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## Living Stones

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listed qualities the bishop believed pastoral ministers at any level should have, and outlined certain initiatives. Among them were an emphasis on lay training and leadership; ongoing adult education; a sabbatical program for priests; close work with renewal groups including Marriage Encounter and Cursillo; and designating mission areas in Rochester's inner city, where the diocese had closed elementary schools. It also set into motion a diocesan program for the permanent diaconate, the rank of permanent deacon having been restored to the church in 1967 by Pope Paul VI.

The letter's language was simple. Near its beginning, the bishop stated, "I urge that we remain committed to persons as unique individuals. Church people should try to know one another by name. We should not let ourselves become functionaries — the usher or that person who sings."

A scholar and teacher, Bishop Hogan holds doctorates in both divinity and sacred theology. He recalled how, as a teacher of the older ways, he came to a new understanding of church, which he tried to impart through his seminal pastoral letter.

"I taught the theology of church according to the old," he told the *Catholic Courier*. "When I was at St. Bernard's Seminary for 10 years, the church I presented in the manuals of theology was a church prior to Vatican II. And so was I a hypocrite? No. I would say that I lived according to the lights that I had at the time. It was only gradually you become aware there's something wrong with this."

*Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, was the key document of Vatican II, he noted. Again and again, it refers to the church as the People of God.

In response to that document, Bishop Hogan recalled, he picked up his older Latin books. "I rushed through the texts, and I couldn't find anything about the church as a people of God. It was strictly a hierarchical church."

"As I say, the council changed all that," he continued. "Before it ever spoke about any hierarchical structure in the church, it spoke about the church as the People of God."

Feeling the Spirit guiding him and the church, Bishop Hogan studied and prayed. His pastoral letter would state how the hopes and dreams of the Second Vatican Council should be fulfilled in the diocese.

Yet looking back on the work of the council fathers he now observes, "They gave us directions but they were all in broad strokes. It was left to the individual."

For example, conciliar documents stated that a diocesan-wide consultative pastoral council — of clergy, religious and lay representatives — was desirable, Bishop Hogan explained, but "never said any more. So, 'Good luck to you,' and left it entirely at your own devices how to get this together and make it representative."

The product of his devices, Rochester's Diocesan Pastoral Council, met regularly beginning in June 1975. "I found it wonderful," Bishop Hogan said. "People were so dedicated in giving of their time and talent."

Father Michael Conboy, who was Bishop Hogan's secretary, observed that the bishop was a great cultivator of people's gifts, as is reflected in his pastoral letter.

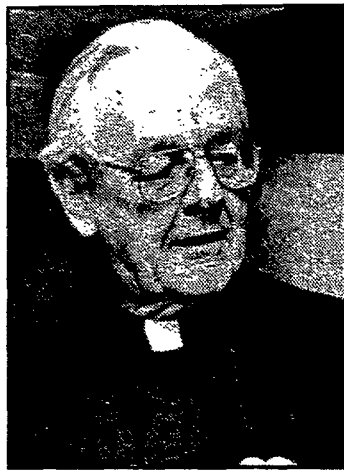
"In the end, it still continues on as a document certainly not only of his era, but it certainly gives encouragement even after these 25 years," said Father Conboy, who currently serves as part-time director of priest personnel and as pastor of St. Jerome's Parish, East Rochester.

"Just the title alone gives us a strong re-

minder that we are the church. Let's just say thank God a lot of this stuff has come to bear, the fruit has been plucked, and it's very much a part of our daily experiences now."

## Readily received

After coming across her old copy of "You Are Living Stones" during the past year, Denise Mack wrote "fan mail" to its author.



File Photo

"I reread it and was so heartened," said the pastoral associate at St. Anne/St. Gregory in Palmyra/Marion.

Sister Roberta Tierney, SSND, also recalled fondly the pastoral's issuance. "I remember when he presented it to the staff at the Pastoral Center meeting we had at the then-Becket Hall. It was a wonderful day to go through different sections as pastoral center staff, what this is and how we implement it."

"I don't think other dioceses were as active in implementing collaborative decision-making," remarked Sister Tierney, who was promoted in 1979 to direct the diocesan Division of General Education from her previous job as deputy school superintendent. "It was really one of the real calls from the Vatican Council — the role of the laity, a call to all of us from our baptism to take responsibility for ministry, not just the ordained clergy."

