

CATHOLIC CALENDAR.

A page devoted to local Catholic interests

June 14, 2002

Vol. 28, No. 11

Lake Charles, La.

Internet Address: <http://lcediocese.org>



11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

Then he summoned his twelve apostles and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him.

Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, "Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.

Matthew 9:36-10:8

Problem of hunger can be resolved with solidarity, Pope John Paul II says

ROME - Here is Pope John Paul II's message to the World Food Summit, convened in Rome under the aegis of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. The message was read at the opening of the meeting by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Vatican secretary of state.

Mr. President of the Italian Republic and Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations and Mr. Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am pleased to extend respectful and cordial greetings to each one of you, Representatives of almost every county in the world, gathered in Rome, a little more than five years after the 1996 World Food Summit.

Since I am unable to be among you personally on this solemn occasion, I have asked Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, to convey all my esteem and regard for the arduous work that you have to undertake in order to ensure that everyone has their daily bread.

I offer a special greeting to the President of the Italian Republic, and to all the Heads of State and Government who have come to Rome for this Summit. During my Pastoral Visits to various parts of the world, as well as at the Vatican, I have already had an opportunity to meet many of them personally: to all go my deferential best wishes for themselves and the Nations they represent.

I extend this greeting to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization and to the Heads of other International Organizations present at this meeting. The Holy See expects much from their efforts on behalf of humanity's material and spiritual progress.

I express the hope that the present World Food Summit will be crowned with success: this is what millions of men and women

throughout the world expect.

The last Summit in 1996 had already established that hunger and malnutrition are not phenomena of a merely natural or structural nature, affecting only certain geographic areas, but are to be seen as the consequence of a more complex situation of underdevelopment resulting from human inertia and self-centeredness.

If the goals of the 1996 Summit have not been met, that can be attributed also to the absence of a culture of solidarity, and to international relations often shaped by a pragmatism devoid of ethical and moral foundations. Moreover, a cause for concern is to be found in the statistics according to which assistance given to poor countries in recent years appears to have decreased rather than increased.

Today more than ever there is an urgent need in international relationships for solidarity to become the criterion underlying all forms of cooperation, with the acknowledgment that the resources which God the Creator has entrusted to us are destined for all.

Of course, much is expected from the experts, whose task it is to point out when and how to increase agricultural resources, how to achieve better distribution of products, how to set up food security programs, how to devise new techniques to boost harvests and increase herds.

The Preamble to the FAO Constitution itself proclaimed the commitment of each country to raise its level of nutrition and improve the conditions of its agriculture and of its rural population, in such a way as to increase production and secure an effective distribution of food supplies in all parts of the world.

These goals, however, involve a constant reconsideration of the relationship between the right to be freed from poverty and the duty of the whole human family to

provide practical help to the needy.

For my part, I am pleased that the present World Food Summit is once more urging the various sectors of the international community, Governments and Intergovernmental Institutions, to make a commitment to somehow guaranteeing the right to nutrition in cases where an individual State is unable to do so because of its own underdevelopment and poverty. Such a commitment can be seen as entirely necessary and legitimate, given the fact that poverty and hunger risk compromising even the ordered coexistence of peoples and nations, and constitute a real threat to peace and international security.

Hence the importance of the present World Food Summit, with its reaffirmation of the concept of food security and its call for a mobilization of solidarity aimed at reducing by half, by the year 2015, the number of people in the world who are undernourished and deprived of the bare necessities of life. This is an enormous challenge, and one to which the Church too is fully committed.

The Catholic Church is ever concerned for the promotion of human rights and the integral development of peoples, and will therefore continue to support all who work to ensure that every member of the human family receives adequate daily food. Her intimate vocation is to be close to the world's poor, and she hopes that everyone will become practically involved in speedily resolving this problem, one of the gravest facing the human family.

May the Almighty who is rich in mercy send his blessing upon each one of you, upon the work you do under the aegis of FAO, and upon all those who strive for the authentic progress of the human family.

