

COLUMNISTS

Popes have mixed records in treating Jews

One of Pope John Paul II's most dramatic gestures was his visit on April 13, 1986, to Rome's chief synagogue where he expressed "abhorrence for the genocide decreed against the Jewish people during the last war" and reiterated the Second Vatican Council's condemnation of all discriminatory measures against Jews.

What the pope was also reported to have said on this occasion, but which does not appear in the Vatican's official translation of his remarks, was that some of his predecessors in the papacy were guilty of sins against the Jews. And indeed they were.

Leo VII (936-39) encouraged the newly elected archbishop of Mainz (Germany) to expel Jews who refused to be baptized.

Innocent III (1198-1216) mandated at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) that Jews should wear distinctive garb, a forerunner of the ugly developments of the 20th century when Jews were compelled to wear the Star of David so that they could easily be identified, harassed and persecuted.

Callistus III (1455-58) revived the harsh anti-Jewish legislation left moribund by his predecessors, banning all social communication between Christians and Jews.

Paul II (1464-71) forced Jews to contribute to Roman carnivals.

Paul III (1534-49) confined Jews to a special quarter, or ghetto, in Rome and required them to wear a distinctive headgear.



essays in theology

By FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

Paul IV (1555-59), who suspected Jews of aiding Protestants, restricted them to ghettos in Rome and in the Papal States, and also compelled them to wear a distinctive headgear.

Pius V (1566-72), although later canonized a saint, expelled most Jews from the Papal States, but allowed some to remain in the ghettos of Rome and Ancona for commercial reasons.

Leo XII (1823-29) confined Jews once again in ghettos and confiscated their property.

Pius XII (1939-58) had, at the very least, a mixed record on the Holocaust, some said because of his warm regard for the German people and their culture or because of his fear of even harsher retaliation against the church in Germany. Whatever his reason, he did not speak out on behalf of the Jews and that failure will tarnish his pontificate forever.

Fortunately, there were other popes

whose record was positive toward the Jews.

Gregory the Great (590-604) prohibited all mistreatment of Jews.

Alexander II (1061-73) intervened in southern France and Spain to defend Jews who had suffered in the Norman and French military campaigns against Muslims in Sicily and Spain. He also renewed Gregory the Great's prohibition against the mistreatment of Jews.

Clement VI (1342-52) defended Jews against the charge that they were responsible for the Black Death that hit Avignon (where the papacy had relocated during this period) in 1348-49.

Martin V (1417-31) denounced anti-Jewish preaching and forbade the compulsory baptism of Jewish children under the age of 12.

Pius XI (1922-39) issued the severe anti-Nazi encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* ("With searing anxiety") in 1937 that condemned Nazism for its racism, and especially for its anti-semitism. The encyclical was smuggled into Germany and read from every Catholic pulpit. The Hitler regime was furious and struck back with full force against the church and its priests.

John XXIII (1958-63) did what he could to prevent the deportation of Jews from Greece during the Second World War while serving as a Vatican diplomat. As pope he removed the word "perfidious" from the prayer for Jews in the Good Friday liturgy and greeted a group of vis-

iting Jews with the words, "I am Joseph, your brother."

Rome's chief rabbi himself recalled the day when John XXIII, while passing the city's chief synagogue, stopped his car and blessed the Jews who were coming out of the building.

So great an impression did Pope John make upon the Jewish community of Rome that, during the pope's final agony, the chief rabbi and a number of his congregants went to Saint Peter's Square to pray for the dying pope.

John Paul II himself was the first pope to visit Rome's chief synagogue where he acknowledged the church's own sins against the Jews and where he sat together with the chief rabbi on the teva, or platform, as a gesture of fraternity and equality. He later established formal diplomatic relations with the state of Israel in 1994.

When he visited the synagogue in 1986, John Paul II cited the Second Vatican Council's document on the Jews, and emphatically denounced "the hatreds, the persecutions, and all the manifestations of anti-semitism directed against the Jews of any time by whomever."

Then he fell silent, looked straight at his audience, and said, "I repeat, by whomever." He was referring to several of his predecessors in the Chair of Peter.

Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Retreats help reenergize parish ministers

When I noticed two pastors wearing beepers at a recent clergy gathering, I knew for sure that we'd entered a new era of church life. My conviction was reconfirmed when I heard the priests raving about car phones, Internet and the latest in computers.