The pastoral letter's title is from 1 Peter 2:5, an address to churches in Asia Minor. It states, "and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

To this day, the passage about living stones has deep meaning for Sister Tierney, who is now parish life coordinator at St. Cecilia Parish, Irondequoit.

"Every time we read that reading at liturgy, it comes right out at you. To have studied it, reflected on it meant a whole lot more," she commented.

Mack, too, treasures the Scripture, which goes on to state in verse 9, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own..."

"I believe because of the work of Bishop Hogan, the church acted out that reality of us being blessed as a royal nation and holy priesthood of living stones," she said.

It seemed the church was being reborn; there was no longer a division between clergy and laity, she recalled. "This was one People of God."

When the pastoral letter was issued, "it was happily received by priests and laity alike," noted Father Emmett Halloran. "It provided groundwork for us as the church of Rochester to build on. In terms of the progressive stance the church of Rochester has taken, it is in large part due to the leadership of Bishop Hogan, and perpetuated, by the way, by Bishop Clark."

Father Bill Spilly, now pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish on Rochester's Humboldt Street, noted that Bishop Hogan's document came out a year after his own ordination and confirmed his decision to become a priest for the Rochester Diocese.

"I found the document to be so uplifting and the whole idea that we are part of the diocese, all creatures are living stones and an important part of the work of the diocese," said Father Spilly, who had studied for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood. "It hadn't been said at least while I was studying at St. Bernard's. It was very af-

firming. It was just an exciting time."

## 'Magna Carta'

"Living Stones" was Bishop Hogan's Magna Carta, Father Conboy said. It was his guarantee of freedom to use one's gifts.

"I always found that important in his ministry as bishop of the diocese — giving encouragement, roles of responsibility to women," the priest observed. "Now we take it for granted."

Sister Mary E. Wintish, RSM, was one of the first women to gain visibility as a diocesan leader. In 1978, at the encouragement of priests, she applied to succeed Msgr. George Cocuzzi as vicar of urban ministry. She remembered her response after Bishop Hogan eventually announced to her, "Well, Mary, it's unanimous," that she was the new director of urban ministry.

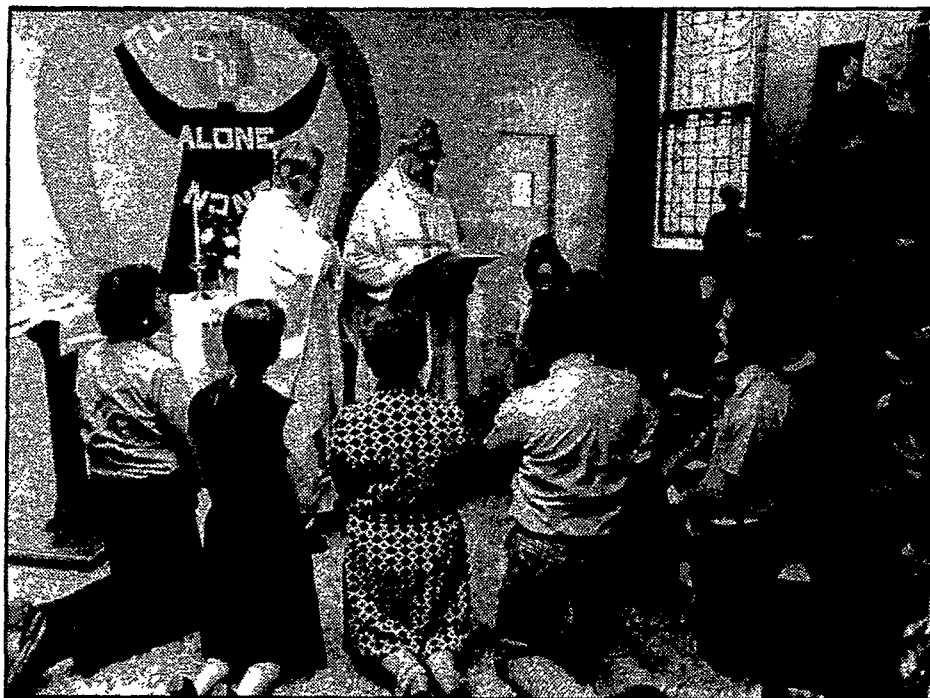
"I don't know what possessed me; I didn't even say thank you. I asked, 'What kind of authority will I have?'" she recalled. The bishop replied, "You will have the proper authority and help write the job description."