From the Vatican, 10 June 2002

IOANNES PAULUS II

(This page paid for by the Diocese of Lake Charles.)

An interview with Bishop Braxton on his travels

(Editor's Note: This is the first of two installments of an interview with Bishop Edward K. Braxton on his travels during the spring.)

Catholic Calendar: Bishop, you have been traveling more than usual in recent months. Where have your travels taken you?

The truth is that I am here the great majority of the time. And as you know, I am often in my office seven days a week, morning, noon and night. However, each of the 194 Diocesan Bishops in the United States is responsible not only for his diocese but for the larger Church. This inevitably necessitates travel to committee meetings the ordinations, installations and anniversaries of bishops, for example Archbishop Schulte's 50th anniversary in New Orleans on May 10. The fact that I am not from Lake Charles and have lived and served in a number of dioceses also requires me to travel. Of course, I must also travel to see my family, especially my Mother Dear, who lives in a suburb of Chicago and is not well. In April I was in Europe for meetings at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium and for meetings at several Congregations in Rome at the Vatican. In early May I spent a week in Lourdes, France with the Knights of Malta.

Catholic Calendar: What were these meetings about? Did you see the Pope? Are there still miracles at Lourdes?

As chairman of the Bishops' Committee that governs the American College, our seminary in Louvain, I went to Belgium to meet with the seminary rector, the faculty and students in order to keep informed about the seminary community. The College is very familiar to me because I lived there while completing my doctorate in Systematic Theology at the University. Though it is older than the North American College, our more famous seminary in Rome, the American College has a much smaller enrollment. This small size can be a strength and a weakness. My responsibility is to make sure that the formation for priesthood, the theological education and the spiritual direction are as good as they can be so that the American Bishops can feel confident that their seminarians will return home well prepared to be effective priests in the United States.

Rev. Mr. Clyde Thomas, a deacon from Lake Charles is a seminarian at the American College. Since I had received all the appropriate documents from the seminary faculty supporting his candidacy, I formally called him, as his Bishop, to serve as a priest in Lake Charles. I will ordain him August 17.

Catholic Calendar: Did you go directly to Rome or did you have other stops?

I had wanted to attend a meeting of theologians at l'Institute Catholique in Paris. But instead went directly to Rome. At the Vatican I met with Cardinal Arinze, the head of the Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue and an expert on Islam. I have known him for more than 20 years, since he was Archbishop of Onitsha, Nigeria. I met with members of the Discipline Section of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and with the leadership at the Con-

gregation for the Clergy. These meetings concerned various issues in the Diocese of Lake Charles. I know from experience that when a diocesan bishop has matters to be addressed in Rome, it is best to go and discuss them in person. Everyone was very gracious. Since I was in Rome just days before the meeting between the Holy Father and representatives of the American Bishops, the turmoil in the United States was frequently discussed. The American writer, George Weigel, author of a major biography of John Paul II was also staying at the North American College. We had very fruitful discussions about the Church in the U.S. America and the perspective of the Pontiff.

At the close of my visit I was invited to concelebrate morning Mass with the Holy Father in the intimacy of his private chapel in the Apostolic Palace. During an audience after the Mass I spoke to him about the vitality of the Church in Southwest Louisiana and he assured me of his prayers and blessing for all of us. Though the Pope grows weaker and weaker before our eyes, his spirit and faith remain very strong.

Catholic Calendar: From Rome you returned directly to Lake Charles. Do you experience much jet lag?

Happily, I do not. I eat very little on trans-Atlantic flights and I make sure I sleep. After catching up on the work here in the diocese, which is not too difficult since I maintain almost daily contact with my office, I joined Knights, Dames, and Chaplains of Malta on a charter flight to Lourdes from Baltimore. Cardinal Hickey, who had recently nominated me to be a Chaplain in the Order, had invited me to join these dedicated American Catholic men and women in their annual week of prayer and service at the grotto where Bernadette Soubirous experienced several apparitions of the "lovely Lady in white" in 1858.

