

THE POPE

The Dignity of Christians is Rooted in Baptism

Toronto (NC) — Here is the text of Pope John Paul II's talk during a meeting with the laity in Toronto Sept. 15.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is a joy to meet with such a large and enthusiastic gathering of the laity of the church. As we assemble this evening in Toronto, we know that Jesus Christ is present in our midst, for he said to his disciples: "Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them" (Mt. 18:20). I embrace you all in the charity of Christ, and I wish through you to extend my prayerful greetings once again to all the laity in Canada, to the young and the old, the sick and the healthy, the handicapped, the poor and those not so poor, to all who by reason of baptism are my brothers and sisters in Christ.



I want to speak with you this evening about the dignity of the laity. In this way, I wish to remind you of how important you are in the life and mission of the church. You contribute to both the holiness of the church and her mission of salvation in the world.

Your dignity — and the dignity of all the faithful — is rooted in the sacrament of baptism. By baptism you are incorporated into Jesus Christ, and into his body, which is the church. By this great sacrament in which original sin is taken away, you have been adopted as sons and daughters of our father in heaven, and the spirit of truth and love abides in your hearts. Through an act of God's love you have become brothers and sisters of Christ, sharers in his priestly, prophetic and kingly role. And this same sacrament which has accomplished all of this in you has thus made you sharers in the redemption, sharers in the paschal mystery of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With penetrating insight, St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, explains this aspect of baptism: "When we were baptized in Christ Jesus," he says, "we were baptized in his death." In other words, when we were baptized we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life" (Rom. 6:3-4). Baptism brings us into contact with the death and resurrection of Christ. It opens up to us the life that Christ won for us by his paschal mystery.

Through baptism we begin to live in Christ, and he lives in us. And in order to explain this union, which is so deep and strong and vital, St. Paul states simply: "Life to me, of course, is Christ" (Phil. 1:20). This is the meaning and reality of our baptism: life in Christ — a life that comes to us because Christ died and rose again, and because we have been able to enter into contact with this death and resurrection of the Lord. But because Christ died, because this was the way he entered into his life of glory, we too

must share in his death, in order to live the fullness of his life.

Dear brothers and sisters: This life of ours in Christ takes us along the way of the cross — through trials and suffering — to the glory of the resurrection and eternal life. It is our baptism that introduces us to the cross and to the fullness of life in Christ. And it is Christ himself who says to us: "Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me" (Mt. 10:38). This too is part of baptism: to be given a share in the dying and rising of Christ.

The work that the Holy Spirit begins in you in baptism he perfects through confirmation, calling you to share ever more in the holiness of God. As St. Paul writes: "Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God" (1 Cor. 6:19). As God's temple, you enjoy the Holy Spirit's special gifts: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22). You must no longer be slaves to earthly passions. Selfishness and sin must not rule your lives. For the victory which Christ won over sin and death is now extended to you. You enjoy the freedom of being children of God, led by the Holy Spirit dwelling in you.

The struggle with evil is not removed from your life, but you have received the pledge of God's grace to conquer temptation and sin. And you find special strength for this struggle through the sacrament of penance. It is through this sacrament that your hearts are purified by personal contact with the God of holiness. It is through the power of this sacrament that holiness spreads throughout the entire body of the church.

A temple is a place where God's name is praised. As temples of the Holy Spirit, you, the laity in the church, are called to worship God. You are consecrated for the purpose of giving glory and praise to God. And you fulfill this responsibility above all when you actively take part in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Second Vatican Council tells us: "The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed. At the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic works is that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper" (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 10).

It is important to remember that the liturgical life of the church belongs to all the faithful. And you, the laity, make up the vast portion of God's people. There are, of course, different roles, different ministries, but everyone is called to active participation in the public worship of God's great majesty. One of the special blessings of the council — brought about by the call to liturgical renewal — was not only the encouragement for greater involvement by the laity in special liturgical roles, but also the encouragement of active participation by all. The church rejoices in this

development which has enriched her life and made the laity more aware of their Christian dignity and of their vocation to worship God, in union with Christ, in holiness of life.

