

Saint Agnes/Our Lady of Fatiman
March 9, 1984
Conversation with Lay Pastoral Ministers
of the Urban Region

I. Scriptural Base

- a. Mark 10:42-44
- b. John 13: 14-17
- c. 1 Corinthians 12: 4-21
 varying gifts but they are not important in themselves
 but are manifestations of the working of the Holy Spirit

II. Ecclesiological Base

- a. Pius XI, in 1922: Catholic Action = "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy."

"The lay apostolate is a participation on the saving work of the Church itself." Vatican II, Laity :::

::: the priesthood of all the faithful and the common vocation we share in Baptism and Confirmation...

- III. Challenge: to apply the teachings of Jesus and the current understanding of the Church and apply it to the Church in the United States today.

This means:

- a. mutual recognition of the common vocation of all Christians
- b. empowerment of peoples in the development and employment of gifts and talents
- c. the participation of all in building the beloved community in justice and peace, mercy - and love
- d. the understanding of one's identity as a lay person and as a lay pastoral minister
- e. the recognition of the different expressions of authority and leadership as it pertains to all by reason of Baptism and Confirmation and as it pertains to the various offices within the Church

e.g., the Sacred Liturgy and the various roles therein

- IV. From Father Howard Gray, S.J., address delivered at Boston College Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry:

"A couple of years ago, John Coleman provided AMERICA readers with a masterful synopsis of the future of ministry. Integrating facts from sociology, theology, and social psychology, Coleman made the following points:

1. The professional use of the term ministry has come to mean an emphasis on skills, accountability, and competence --"specialized reflective training and supervision in spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, liturgical enablement or community organization.
2. Consequently, "function and competence take precedence over a professional clergy determined by status as ordained. In the classic sociological phrase, ascribed status yields to achieved status."
3. Thus to speak of ministry "is to evoke this whole gestalt of the priority of baptism, charism, competence and collegiality over ordination, office, status and hierarchy.
4. As a consequence, this new language system no longer finds as problematic what might be an appropriate apostolate for the laity...but rather what, if anything, is appropriate uniquely and only to the ordained.

This language and ideational switch becomes even more significant when it is brought into conjunction with the decline in the active ordained ministers.

The Sisters of the Holy Spirit
First Profession of Sister Augustine Marie
Garfield Heights, Ohio
May 30, 1984

Sister Agnes Mary, Sisters of the Holy Spirit, Sister Augustine Marie, my Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus:

I am so happy to be here for the first time on this occasion - the First Profession of Sister Augustine Marie. I thank you, Sister Agnes Mary, for this invitation.

May I also take this occasion, with so many of you gathered here, to state a word of appreciation for all that the Sisters of the Holy Spirit accomplish at Jennings Hall. You labor beyond reproach, and the quality, extent and depth of your presence and service brings the vitality of the gospel to the hearts and spirits of the people to whom you minister. I am profoundly grateful for all that you do.

Parents, permit me to single you out for a special word of congratulations and appreciation. I know that you share your daughter with the Church out of respect for the Christian freedom she exercises and with the joy and generosity that characterizes truly Christian parents. This daughter of yours has been formed from the stuff of your lives and the quality of your faith. The Church and the Sisters of the Holy Spirit are eternally indebted and profoundly grateful to you. Be assured that you will always remain in our prayers.

In the January issue of U.S. Catholic Magazine in an article entitled, "Why People Are Coming Back to Church,"

the writer tells us that people are searching for something important in life and that they are trying to rediscover a sense of mystery. He reports that men and women are increasingly experiencing a spiritual void in their lives and that the pleasures of upward mobility are fleeting. He reflects that the pragmatic materialism characteristic of our society is incapable of satisfying the deepest longings of the human heart. Underscoring his point, he quotes the noted psychiatrist Victor Frankl, who observes, "...an ever-increasing number of our clients today suffer from a feeling of interior emptiness... a feeling of the total absence of a meaning to existence."