Lourdes is a small village of 18,000. But every year there are more than 6,000,000 visitors. There were over 5,000 Knights of Malta from all over the world in our group. Most of our time is spent caring for the sick (mallades) who we brought with us. They are carried back and forth from our hotel to the grotto and churches inside the domain in order to participate in the many masses, stations, rosaries, and candlelight processions. The high point for most of the sick is when they are taken to be bathed in the waters that flow from the grotto. Though their faith is strong and their sickness is grave, most are not expecting a physical healing. They hope for the spiritual healing of peace of mind, acceptance and renewed faith, which happens everyday at Lourdes. Many are surprised to learn that Lourdes has only recognized 67 cures in its long history. Thus, it is special blessing for our group to learn, while I was celebrating the Eucharist in the tiny "cachot" (the former jail where Bernadette lived as a child), that a mallad in our group, who had suffered from leukemia for many years, was officially recognized as the 68th cure! Even though I had several talks to give and a number of meetings to attend, there was enough time for quiet prayer before the Eucharist to make the week feel like a retreat.

(To be continued)

Ecumenical partners encourage American Bishops' efforts

WASHINGTON - The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has gratefully received a public statement of support from fifteen ecumenical partners, American Christian denominations with episcopal church structures. The statement, provided below, is an encouragement to the Catholic bishops in their semi-annual meeting which began in Dallas yesterday, in which the sole agenda item is the consideration of new policies for dealing with the abuse of children and youth by priests.

The statement, which was distributed by the Episcopal News Service and posted on www.episcopalchurch.org, reads as follows:

"In the afternoon of June 5, 2002, fifteen ecumenical partners gathered in the Episcopal Church Center in New York, at the invitation of Cardinal William H. Keeler, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore. The purpose of the meeting was to engage in a conversation about the draft text of a 'Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People' to be presented to Catholic bishops who would come together the following week in Dallas. Input on the document was shared as were the sexual misconduct policies of the various Christian communions present.

meeting that the Roman Catholic Church and its bishops do not stand alone in the painful experience of dealing with sexual misconduct among clergy and lay leaders in the church. The Catholic Church shares with the wider ecumenical community deep concern for the victims of sexual abuse, especially children and young people. All Christians must work together in seeking to find ways to offer healing to those who have been so wounded and to restore the faithful to the faith that has been taken from them by these actions.

"In addition to giving and receiving feedback on this specific document, the participants agreed to seek ways in the future to cooperate together in order to take even more dramatic steps on the specific issue of abuse of children and young people in church and society. The following church leaders attended this gathering:

"The Rev. Dr. William Allen (Christian Church, Disciples of Christ); Archbishop Khajag Barsamian (Armenian Orthodox Church in America); The Very Rev. David Brum (Orthodox Church in America); Mr. David Early (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops); The Rev. Jon Enslin (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America); The Rt. Rev. Christopher Epting (The Episcopal

Church); The Rev. David Fromm (Reformed Church in America); The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold (The Episcopal Church); Brother Jeffrey Gros (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops); The Very Reverend Alexei Karlgut (Orthodox Church in America); William Cardinal Keeler (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops); The Rev. Cletus Kiley (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops); The Very Reverend Father Simeon Odobashian (Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church in America); The Rev. Bruce Robbins (United Methodist Church); Bishop Savas of Troas (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese); The Rev. Lydia Veliko (United Church of Christ), and The Rev. Robina Winbush (Presbyterian Church U.S.A.)"

Cardinal Keeler said, "The American bishops of the Catholic Church are going to their semi-annual meeting in Dallas with a determination to provide clear policies in dioceses throughout America that will ensure the protection of children and prevention of abuse. We are honored and grateful to have the support and encouragement of our sisters and brothers in Christ."