



OFFICIAL

My Dear Brethren:

Followers of Christ, Christians, belong to a different dimension, a supernatural dimension. It is like living on a distant planet where higher norms and laws are in effect, "Our habitation is in Heaven", (II Cor. 5:2). In this realm we have to use the sight, the touch, the communications of Heaven. "Our conversation is in Heaven", (Phil. 3:20). This is the active life of a Christian.

The three supernatural senses by which we get in touch with God are Faith, Hope, and Love. By Faith we touch God. We call ourselves to His attention. We see Him. We believe Him. We touch His heart. This supernatural gift is necessary to our spiritual life on earth and for our reward in Heaven. "Without Faith, it is impossible to please God". (Heb. 11:6). Faith trusts the future to God and remains confident, no matter what, to the contrary. Faith trusts God fully until the end, and this is Hope.

These two supernatural senses which see, appreciate, grasp and know God, not only touch His heart, but He then touches ours also and provokes us to Love — to love Him first and above all, and all those whom He loves, our brethren. This supernatural Love makes us see Him as He is — simple, humble, merciful, forgiving, abandoning the heights, the wealth, the happiness of Heaven, to become the suffering Servant, our Brother, our Victim, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world.

The preparation for Christmas has to be a real preparation for this God-man, as He is. We see His littleness in the manger; His loving-hurt glance at sinner; the tears of suffering on His cheek; the heart of God, filled with goodness and love for His brethren who want and need everything that is good. These senses of the soul, Faith, Hope, and Love, were put there by Christ at Baptism; our re-making into a new creature who can live in the heights of Heaven, while walking on earth. These sensitive acts of our soul, of seeing, believing, touching, and embracing the God-man must be exercised daily if we are to grow in Eternal Life. God, the Son, our only knowledge, our only hope, our only love. "I have first loved thee with an everlasting love", (Jer. 31:3). We return the love of our hearts this Christmas Day to Him and to His poor, suffering servants who willingly or unwillingly represent Him in the world.

What can we offer to such a God, Who has done everything for us? Only the totality of our being, the generosity of our hearts, and the service of our hands, to do His will and to assist everyone made to His image and likeness.

It is with these sentiments of love in our hearts that we ask you on Christmas to assist the poor, the weak, the needy, our Orphans at Nazareth and the the orphans everywhere by the generosity of your love. For He has first loved us in the humble, simple God-man, Who took the last place on our earth.

May He grant us mercy and forgiveness, the salvation of our souls, and life everlasting — this is my wish and that of Bishop McLaughlin for you, our flock, on Christmas Day.

With every blessing, I remain
Sincerely in Christ,

Vincent S. Waters

Vincent S. Waters
Bishop of Raleigh

Msgr. McNerney, R.I.P.

FULLY aware that serious heart surgery was scheduled for Monsignor McNerney on Monday morning, the hopes of all were cheered on the next day by a favorable telephoned report which the hospital chaplain, Father King, made to our city saying that the patient gave favorable response at the time. It was planned that Monsignor be returned from the usual intensive care unit treatment to his own room the following day. However, hopes were shattered when the second unexpected call came informing us of his sudden turn to death.

"Himself" was dead. All were at a loss to know how they were going to get over it. Prayerful hopes had risen so high for a continuing and steady recovery. It was a shocking reality to face. "Himself" — that was the title given to a person in authority, to someone important by nature of his highly esteemed office. Monsignor McNerney, only 63 years of age, epitomized the conservative "Irish Pastor" in American Catholicism; the keynote of the parish life, the man who has left his stamp of Faith and religious practices upon his congregation. That kind of pastor was himself the product of American Catholicism, and no wonder that the slow eradication of many of the former externals that marked off Catholic life and practice may have left him referring to the "old days."

Pastors of his stamp have served the Church well. Like Monsignor McNerney, they have always accepted assignments asked of them by their pastoral role. He willingly accepted the responsibility of being Vicar General and Diocesan Coadjutor to the Bishop and was formerly dean of a number of areas. He performed these obligations faithfully, many of them

Guillotine



In Current Thought

Lutherans, Catholics Issue Joint Eucharistic Statement

Washington — With strong emphasis on points of agreement and specific analysis of points not yet agreed upon, representatives of the Lutheran and Catholic traditions released a 14-page statement outlining beliefs on the Eucharist as sacrifice and the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

The statement, prepared by Lutheran and Catholic scholars after nearly two years' discussion and five major revisions, emphasizes "our profound gratitude to God for the growing unity on this subject which we see in our day."

