

Candle lighted way for unique bishop

EDITORS' NOTE: Msgr. William H. Shannon delivered the following address in 1992 on the 50th anniversary of Bishop Hogan's ordination.

There is an old saying in the church about bishops that is probably quite true. The saying is this: Once a man is made a bishop, there are two things that will never happen to him. The first is that he will never again be served a bad meal. The second is that he will never again be told the truth.

I am sure the first part will be true today. He will be not be served a bad meal. But the second part of that saying I shall contradict. For today in the presence of Bishop Hogan, I am going at long last to tell the truth about him. I shall reveal secrets never made public before. I shall tell you how he nearly missed being made the bishop of Rochester; then I shall tell you the real story of how he became the seventh bishop of our local church. We must keep this all to ourselves of course. It would not do for the sensitive information I am about to give you to become public knowledge.

Why do I say that he almost missed becoming the bishop of Rochester? The story goes back to 1945 and to Sister Teresa Marie, the first dean of Nazareth College. In 1945 she wanted a priest to teach religion at Nazareth College. She contacted the rector of the seminary for advice, and Dr. Craugh recommended three names: one priest each from the classes of 1942, 1943 and 1944. Since she did not know any of them, she asked for the one ordained the longest, the one from the class of 1942. This happened to be Father Joseph Lloyd Hogan. But a loving Providence had arranged otherwise. For just a short time before Sister Teresa Marie put in her request, Father Hogan was appointed to teach at St. Andrew's Seminary.

Thus, Teresa Marie had to go for second-best. She asked for the priest from the class of 1943, a guy whose name happened to be Bill Shaninon. You can immediately see the point I am making. Joseph Lloyd Hogan might well have spent the rest of his life in the comfortable role of a professor at Nazareth College and chaplain to the motherhouse. This means that he would never have become the seventh bishop of Rochester. For what man of sound mind (and he was, and indeed still is, a person of sound mind) would ever choose to be a bishop when he could be professor at Nazareth and chaplain at the motherhouse?

I said I would also reveal the secret of how he did become the seventh bishop of Rochester. Some skeptics may scoff at this story, but it is, I assure you, the honest truth. You know how, when an important event takes place, people try to remember where they were and what they were doing at the time the event took place? Well, I don't have the slightest idea where I was or what I was doing when I heard that my good friend, Joseph Lloyd Hogan, was appointed as seventh Bishop of Rochester. But I do remember the thought that immediately flooded my mind. I remember saying to myself: "For sure, it was that seven-day candle." This calls for a brief explanation. After we both took up our respective teaching positions, we decided we needed to do some graduate studies. We chose to go to Canisius College. So in 1947 Ack Hogan, Dick Quinn and I met every Friday at the old railroad station in Rochester and at 3:30 p.m. boarded the Advance Empire. At the Buffalo station we got off and went into the city. Each Friday we went to Leonardo's in Buffalo and each Friday chose the identical meal, the Friday special called Neptune's delight. Then we took a taxi to Canisius and had classes from 7 to 9 p.m. and the next morning from 9 to 12. Whereupon we returned on the 'Empire' going east.

Now the plot begins to thicken. Ack had a relative, a cousin I think, whose name was Msgr. Pulling, who was pastor at a big church on Eagle Street. So Ack had made prearrangements for us to stay there. It was a huge rectory, and we were given a room on the third floor. It was one big room for all three of us. So, tired from the long day, we got ready for bed. Then we made a sad discovery: We found that there was no light in the bathroom. So, in our pajamas, the three of us marched in solemn procession downstairs and then over to the church. We went to the back of the church and pilfered one of those wonderful seven-day candles. We came back in procession, and duly installed the candle in the bathroom to light our way.

The following Friday on the train I casually mentioned to Ack that, while Msgr. Pulling's place was very nice, I had made arrangements to stay at the motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph across the street from Canisius. The sisters needed me, I told him. Dick Quinn, just as casually, mentioned that, while Msgr. Pulling's place was very nice, he had been asked to stay at the school for the deaf on Main Street near Canisius.

But poor Ack — he couldn't desert his cousin. There were blood ties there. So each week, as Quinn and I went to our comfortable abodes, Ack made his lonely way to Eagle Street and to the seven-day candle. Each Friday he carefully lighted that candle in a deeply prayerful mood.

Now everyone knows how powerful seven-day candles are. I am firmly convinced to this day that it was Joseph Lloyd Hogan's fidelity to the seven-day candle, which lighted his lonely existence on Eagle Street, that won for him the vocation to be bishop of Rochester. This is the secret story of Joseph Hogan's rise to the head of the local church of Rochester. Never underestimate the power of a seven-day candle.

The people of this local Church of Rochester were not prepared for this tall, witty, people-loving bishop. He was different from his predecessors. Bishop Kearney we all loved for his great humanity. Bishop Sheen we respected for his many gifts. But both of them belonged to an order of bishops that was beginning to disappear in the church. They were the last of the "prince bishops," a type of bishop who went way back to the time of Constantine in the fourth century. They were bishops whose office set them apart from their people and above those people. They could be among people, but never really mingle with them as part of the group.

Bishop Hogan changed that image of the bishop. He took to heart the words of the Second Vatican Council, in its document on the church:

He taught me at St. Bernard's Seminary and he had a great sense of humor, he would joke in class all the time. He would also play ball games. I was just thinking about that one day, that he played basketball. He was tall and right handed.

— Father Albert Delmonte

On Bishop Hogan's reaction three years ago after winning \$10,000 cash in a Sacred Heart parish raffle I called him up to congratulate him and he said, "Don't even write the check." He said the cathedral had been good to him, and maybe this was a way of paying it back.