Sister Augustine Marie, why do I place before you these observations about contemporary life? Simply because they represent clear examples, among many, of that fundamental reason why you are called and chosen for service in the religious life as a member of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord calls you because there is a hunger and thirst deeply embedded in the spirits of our people - it is a hunger and thirst for God:

The Spirit and the bride say, Come! Let him who hears answer, Come! Come! Let him who is thirsty come forward; let all who desire it accept the gift of life-giving water. Rev. 22:17

The Church was founded to preach Jesus Christ, in order that this hunger might be satisfied. As a religious

woman, you are a sign and witness that God cares for his people and satisfies their deepest yearnings. You are a sign and witness that the emptiness, loneliness, and lack of meaning which the contemporary person experiences can be filled only by God. You are sign and witness, too, of the mission of the Church, which is to do the work of Jesus--to build that Kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, that kingdom of justice and peace. "I solemnly assure you, unless the grain of what falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat." (John 12:24) Your dying to self, your commitment to the vowed life, is your way of effecting the Kingdom of God. (Song of Songs 8:6-7) Your practice of Solomon's virtues, so poetically proclaimed in the Song of Songs - moderation, prudence, justice, fortitude, enables you to work for the Kingdom of God.

Sister, as you personify both this mission and calling as a Sister of the Holy Spirit, you are in a most unique way challenged to follow the way of Mary, overshadowed by the Spirit, who in her own humility recognized the power, greatness, and majesty of God, and who saw herself as an instrument of God's ongoing intervention in human history:

My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord...
God who is mighty has done great things for me...
His mercy is from age to age...
He has deposed the mighty...
The hungry he has given every good thing...

Luke 1:46-55, passim.

How great was Mary's trust in the Lord; how firm was her "fiat!" Thus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, your special divine patron, she could say:

"Blessed is she who trusted that the Lord's word
to her would be fulfilled." Luke 1:45

"Be it done unto me,
according to your word." Luke 1:38

Is it any wonder, then, that Mary, who conceived Christ first in her heart before in her womb, would be taken to glory, body and soul, as the first human person confirmed by God as victorious over human struggle and death and the first to share in the fruits of her Son's redemptive dying and rising? Surely, Sister, Mary's trust and obedience is the key to your own self-giving to the Lord and readiness to be at his service in the mission of the Church.

You may for a time have to suffer the distress of many trials, but this is so that your faith...may by its genuineness lead to praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ appears, and to an imperishable inheritance, incapable of fading or defilement.

1 Peter 1:6,4

Sister, with all this in mind, may I offer you three personal convictions which I have gleaned from my own conversations with the Lord and my own experience of religious life.

First, do not fear to be who you are uniquely called to be and to do what you are uniquely called to do. Christ himself did not hesitate to pull the Twelve and the disciples

apart from the people - to address them in a special way, with a special word, and to give them a special task. He did not hesitate to pray - just with them. Your own constitutions challenges you to be an intimate collaborator in the preaching of the Gospel: do not pull back from the demands and challenges of that intimacy. Even when you falter or fall, remember - you remain the Lord's prized and special envoy, He shall always be with you. (Confer Romans 12:1-9) His word, implanted in you and uniquely received by you through the vowed life, shall not return to him void; it shall do his will, achieving the end for which it was sent. "Blessed is she who trusted that the Lord's word to her would be fulfilled." Luke 1:45.

Secondly, this is the age of personal fulfillment and individual freedom, of personal goals and individual accomplishments, of introversion, pleasure, and comfort. Particularly as a religious woman, you are the sign of a different focus: that other-directedness which was the chief characteristic of the life of Christ, and of Mother Josephine. Your treasures, Sister, are the elderly poor, the hungry, the imprisoned, the homeless and the unemployed; the orphans, the widows and the lonely; our often-aimless and always-searching youth; the used and abused of our society, the neglected and rejected, the "least" of our brothers and sisters. Your treasures, too, are the people longing for spiritual healing--those who

have not heard the Gospel, the unchurched, alienated Catholics, our divorced and separated brothers and sisters.

Again, your own constitutions call you to this task.

Thirdly - remember that your service takes place "in the world" - in all of the unredeemed spheres of human existence. It is to the world that the message of salvation must be given; it is with the world that the power and folly of the cross as well as the radiant hope of the resurrection must be shared. I state this to assert that there is nothing "otherworldly" about your ministry or about the Christian life. In his Solemn prayers, Jesus affirmed, "They do not belong to the world. . . they are not of the world . . .," in order to instruct us that the signs of death - pride, envy, anger, greed, lust, intemperance, injustice, violence, and so on - are inconsonant with the Christian way. But with equal vigor, Jesus begs the Father, "I do not ask you to take them out of the world. . . As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." (Confer John 17:1-19)

Sister, do not shrink from the world, do not withdraw from its pains and groans. This unredeemed, conflict-ridden world of loveless lives, empty hearts, inquiring minds, broken families, estranged minorities, and international tensions and violence - do not run from this world into an "other world." The "other world" does not need the Gospel; this world does.