In the context of the sacred liturgy, I wish to say a word about the unique place that Sunday occupies in the weekly rhythm of life. In a very real sense, this is the Lord's day, the day when the church throughout the world commemorates the death and resurrection of Christ. From the beginning, the church has sought to keep the Lord's day holy by calling all the faithful together in order to celebrate the Eucharist.

All of us need to listen regularly to God's word and be instructed in the teaching of the church, to give glory and thanks to God, and be nourished with the bread of life. And in order that we may enter more easily and fully into the festive nature of the Lord's day, we need to observe it, as best we can, as a special day of rest.

It is important for society as whole to recover a renewed sense of the sacredness of Sunday. Even more in the hectic pace of modern life, we need a day set apart, a day to rejoice in God's goodness, a day to worship the Lord together. This worship is an obligation for God's people, yes. But, above all, this worship is an immense privilege: to be able to offer praise and thanksgiving to God, in union with Jesus Christ his son our Lord.

(This portion of the pontiff's address was delivered in French) There are many things that you are called to do as Christians. In Halifax I spoke at some length about the various ways in which you, the laity, are meant to collaborate in the mission of the church, about your contribution to building up in justice and holiness of life the body of Christ. Here this evening I would also offer those observations to your prayerful reflection. But, above all, I wish to call your attention to the great truth that everything you do has meaning because of who you are. And that is why I wish to proclaim to you the dignity that is yours through baptism and confirmation, the dignity that is yours as children of God, as brothers and sisters of Christ who live through the power of his death and resurrection. The Lord Jesus lives in you, the Catholic laity. He prays in you, acts through you, and communicates to you a share in the holiness of God. This is what my predecessor Leo the Great meant 1,500 years ago when he exclaimed: "Recognize. O Christian, your dignity!" (This concludes the portion delivered in French.)

And this gift you must protect and safeguard in yourselves, and honor in others. This understanding of your Christian identity — and therefore of your Christian mission — you must pass on with pride to your children. Your Christian dignity must be told and retold through catechesis, because it is the story of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ and kept alive in his church — kept alive in you, who are called to be God's holy people.

Dear brothers and sisters: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love is with you all in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:23-24).

AT YOUR PARISH

Immaculate Heart

Painted Post — Showing a video film, "What You Are Is Where You Were When," is a project of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish adult education committee. The highly acclaimed film is divided in two parts. The first part will be shown 4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 4. A buffet supper will be served at 5:30 p.m.; and the second half of the film will be shown 6:30 p.m. in the parish hall on High Street. The program demonstrates how people develop different values, attitudes and world views and strives to present an insight into business, social and personal relationships. Persons wishing to attend are asked to call Muriel Seargent, 962-1867, or Joe Kane, 962-1382, by Oct. 31. A \$2 donation will be asked to cover the cost of the buffet.

Immaculate

Ithaca — Parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church were advised last week that more altar servers are needed to enhance the liturgical celebrations at the church. Young parishioners in grade four and older, are asked to call Father Robert Bourcy, 273-6121, if they are interested.

St. Ambrose

St. Ambrose Parish will conduct a lector training session, 9 a.m.-noon, Saturday, Nov. 10 in the rectory



St. Jerome

The children of Peggy Stephany play with a homemade learning game. Mrs. Stephany will give a talk, sponsored by the Home-School Association of St. Jerome's Church, on practical and enjoyable methods for parents to help children in practice of basic school skills, 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 24 at the school, 501 S. Garfield St., East Rochester.

conference room. Further information is available by calling Nancy Giordano, 288-1665.

