

**Bishop Hogan's Address:**

**True Marian Devotion Seeks the Real Mary**



(Following is the text of Bishop Joseph L. Hogan's address at the diocesan Holy Year Celebration for the Yates-Ontario-Wayne Region, celebrated on the feast of our Lady of the Rosary, Oct. 7, as published in "The Voice" of St. Patrick's Church in Victor, and emended by him Oct. 20.)



I dedicate my words this evening to our Blessed Mother in personal gratitude for her motherly care for me. This month is especially dedicated to her as we celebrate the feast of the Most Holy Rosary, Oct. 7.

In March of 1974, Pope Paul VI expressed concern about the health of Marian devotion in a letter addressed to all the Catholic bishops of the world. In it he showed a deep pastoral care about preserving **balanced devotion** to the Mother of God. Among the extremes, he cited those who scorn all devotion of piety and never do anything to replace them (I think especially of some adolescent clergymen who, in an effort to be dramatic, tore apart rosaries in the presence of their congregations. I've often wondered what religious practices they recommended in its place); and at the opposite extremity those whose devotion is filled with sentimentality, vain credulity and superstition. Devotion to Mary, he warned, has to be in the spirit of the Gospel which is personally demanding and calls us to perseverance and practical action.

In 1970, Father Eamon Carroll, a faculty member of Catholic University and a prominent Marian scholar, was asked to comment on the quality of our American devotion to Mary. After a six-month tour around the country and 160 lectures on Marian devotion, he expressed the same pastoral concern that Pope Paul voiced:

"I would regard the chief drawback of the American attitude toward our Lady as an overdependence on apparitions and private revelations. This has prevented for many the growth of a deeper scriptural devotion to our Lady. People nourished on an approach to our Lady that has secret messages, hidden letters, apocalyptic threats, seem inclined to find the Biblical portrait somewhat less interesting or nourishing."

John Garvey, in his "Saints for Confused Times" (Thomas More Press — 1976), has an interesting chapter on Mary.

He contends that there has developed a great gulf between the Mary we encounter in Scripture and the one presented to us by a later tradition that made her so exalted and remote from us that it became practically hopeless to imitate her. And that's what saints are for — **our imitation**.

It is interesting to recall that while the Protestant Reformation brought an end to devotion to Mary among many Christian denominations, the original intention of its chief leaders was to purify a devotion which had become overlaid with superstition.

Martin Luther, for example, wrote: "The great things are nothing less than that she became the Mother of God, in which work so many and such great good things are bestowed on her as pass man's understanding. For on this there follows all honor, all blessedness and her unique place in the whole of mankind. It needs to be pondered in the heart what it means to be the Mother of God."

John Calvin wrote: "We truly do not want to take in the least from the honor which is due her, but nothing is withheld from her by not making her into a goddess. On the contrary, people do Mary a great disservice when they disfigure her with false praise and rob God of what belongs to Him." Again, in recommending the imitation of Mary, he wrote: "We must not just praise her in words, we must follow her example. The greatest praise we can offer is

when we recognize her as our teacher and we her pupils." How could the sects that claim these reformers as their founders eventually reject all Marian devotion? It is a complicated bit of history. Heated accusations served to promote new efforts by the reformers to strip away as many remnants from the old faith as possible, and on the Catholic side the distortions were held to more firmly than ever because of the attack.

Calmer heads prevail today and respect for one another is deepened as Christian scholars search the Scriptures together and are finding the great woman of faith presented there — a model for our imitation and a sign and hope of our salvation.

The sentimentalists in Marian devotion forget the reality of the pain of Mary's pilgrimage. She has been rightly compared to Abraham who the liturgy in the first Eucharistic prayer calls "our father in faith." Both find a God of mercy and justice who keeps faith with His promises. But the same God makes terrifying demands to those who say "thy will be done." God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Mary is asked to bear a child without a natural father. To have a child that comes from God apart from human generation had to be interpreted by her contemporaries as an absurdity. She must have endured ridicule from the so-called "respectable people" of her day.

God chose to take what the world ridicules and despises, the world of righteousness, and make it the vehicle of His son's entry into the world. This is an uncomfortable picture of Mary. We are tempted to drag her into the world we prefer — the world of respectability in which we worship a predictable God who could never make his children uncomfortable.

It was because Mary could say and mean it "be it done according to your will" that the Word became flesh in her. Despite the dread, the risk, the strangeness of God she faced directly for the first time, she was able to accept His will completely and God was free to act. Redemption needed her cooperation.

It is as a model of what faith means that Mary can matter to us now. For the Word to become flesh in each of us, we have to be prepared to meet a God as strange as the one Mary met. It is only through prayer and attentive listening that we open ourselves and become able to say wholeheartedly, "Be it done as you will."

May this woman of faith help us to say "yes" to the Lord each day as we face the inevitable pain of our human pilgrimage.

**More Opinions**

Continued from Page 29

**Help Pay For Protests**

**EDITOR:**  
Seneca County is sustaining extraordinary police expense for protection of all people due to the antinuclear protestations at the Army munitions depot at Romulus. I feel the depot is necessary for the defense of the United States and thus, additional police expenses should not be the sole burden of the people of Seneca County, but should be borne by all those who realize a militarily strong nation is necessary to maintain our freedom.

For those of you disenchanting with the widespread support and encouragement given to the protestors by certain religious of this area, you may want to make a contribution to Seneca County for above expenses in lieu of supporting the organizations these religions represent.