"What we have to report," the statement continues, "is not so

much original with us as simply one manifestation of a growing consensus among many Christian traditions on the Lord's Supper.

"Ours, however, is a specifically Roman Catholic-Lutheran contribution. It attempts to go beyond the more general ecumenical discussion of the Eucharist

involving travel, in addition to his other duties as pastor. He was interested in the physical appearance of a parish plant, often supervising and sometimes doing the work himself when money was short. He was concerned with the religious instruction of the youth of his parish and was known by his brother priests as giving well thought-out instructions to prospective adult converts. His sermons were a clear presentation of Christian Doctrine.

This is one of those impossible tasks that sometimes falls upon editors and preachers. To be able to say anything that would highlight an already well-known and well-spent life is clearly impossible in this case. As with few others, the life of this priestly man will be of legend and example for his many curates and clerical friends and parishioners. Stories will be told of his conversations at retreats, his devotion to the cause of Irish independence, his pleasure in welcoming neighborhood priests to his rectory for a quiet evening after a busy Sunday and playing a few hands of his favorite game of 'Hearts'. He will be a tradition here of priestly companionship and of holy indignation at evil in all its guises. Clearly, few have lived among us so noted for the "heart", firm in commitment to service and pliable to compassion of men.

He never tired in confronting this modern world with the foolishness of some of its attributes. Perhaps one smiled a bit listening to his fulminating against the foibles of our times, but is it not true that when we returned to the solitude of our own inward thoughts, we found ourselves nodding in agreement to the basic soundness of what he said.

As in the case when great men die, the tongues and pens of lesser men are brief or silent out of awesome reverence. To Monsignor we say thanks for his zeal, pastoral care, example and the life of a Christ-like priest in our midst.

Kindness, justice and integrity are the things that please God. If one analyzes each of these virtues as they live in the soul of Monsignor McNerney and his way of living, one will know, without doubt, that this priest was, and is, truly loved by God.

To all who knew and loved him, his former parishioners from the coastal cities of New Bern and Wilmington, across the wide Diocese to Tryon in the mountains, we extend our sympathy and share their sense of loss. To our Lord we entrust his eternal repose and give thanks for such blessings given us in this genuine, faithful and priestly servant. R.I.P.

Fr. Curran, CU Prof. Finds Jesus' Ethics 'Uneasy, Disturbing'

Washington — A professor of moral theology said here the task of religious educators is to open Christians to the "disturbance and uneasiness" of the teaching of Jesus.

The ethic of Jesus is disturbing, said Father Charles E. Curran, of the school of sacred theology of Catholic University of America.

Father Curran spoke at a three-day conference on "Directions in Catechetics Today," held at Trinity College. The affair was sponsored by the Conference of Clerics and Religious, an association of Catholic seminaries in the Washington area.

Christians are called to love others with the unselfish love of Jesus, and this kind of love is full of mercy and forgiveness, even when undeserved, Father Curran declared. He said relationship with God is grounded in relationship with neighbor, especially neighbor in need.

Father Norbert Fournier, C.S.V., director of the Institute of Pastoral Theology at the University of Montreal, said religious educators must face the challenge of the separation between faith and life.

He cited four objectives of religious education: the transmission of God's message; education in and development of habits and attitudes; witnessing the mystery of God through the word; initiation into the life of interpersonal relationship with God.

to an examination of the particular agreements and disagreements of our two traditions."

While drawn from Scripture and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the statement deals primarily with problems that have become acute for Christians as a result of the 16th-century controversies surrounding the Reformation. It does not try to treat the sacrament comprehensively.

Yet the treatment given dramatically underscores the wide agreement so far reached on basic Eucharistic beliefs. Both traditions accept the fact that "Christ is present as the Crucified who died for our sins and who rose again for our justification, as the once-for-all sacrifice for the sins of the world."

Similarly, the confessional documents of both traditions agree that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sacrifice of praise and self-offering. Other points of agreement indicate that:

—Catholics as well as Lutherans affirm the unrepeatable character of the sacrifice of the cross.

—The Catholic practice of "offering Christ in the Mass" is an acceptable explanation of the Eucharistic assembly's consent to the power of the Holy Spirit, since apart from Christ "we have no gifts, no worship, no sacrifice of our own to offer to God."

—Lutherans and Catholics can join in affirming that the presence of the sacrifice of the cross in the Eucharistic celebration is efficacious for the forgiveness of sins and the life of the world.

See Lutherans, page 5A

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