closely united with one another, with the Catholic fraternities of the sick existing in most dioceses, and, needless to say, with your bishops.

I assure you of my particular esteem and I call down the abundant graces of your state on all members of the "hospitalites" of Lourdes, of France and of the world.

In a few moments the Lord himself will come to bless the sick in the holy sacrament which makes his sacrifice present, the gift of his life and of all his love.

Bishops Publish New Rules for Vocation Offices

Washington (NC) — The National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Vocations has released a revised edition of the "Guidelines for Diocesan Vocation Offices."

The guidelines, first released in 1976, offer aids to bishops and vocation personnel in developing and evaluating diocesan vocation

offices. Auxiliary Bishop Anthony F. Mestice of New York heads the committee.

The general meeting of the bishops in November 1978 authorized the committee to revise the guidelines to reflect the "growth and evolution in the practice of the pastoral care vocations," Bishop Mestice said.

The revision attempts to

give "practical concepts and methods which have been tested in many dioceses," the introduction states.

"The guidelines are not to be interpreted, nor have they been designed to be a response to the vocation crisis," the bishop added.

A number of organizations, including the NCCB Committee on Priestly

Formation, the Formation Committee of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the National Sisters Vocation Council and Serra International, were involved in the revision.

The vocation committee was also in consultation with the Seminary Department of the National Catholic Educational Association and the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors.

Bishop Mestice said that in an informal survey last year the U.S. bishops ranked vocations to the priesthood and religious life highest on a list of issues they would like to see the bishops' conference address.

"It is our hope that these guidelines may not only be helpful to bishops in their responsibility to the vocation personnel of their own dioceses, but also in the continuing dialogue regarding vocations to the priesthood and religious life," the bishop said.

Gabrielli Heads Red Mass

Judge Domenick Gabrielli, retired judge of the New York Court of Appeals, has been named honorary chairman of the 38th annual Red Mass celebration, slated 12:15 p.m., Friday, Sept. 9, at Old St. Mary's Church. The Mass is sponsored by the St. Thomas More Lawyer's Guild.

Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey will celebrate the Mass. Father William J. O'Malley, SJ, teacher, author, theologian and film actor, will be the homilist. Also participating in the rites will be retired judges Harry D. Goldman and Lyman H. Smith.

William P. Polito, guild

president, said Judge Gabrielli's selection was particularly appropriate since the theme of the Mass will focus on the ideals of the judiciary, and, in his quarter century on the bench, "No one is more respected than Judge Gabrielli or more deserving of the honor."

The Red Mass started in the fourth century as an invocation for spiritual guidance and blessing for the legal profession, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary.

The Mass was introduced in the diocese in 1945 by Bishop James E. Kearney and has since annually marked the opening of the courts in the Fall.

The public is invited to the rites.

Alumnae Prexy

Telana Stokes, senior marketing representative for Xerox Corp., has been named president of St. Mary's College Rochester Alumnae Club. Ms. Stokes graduated from the institution in 1979, earning a BA in business administration.



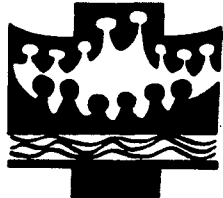
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Insights In Liturgy



By John M. Kubiniec

Instrumentalists: Tune Up!

As the days of summer draw to a close, it is again time to begin to reorganize our music programs. It should also be a time when instrumentalists step back and discern ways that they could improve their musical and liturgical skills so that they might be more effective leaders of prayer. Here are some thoughts to ponder:

• Directors of singing groups: Have you thought out those "closet" instrumentalists who are sitting in your pews? These could include high school music students as well as adults. In many cases they need only to be asked and given a little encouragement before they will be willing to play. Once you have them, use them — frequently! Do not hold them in reserve only for celebrations at Christmas and Easter.

• Organists: How are your service playing techniques? Are your introductions clear and precise? Is the assembly able to follow your playing? It might be beneficial if you had someone tape a liturgy at which you play. Listen to see if you are consistent and keep a steady tempo. You might consider taking some organ lessons with a qualified teacher and work on your service playing technique. Also consider possibilities of how you might enliven an old familiar hymn with a different accompaniment or with another instrument.

• Guitarists: Are you in a slump of using the same strums and picking patterns? Are you puzzled in trying to figure out how to play certain chords

which are appearing in much of the new music? It would be beneficial if you resolved to learn some of the newer chords instead of glossing over them. Possibly consider taking some lessons and learn some new strumming and picking patterns. In doing this you might find ways to bring new life to some of the pieces you have been playing and would have the ability to tackle some new and more challenging pieces.

• Accompanists (guitarists and organists): Do you know the music before you go into a rehearsal, or are you learning it along with the singers? Take time and learn the piece of music before the rehearsal. This will save time, reduce the frustration level and make for a more effective rehearsal.

All musicians should consider doing some reading and study in the area of liturgy. If you would like some assistance in finding some helpful materials feel free to contact the Office of Liturgy. Organists and guitarists in the Rochester area might consider reserving Tuesday evenings in November when the Liturgy Office will be offering a series of workshops to aid in the development of playing techniques.

Finally, if there are a number of music groups in a parish please take time to talk to one another and find times to pray with one another. Through this exchange you might find ways in which you could pool your musical resources and share ideas with as to how the entire parish music program could grow and develop.

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