Please send any donations to the following address and state the monies must be used for emergency police protection due to the antinuclear protesting at Romulus: Treasurer, Seneca County, West Williams St., Waterloo, N.Y. 13165.

James Law  
32 White Birch Circle  
Rochester, N.Y. 14624

**Humanae Vitae 15 Years Later**

**EDITOR:**  
Pope Paul VI's encyclical, delivered July 25, 1968, on the feast of St. James the Apostle, promulgated in prophetic fashion the grave consequences that would flow from contraception for individuals, parents, public authorities and the effect this

practice would have on the future of mankind.

Sadly, critics, both within and outside the Church, attacked both the pope and his document. Full-page ads appeared in the New York Times blaming Paul VI for world hunger (at the same time American and European farmers received government payments not to grow crops).

Even priests would subvert the authentic teaching in the confessional with their own "infallible pronouncements" for fear that marriages would be destroyed if couples, for grave and just reasons, followed the counsel of Scripture: "For everything there is a season ... a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing" (Eccl. 3:1-5).

Pope Paul VI told us that marriage, which could only be altered by contraception, was not a product of evolution, "but the institution of the Creator to realize in making His design of love." Witness the contracepting cultures of the West with the highest divorce rates in the world. We are now told (even by some who call themselves Catholic, that homosexual liaisons may, in certain cases, be of equal dignity with marriage.

Paul VI also linked abortion to contraception and stated that abortion is "to be absolutely excluded as licit means of regulating birth."

As if to further confirm Paul VI's vision, the 1973 Supreme Court pro-abortion decisions applied the concept of "privacy" which it had earlier devised in a 1964 case which struck down a Connecticut state law which outlawed contraceptives for the married.

Pope Paul gravely warned: "Who could blame a government for applying to the solution of the problems of the community, those means

acknowledged to be best for married couples in the solution of a family problem?" The forced sterilization programs of India and the forced sterilization and abortion currently under way in China has not caused the U.S. to sever diplomatic relations with these countries because of their grotesque and massive human rights violations. Pope Paul VI was right, by tolerating both abortion and sterilization here, we did not condemn it when governments required it abroad.

The beauty of conjugal fidelity, the gift of children in marriage, and the joy and mutual enrichment of love in the family, are all portrayed with clarity and love in *Humanae Vitae*. What a contrast to the secular society which does not heed this message of hope! The results: the alarming increase in abortion, divorce, pornography, promiscuity, venereal disease, biological engineering, etc.

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**Clothes, Ideas Connected**

**EDITOR:**  
One of the things which causes me most regret in the working out of liberation theology following the "reforms" of Vatican II is the loss of my former automatic respect for religious men and women.

In order to get the facts, I subscribe to a number of conservative publications. A few weeks ago, the editor of one of them wrote that he had encountered a priest clad in a pink suede suit, or it

could have been pink velvet. The priest was being rampant and disagreeable about some current liberal/radical cause like human sexuality or nuclear freeze.

Wrote the writer: "Christian love was not apparent in his demeanor nor was the dignity that hitherto has so often distinguished the Catholic cleric even in the eyes of scoffers."

Ah, nostalgia! O tempore, o mores!

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**Bishops Ignore Death Penalty**

**EDITOR:**  
I would like to take this opportunity to voice my opinion on the most blatant disrespect for human life in existence today — capital punishment. Why the United States government allows this organized, "legal" murder to be falsely called justice, I do not understand. I am not addressing this to the U.S. government, however, I am addressing this to our bishops!

The U.S. bishops are quick to jump on the anti-nuclear bandwagon and will readily denounce abortion as murder, but what about the death penalty? When you manufacture or stockpile nuclear weapons you are threatening peace and life, you are not affecting or hurting either. I think abortion is wrong, but I can see where they may be some question as to when life legally and morally begins, conception or birth. The death penalty, on the other hand, takes a living human being, a creation of God, brutally straps him to a chair, or to a bed, or in a gas

chamber, and then, in the name of justice, kills him. This is not justice. It is revenge. It is hatred. It is murder!

So, to Bishop Clark and to all the U.S. bishops, I say the time has come for the Catholic Church to make a positive and definite stand on capital punishment. Not to merely say it is not right, but to actually work toward its end. I think our bishops should spend a little less time worrying about the abstract or potential forms of violence and injustice and focus, instead, on the sinfulness and violence of the death penalty. Our bishops owe this to themselves, to the Church, and above all, they owe it to God.

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The U.S. bishops have twice officially spoken out against the death penalty. As early as 1974, they adopted a simple statement of opposition to capital punishment — "The U.S. Catholic Conference goes on record in opposition to capital punishment." In 1980, the conference of bishops by a 145-31 vote with 41 abstentions, reiterated its position in a lengthier document. Based on the premise that "the sanctity of life must be deemed in all its stages," the

bishops strongly advocated an end to the death penalty in this country. In 1977, the State Catholic Conference announced its opposition to the death penalty, saying such opposition is "rooted in the basic Christian value of respect of human life."

**Catholic Responsibility**

**EDITOR:**  
At Fatima, our Blessed Mother gave us the formulae to save the world:

1. Rosary.
2. Scapular.
3. The five First Saturdays.

Of the many "flocks" of Christ, we are the ones that "say" the rosary. Then the awesome responsibility of saving the world rests on our shoulders and ours alone for she picked us out of all her children.

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