"Because he was open to women in the church ... it changed the direction of ministry I did," observed Sister Wintish, who was appointed pastoral administrator at All Saints Parish, Lansing, in 1998, after previous stints as a pastoral associate.

Sister Margaret Mary Mattle, RSM, was the first head of the diocese's Department of Liturgy, created in 1975. Bishop Hogan emphasized the Pastoral Center, where she worked, was a service, and that its employees meet for prayer, she said. "I think we were all changed working together."

By calling lay people — a state of life that includes vowed religious — to leadership, his document "was quite prophetic," she commented. What continues to make the document valid for today, she said, is its vision of unity, dialogue and collaboration.

"The whole thing is still a challenge, I think," Sister Mattle remarked.



File photo In a photograph from January 1974, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan was visiting a school in Geneva. With him is Father Dave Simon.

Sister Tierney agreed. "We haven't reached what's in there — the goals of the Vatican Council or 'Living Stones.' I just know every time I read it, I have that feeling. I think we're still struggling with our councils and struggling to respect the roles of all the laity in the church. It's something you still could study with your councils and parish staff."

## Back to the diaconate

Deacons owe much to the vision Bishop Hogan articulated in "Living Stones." Those who may not have realized that fact do now, thanks to Deacon Ray Defendorf.

In a take-off of the TV show "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire," Deacon Defendorf asked fellow deacons at a May 13 convocation, "In which pastoral letter did a Rochester bishop call for the re-establishment of the permanent diaconate?"

"It was a wonderful document. I still have my copy that's autographed," said Deacon Defendorf, who was ordained as part of the diocese's first class of deacons in 1982. Bishop Hogan "obviously was a visionary

when it came to lay ministry and the role we play in the apostolate of ministry."

After he converted from Methodism in 1961, Ed Sergeant asked a priest what role he could take on in his new church. The priest drew a blank.

When the bishop's pastoral letter came out, the convert said, "This was my answer." Now Deacon Sergeant, he also was ordained in the diocese's first deacon class.

"What 'Living Stones' did was help bring us a new vision of church out of Vatican II and we began to see there was a possibility for all people to be involved in the church in one way or another," he said. He is now chaplain for the Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Service Office.

Between the council and the time his document was released in 1975, some other dioceses already had permanent deacons, Bishop Hogan noted, but they were "illy and poorly trained and with no work for them to do. I would say that in our diocese we took our time and our requirements were rather rigid."

"And we have some wonderful permanent deacons," he continued. "I'm always glad to hear their names mentioned, they're wonderful preachers, very practical and people can relate to them."

## 'Cauldron' of activity

Father Conboy noted that the 1970s posed many other concerns for the bishop other than church renewal. He remembered piles of letters asking the bishop to call for an end to the Vietnam War, and the pain of consciousness-raising about the needs of migrant, farm and textile workers.

"This is the milieu, the setting the bishop faced when he first went into office," Father Conboy said. "In a sense it was like a cauldron with boiling with activity, some very good, some challenging, some very stressful."

The stresses took a toll. In 1978 Bishop Hogan retired on the advice of physicians.

"Certain things were coming that I knew I wasn't capable of handling, especially the closing of the seminary," he recalled. He had spent a quarter of his life as a student or teacher at the seminary. "And the doctors advised there were signs of health deteriorating because of pressures on me," he added. Lung problems have especially plagued him.

He also noted that he had set himself a limit of 10 years in office.

Nevertheless, he recalled his term as bishop as "great years." Bishop Hogan often said that though it was a turbulent time, he was not dismayed.

In a recent autobiography, he stated, "The

history of the church assures us of equally vehement turbulence in the past. St. Paul testifies to internal dissensions which harassed the early Christian communities. The Acts of the Apostles reports serious strife ... in the infant Church.

"... The church will continue to suffer this tension of vitality in every age."

He remembers hearing that around the time of his pastoral letter, secret sessions were held by people in opposition. But there was never any open confrontation.

"Some really detested the whole idea of the council, of course. Still do. The same ones.

"But I knew that renewal would be a very painful process. It has to begin with yourself. Then you just hope that others will eventually come along. I realize how difficult it is for some people who feel the earth is sliding away from under them, where they had the easy answers for everything.

"I still believe in the Holy Spirit guiding us, as always," he said, "if you are a prayerful people."