The priests, it seems, are wired into all types of people and were sending e-mail messages to parishioners in their homes, workplaces and schools.

The latest in computer software allows these priests to manage their books better, communicate more effectively and be more creative in designing parish newsletters. As clerical electronic buffs, the priests epitomize a new electronic age in the church.

Electronics alone, however, do not define the current new era in church life. There are some other pastoral changes as well that need to be noted.

During the gathering I attended, I heard three non-Hispanic pastors talking to each other in Spanish. They had gone to Mexico to learn the language and the



the human side

By FATHER EUGENE HEMRICK

culture. The parish programs they described evidenced the arrival of a new multicultural age.

Another group of pastors talked about having to adapt their homilies to changing congregations that include a growing number of couples in ecumenical marriages, single-parent families and single adults. In terms of family life, we've entered a post-modern era that holds unique pastoral challenges.

Several pastors discussed the needs of parishioners suffering from depression or drug dependency. The priests were espe-

cially concerned about young people who require more and more medication to help them cope with stress. As I listened I couldn't help but recall Aldous Huxley's book, *Brave New World*, which foretold a new age of drug dependency.

Interestingly, two pastors I heard were concerned about just salaries for parish employees. As one pastor put it, "How can we get up there and preach justice if we don't practice it in our own back yard." He reflected the feeling of several others. Gone are the days when parish staff members expected to be paid the minimum in terms of salary and when benefits seldom were discussed.

A question arises from all the current realities I've cited. Where will pastors and parish staffs find the energy to keep up with these demanding changes? May I suggest they take to heart an age-old church practice that would urge them to go on retreat. Retreat?

A good retreat is an opportunity and a means to regroup energies physically, intellectually and spiritually. Christ's "going

off from the crowds" to pray is an example of this.

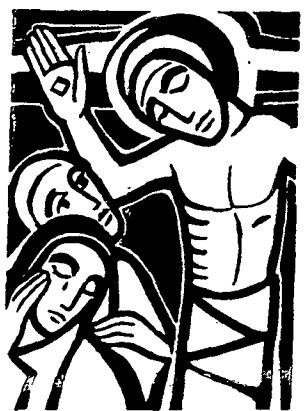
And the retreat is educational, with the education tied directly to contemplation. Becoming silent, taking time to reflect and to prayerfully address the issues in our lives can refresh our powers of concentration, revitalize our energies and restore our composure.

No doubt pastors and parish staffs need to cultivate new skills to keep up with the new era of church life. In the rush to learn these new skills, a retreat may sound like a waste of time, a diversion from the real task at hand or it may simply sound impractical.

But the wisdom of the church's long history tells us that a retreat is anything but impractical. It is just what is needed if we don't want the challenges of the times to age us before our time.

A good retreat is a wise investment that is bound to pay big dividends.

Father Hemrick is director of diocesan relations at the Catholic University of America.



In Memory of Seth McCoy

The Collegium Caecilianum presents

Dietrich Buxtehude's Oratorio **Membra Jesu Nostri** (A meditation on the sufferings of the crucified Christ)

scored for chorus, soloists, strings and continuo
conducted by — Thomas G. Donohue

Passion (Palm) Sunday — 23 March 1997, at 5:00 PM

Saint Anne Church
1600 Mt. Hope Avenue • Rochester, New York

PREMIER
Pilgrimages

PREMIER
Vacations

Invites You to

- Spain
- Fatima
- Poland
- Ireland
- Lourdes
- Medjugorje
- Shrines of Italy
- Santiago de Compostella

Myrtle Beach,
South Carolina

- 70 miles of pristine beaches
- 92 spectacular golf courses
- Historical excursions
- Wildlife & watersport adventures
- Live country music shows
- Honeymoon packages
- All-inclusive air/land packages
- Groups or individuals
- Combination packages to all other American cities

Prices Start at
\$949.00 plus tax

• SCHEDULED DEPARTURES FROM NEW YORK
• LOW RATES FROM YOUR CITY
• ALL INCLUSIVE PACKAGES
• NEW PROGRAMS & DESTINATIONS
• SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS
• GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

All with true
Southern Hospitality!

For Free Brochure or Inquiries call
(800) 342-5922