St. Philip Neri

St. Philip Neri Parish will hold its annual spaghetti dinner, 1-5 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 4 in the school hall, 1772 Clifford Ave. Tickets at \$4.25 for adults and \$1.50 for children under twelve, are obtained by calling the rectory, 482-2400; Dorothy Marmo, ticket chairperson, 338-7708. Chef for the event will be Tony Mark. Chairpersons are Sam Pecorella and Charles Wilmer, according to Emily Petronio, publicity chairman.

St. Patrick

Corning — Parishioners of St. Patrick's Church here were advised last week that a volunteer is needed to staff the Community Pantry, 9 a.m.-noon on Mondays, and, in November, 9 a.m.-noon on Wednesdays.

St. Thomas More

St. Thomas More Parish will hold its annual fall dance, 9 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 27 in the school hall. The event is sponsored by the Margaret Roper Guild.

Holy Spirit

Penfield — The Notre Dame Chorale, the 42-voice group now on its annual fall

tour, will perform in concert, 7:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 26 at the Church of the Holy Spirit on the corner of Hatch and Plank roads. A reception will follow the performance. Tickets to the concert will be available at the door or may be reserved by calling Vincent Parks III, 671-5680.

St. Anne

Palmyra — A Mass will be celebrated for the charismatic prayer groups of Yates, Ontario and Wayne counties, 7:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 26 at St. Anne's Church. Father James Connolly S.J. will preside.

Old St. Mary

"Saints and Sinners will be the theme of a special sesquicentennial Halloween party, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 27 in the lower church of St. Mary's Church downtown. Participants are asked to dress either as a saint or a sinner. The public is invited to the party, and participants are urged to bring a snack to share. Live music will be provided. No admission will be charged. Further information is available by calling the rectory, 232-7140.

St. Mary Magdalen

Wolcott — St. Mary Magdalen's Parish will hold its annual spaghetti supper, starting at 4 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 4 in the church hall.

Take-outs will be available for those who bring their own containers. Prices are \$3.75 for adults, and \$2.75 for children under 12.

St. Bernard/
St. Isaac Jogues

Fleming — The Rosary Society of St. Bernard's Church in Scipio Center will hold a dish-to-pass buffet brunch noon, Sunday, Oct. 28 at St. Isaac Jogues Church hall. The event will promote the religious education program underway in the area. Guests will include Father William Spilly, Father Paul Cloonan, Sister Brigit Quinn and Deacon and Mrs. John Prave of the new cluster of parishes including St. Patrick in Aurora, St. Michael in Union Springs, St. Joseph in Cayuga and Our Lady of the Lake in King Ferry.

Assumption

Fairport — St. Mary's Guild of the Church of the Assumption of Our Lady is seeking candidates for its annual "Woman of the Year" presentation. Persons wishing to suggest names are asked to contact Theresa Lawson, 223-6899.

Holy Name of Jesus

Our Lady's Guild of Holy Name of Jesus Church is sponsoring a craft sale, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 3 at the parish recreation hall on Bonesteel Street. Christmas items will be available.

St. Bridget/
St. Joseph

East Bloomfield — The annual chicken, biscuit and gravy dinner of St. Bridget's and St. Joseph's churches will be served 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., and 5 p.m.-7:30 p.m., Election Day, Nov. 6 at St. Bridget's Church hall here. Tickets are \$3.50 for adults; \$1.50 for children under 12; and children under five served free. Also on sale will be an assortment of baked goods. Principals of the event are Mrs. Robert Sengillo and Mrs. Patrick Murphy, kitchen; Mrs. William Morsheimer, dining room; William Morsheimer, tickets; Mary K. Murphy, publicity.

St. Mark

The Rosary Society of St. Mark's Church met Oct. 16. Lorraine Rogers presented a fashion show of Queen's Way merchandise. The next meeting will be held 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 20. At that time members will make wreaths to be given to persons in an area nursing home for Christmas.

Advisory

Parish correspondents are advised that the deadline for items to appear in At Your Parish is noon on Thursday, preceding Wednesday publication. Items must be written. The Courier-Journal address is 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.