It is out of the experience of this world that the fundamental life questions are asked: Who is the human person?

What is the meaning and purpose of our lives? What is goodness and what is sin? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgement, and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our beings?¹

Sister, this is the world and the life experience that needs the Gospel. The Gospel can dispel our doubts, fears, and anxieties. The Gospel can transform our ways and remake and revive our consciences. The Gospel can bring meaning to our empty lives. The Gospel can bring peace to a materialistic, crisis-filled world.

I repeat - your ministry takes place "in the world," in the unredeemed spheres of human existence. Do not shrink from this world, its anxieties and its hopes. God's people hunger and thirst for the word of God, in order to deal with this world. May Mary be your model in this noble task.

My brothers and sisters, every Eucharist represents the clarity of Jesus's identity and the boldness of His in-breaking into the world, for in these humble signs of bread and wine the mystery of divine intervention in an unredeemed world is re-enacted. May each of us here be nourished by this Eucharistic food, that our share in the priestly and prophetic service of Christ may lead the world to that salvation for which it so deeply longs. All of us yearn for

¹Confer "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" of the II Vatican Council.

First Profession

May 30, 1984

Page 8

a universe in which the fullness of Christ's order and redemption is experienced. In the words of the poet, Langston Hughes - and Sisters, we depend upon you--

I dream a world where man
No other will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn,
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And Joy, like a pearl,
Attend the needs of all mankind,
Of such I dream -
Our world.

17 June 1984
150 Anniversary of the Sisters of Charity of the BVM
Regional Celebration
Saint Thomas Church, Memphis, Tennessee

Sisters, it is a great delight for me to be with you today to celebrate this anniversary of your founding. The whole Church, and especially the Community of St. Thomas, rejoices with you today, thanking God for the blessings He has bestowed on His people these many years through your hands. How can we even begin to count them. Surely, the Franciscan Friars rejoice with you. For decades we shared the pastoral care of God's people, and what a joy our work together has been.

It was not flesh and blood that drew you together, but the Holy Spirit of God, who gives good gifts to the children of God, and who endowed you with so many gifts, for the sake of building up the Body of Christ. For the gifts of the Holy Spirit are never purely private--they are always for the building up of the Body.

How generously you have responded to the call of the Holy Spirit, and opened yourselves to receive these powerful gifts. Throughout your long history, it is so plain that the Holy Spirit worked in you. Each of us here can personally attest to this miracle of God's grace: in your abiding and loving service to the black community from the very beginning. You loved us as Christ's very own--with reverence and sensitivity. Not counting the cost, ignoring all hateful and misguided criticism--you humbly but firmly set yourselves at

in Memphis without studying the Chapters entitled, "Strangely Dressed Catholic Nuns and the Coloreds in South Memphis" and "Contemporary Nuns Foster Black Culture and Black Religious Expressions." Clearly, if there was a "Colored to Negro to Black" conversion experience within the African-American community, there was a like growth and development among the BVM Sisters who served that community. In those difficult and tenuous times, we all had to "mend our ways and encourage one another, so that together we could dwell with the God of love and peace." (2 Cor. 3:12)

Sisters, you came among us as Christ Himself did, as gift of the Father's love: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. . . (John 3:16) Like Christ you, as it were, took on our flesh and our color, listening and learning, giving and serving. In listening to our stories with understanding and love, more than anyone can say, you have helped. . . You helped us to discover ourselves, the richness and beauty of our "Gift of Blackness" which Pope Paul VI said was our glory and our very special gift to the whole Church.

To be a gift--Sisters--you must know what Gift is all about. So Jesus [in John 4] speaks to the Samaritan Woman at the well: "If only you knew the gift of God," and if only you knew the treasure contained within the humble request for a drink of water--you would find the deep search in your heart for living water.

We have a Father who so loved the world that He sent his only begotten Son to us. We have a Saviour who became one with us in obedience to the Father to liberate us from the slavery of sin and death at the cost of His own body and blood. We have the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son and powerfully moves in the hearts of all who hunger and thirst for Justice, and who makes us all--through the gifts supplied to each part--into One Whole Body of Christ, for the life and salvation of all the world.