— Father Thomas Mull

We went on trips, going to Europe four times and to the Canadian Rockies in 1990. Once I remember the gang went to New York City at Christmas, and on the way back we saw a girl near a little girl, about 10 years old, who was traveling by herself. An escort put her on the plane, and she was scared.

She began talking to the bishop, and asking questions: "How does the plane fly?" He said, "Well, I always wondered that, too." She asked him his name, and he said, "Joe." She asked him what he did, and he said he was a bishop. She asked what a bishop was. And they talked and talked and talked.

When we got to Rochester, she took Bishop Hogan by the hand and brought him to her mother and said, "This is my new friend, Joe." To her, he wasn't a bishop. He was Joe.

— Father James Marvin



"The laity have Christ for their brother. They also have for their brothers those in the sacred ministry." (*Lumen Gentium*, 32). Bishop Hogan heard the words of *Christus Dominus*, the Vatican II document on the ministry of bishops, which said that "the bishop should stand in the midst of his people as one who serves" (15). When he became seventh bishop of Rochester, he was determined that his office would not separate him from people. For he knew that the most important truth about himself was not that he was ordained, but that he was baptized. He knew very clearly that being a member of the hierarchy must in no way obscure the fact that he was a member of the faithful. The fact of Christian existence is more important than any office one might hold in the midst of the community.

I don't mean to say that he did not realize the special responsibilities in the midst of the local church community that he was called to exercise. But no one understood better than he that the office existed, not to glorify him, but, as his coat of arms expressed it, to call him to spend himself and be spent for the good of the people of the local church.

Joseph Lloyd Hogan became bishop at a time when the pains of transition in the church were being most seriously experienced. Bishop McCafferty once remarked: "I wish I had been made a bishop at a time when it was fun to be a bishop." Bishop Hogan must have felt that way, too. It was no fun to try to create a whole new mentality in the church and a whole new way of understanding of what it meant to be church. Vatican II was behind us when he became bishop, but everyone was trying to figure out what it meant. Bishop Hogan realized that the church, which had been given the vision of Vatican II, had yet to become the church envisioned by Vatican II.

It is fair to say, I believe, that all his efforts as bishop were directed to make that vision a reality in the local Church of Rochester. It was no easy task. He knew that you cannot bring about changes in people's hearts and thoughts by imposing change upon them. To effect true inner change, which alone can be permanent and lasting, required much patience, much effort and a good deal of experience of the cross. Creating change inevitably means rousing opposition from those who feel they have to hang on to the past just as it was, without modification at all. Bishop Hogan realized this; yet he pushed on to make the church what the Spirit was calling the church to be in our time. The nine years he served as our bishop were a time of joy for him, a time of accomplishment, but also a time of the passion. But at the end of nine years, when his health forced him to resign from the pressures of office, he was able to retire with a sense of joy and confidence that he had set the local Church of Rochester on a new path from which there was no return. Under his leadership the spirit of the Second Vatican Council had become, firmly and definitively, the spirit of our local church. There could be no turning back. When he handed over the leadership of the church of Rochester to Bishop Clark, it was a church very different from the church he had received from his predecessors. It was a church that had responded to the call of Pope John XXIII and had begun to read the signs of the times. It was a church that truly desired to make a difference in the lives of people.

Bishop Hogan, as you celebrate your golden jubilee for at least the fourth time (and may you celebrate it many more times yet this year), we salute you and offer you our deepest gratitude for all that you have done. You have made us proud to belong to the local church of Rochester. May I also, in the name of all the sisters assembled here and those who could not be with us, salute you and thank you for your friendship and goodness to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Through these years you have shared with them much more than the name of Joseph. You have been a support and a help to all of them through the years. And there are many onetime novices here who probably owe their continuing vocations to the joy, wit and humor that your classes brought them in the novitiate. It was just enough to balance the rigors of novitiate life and enable them to go on.

I want to end with words used by John Henry Newman to conclude one of his sermons. May it be a prayer for you and for all of us. I quote: "May he support us all the day long, till the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over and our work is done. Then in his mercy may he give us a safe lodging and a holy rest and peace at the last."

The *Catholic Courier* thanks the scores of people interviewed for this special edition commemorating the life of Bishop Joseph L. Hogan. In addition to interviews conducted this week and research in the archives of the *Courier* and the Diocese of Rochester, the sources for these articles include Father Robert J. McNamara's revised history of the diocese, *The Diocese of Rochester in America, 1868-1997*, and a transcript of Bishop Joseph L. Hogan's memoirs as audiotaped by Dr. Nathan Kollar.

By Carr
Guest c

I pick
crat
way
es, and s
I headed
zoomed
name in
instincti

It was
eyes or
Hogan,
the Rock
first nev
1969. H
Fulton J.
and pe
Hogan f
that the
Bishop S
news c
Hogan's
changes

But n
ed the
Hogan
with thr
before a
Novem
tenure c

A di
course,
farewell
"Bishop
will ans

"Oh,
ducked
even he

A nev
learned
arisen a
retary, F
to publi
to the bi
Fathe
integrity
Conboy

Thou
bishop v
priests v
Back
realized
diacona
each eve

"Mod
Hogan.

I alwa

in how
At a l
was suff
processi
and hall
sat as lo
painslak
height w
ments, h

R

By E. L.
Guest c

A
'Acaden
prophet
Rochest
seemed

Mayb
suming,

As Fa
ops of I
Withou
a bishop

And I
to those
came d
while I
There h
a year a
support

In the
mer vac
drive d