

Pope: Offer Suffering To Avoid Nuclear War

Vatican City (NC) -- Pope John Paul II has asked sick people to offer their sufferings to God so that the world can avoid a nuclear conflict.

"I ask you in the name of the Lord to offer to him your sufferings for peace between men, for the return to God of those who do not know him, who do not believe in him or who fight him, and so that there will be no more war on earth, above all so that the world may be spared the trial of nuclear conflict," he said Jan. 11 at his general audience in a special message to a group of sick people.

During the main audience

talk, the pope said the baptism of Christ was a symbolic act that opened the way toward reconciliation between God and man.

Speaking to several thousand people in the Pope Paul VI Auditorium, the pope said baptism thus became a visible sign of man's sharing in a "higher life."

"Christ's baptism is a symbolic gesture that signifies the commitment of sacrifice for the purification of mankind. The fact that at that moment the heavens opened tells us that the reconciliation between God and

man began to work," the pope said.

"At the Jordan River his baptism is only figurative. On the cross he was to receive the baptism that would purify the world," the pope said.

The fact that Christ was baptized even though he was without sin showed his humility, the pope said.

"Even knowing that his mission would profoundly transform the history of the world, he did not begin his ministry with a break from the past, but in the river bed of Judaic tradition," he said.

Baptism for us, the pope said, is the communication of divine life along with the freedom from the state of sin.

"Baptism, making us participants in the death and resurrection of the savior, fills us with new life," the pope said.

"Throughout the Christian existence, baptism is the source of a higher life needed by those who, as children of the father in Christ, carry with them the divine resemblance," he said.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

More Questions And Answers

Further questions from a recent day of recollection group:

If a baby is born out of wedlock, why won't a priest baptize it?

I doubt any priest would refuse baptism to a baby just because of being born out of wedlock. In fact, the baby's mother should be especially regarded for not destroying the child, considering how prevalent that hideous practice is.

It is possible a refusal might come if the mother won't practice her religion, and thus she deprives the child of example and training. We used to baptize every child that was presented for baptism. Today, many priests require a meeting with parents and godparents to explain the reasons for baptism, and the obligations that go with the sacrament.

The baptismal rite is clear. Right at the beginning the priest says to the parents: "You have the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?" The parents answer: "We do."

Then to the godparents: "Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?" They reply: "We are."

Some parents of new babies want baptism, not for the supernatural reasons (i.e. to take away original sin, to infuse God's grace, and to become a vital member of the mystical Body of Christ, the Church), but because it can be a great social affair when friends and relatives gather for a big party. Do you remember the baptismal party in the movie "The Godfather"?

Some parents are indifferent about the baptism themselves, but are pressured by concerned grandparents or other relatives. Baptism brings privileges and responsibilities. I do think some priests are too rigid

and others too lax. "In medio stat virtus" still holds.

Why do the deacons give the homily when a priest is available? No offense to the deacons. Just wondering.

Deacons are ordained. They are ordained to baptize, to perform marriages, officiate at funerals, though not celebrating Mass, to assist the priest at Mass -- and to preach.

St. Francis of Assisi would not accept ordination to the priesthood but did ask for the diaconate in order to preach, since only clerics are authorized to preach. I know one deacon in our diocese who spends 30 hours preparing his monthly sermon.

The deacons I have heard do a good job, both in substance and in delivery. And none has been long-winded. Remember, Father Andrew Costello, a missionary friend of Father Leo Dunn at Notre Dame Retreat House has a cassette on preaching which I sent to several deacons in appreciation of their work. Father Costello's first dictum to preachers is: "Keep it short."

Msr. George Cocuzzi, the godfather of the deacons-in-training, gave each a copy of "The Ten Commandments for Homilists" by McQuaid's Father O'Malley. His sixth commandment is wisely put: "Presume disinterest. Presume that they would rather feed their children to crocodiles than listen to you. That way you will spend the rest of the week finding a good hook to start the homily."

I suppose it is because I am skeptical about a congregation's attention to our homilies that in season and out of season, I urge the listening to cassette tapes by masters of spirituality and rhetoric. I know one young priest who ascribes his vocation largely to a set of Abp. Sheen tapes, which inspired him greatly.

Deacons are often more modest than priests, and modesty is an attractive virtue. If any deacon wants a cassette of Father Costello's talk, drop a note to me and I will drop a cassette to him.

'Focus' Unit Issues Call For Feb. 2 Celebration

The local organizers of "Focus on the Eucharist," will make a special observance of the Feb. 2 Holy Year day of renewal for religious, called by Pope John Paul II in Rome.

Focus on the Eucharist spokesperson Judith Echanitz said the group, "invites all interested religious, third order members, affiliates, members of secular institutes and lay persons to its monthly Mass and vigil."

The rites will be held 7:30 p.m., Feb. 2 in St. Salome's Church.

Franciscan Father Charles Adams will offer Mass at 8 p.m. for the Holy Father's intentions for the jubilee.

Following the Mass will be a silent renewal of religious vows or promises in the presence of the Eucharist.

The evening will conclude with Benediction.

In addition, Mrs. Echanitz said, "A letter of unity and support will be presented that everyone present may read and sign as he or she chooses. The letter will be sent to the Holy Father."

'Runaway' Retreat

A weekend "runaway" retreat has been slated at the Cenacle March 2-4. Designed for "busy, involved women, married or single, who are juggling several responsibilities," the program will allow time for prayer, reflection, listening, sharing and resting. Miss Ruth Page and the Religious of the Cenacle will lead the retreat. The cost is \$50 and reservations and further information is available from the Cenacle Ministry Office, 693 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14607; (716) 271-8755.

Deadline

Deadline for news in the Courier-Journal is noon on Thursday, preceding Wednesday publication. The Courier-Journal address is 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

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