Today also is Fathers' Day--a day we set aside to honor our earthly fathers with gifts expressing our gratitude and love. Fathers, God bless you abundantly. We remember our fathers and grandfathers who are no longer with us. May our heavenly Father give them eternal rest!

Sisters and Women, perhaps talking about fathers, the Trinity, even a heavenly Father--might stir a little resentment. Perhaps some women come of age might be reminded by these words, of a system of patriarchy in society--yes and even in the Church--which has oppressed them and deprived them of full human rights.

The Church recognizes with sorrow the sin which so easily reigns in our weak hearts--it is easy to be arrogant, self-righteous, and self-justifying. It is so easy to consider ourselves superior to others because of our race, the privileges of education that we may have received, the blessings of

150th Anniv. Srs. of Charity, BVM
17 June 1984
Page 7

Let us find favor with the Lord at the Eucharistic Table,
where he shall receive us as his own.

For 150 years the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin
Mary were nourished at this Sacred Table. May they, and all
of us gathered here, also see it as a pledge of our future
glory.

Most Reverend James P. Lyke, O.F.M., Ph.D.

CONGREGATION CELEBRATION OF JOLIET FRANCISCAN JUBILARIANS

Sunday, 24 June 1984
St. Raymond Cathedral
Joliet, Illinois

Readings: CORPUS CHRISTI: Cycle "A"
Deut. 8:2-3; 14-16
I Cor. 10: 16-17
John 6: 51-58

N.B.: 10 Diamond Jubilarians (60 years professed)
14 Golden Jubilarians (50 years professed)
6 Silver Jubilarians (25 years professed)

*By consent
Mr. Ann Jones*

Michael Jackson

My dear Sisters--today is a day of great joy in the Church here in Joliet and throughout the world--yes, and in heaven too! ~~For~~ today we gather to celebrate the magnificence of our God's great gift of Himself to us, manifested ⁱⁿ ~~under~~ the ~~form of the~~ lives of our sister jubilarians we honor here: thirty sisters--summing up in professed lives a harvest totaling 1,450 years of God's blessings!

How fitting that we celebrate this jubilee day on the feast of Corpus Christi! On this feast we remember the special gift that Christ left to us in the Church of His own Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It is appropriate ~~not only~~ because the daily Eucharist has surely sustained our sisters these many years of their service to the Church, and that devotion to the Eucharist is so central to the rule of life which they professed, the spirituality they have lived, and the faith that they have witnessed so fruitfully.

Our sisters are Franciscans--and their lives are

deeply marked by the life and words of our Father Saint Francis. Dearest to their hearts is the love Saint Francis bore towards the Eucharist, and his penetrating understanding of this great mystery of Christ's Body and Blood. Writing to a General Chapter of his order, he open his heart for us all:

Our whole being should be seized with fear, the whole world should tremble and heaven rejoice, when Christ the Son of the Living God is present on the altar in the hands of the priest. What wonderful majesty! What stupendous condescension! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the whole universe, God and the Son of God, should humble Himself like this and hide under the form of a little bread, for our salvation. Look at God's condescension, my brothers, and pour out your hearts before him (Ps. 61:9). Humble yourselves that you may be exalted by him (cf. I Peter 5:6). Keep nothing for yourselves, so that he who has given himself wholly to you, may receive you wholly. (LETTER TO A GENERAL CHAPTER)

The heart of St. Francis' insight is this: In the Eucharistic ~~Bread~~, God humbles Himself absolutely before His beloved Creatures: Lord of all, He becomes Least of All! At the Last Supper, Jesus says to His disciples as they argue

among themselves about who is the greatest: "Who is greater, the one who reclines at table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines? But I am among you as one who serves!" (Luke 22:27). And if the server of food is less than the consumer of the meal; how much more subordinate and subjected is the food to the one who eats? "The bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh." (John 6:51).

In the gift of Christ upon our altars, God has humbled Himself before us, who gather to eat and to drink. In the Eucharistic gift of Christ, our God has impoverished Himself utterly and absolutely. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty ^{you} might become rich." (II Cor. 8:9). ~~And~~ ^J this is the poverty of our God: having given us a Son, obedient even to death, handing over His body and blood to be our very nourishment in spiritual starvation, our healing in illness and disease, our reconciliation in injury and alienation, our life in the face of death itself--our great God is helpless before us. When we reject Him, there is nothing more that He can give to us. When we waste this gift, what more is there of our God that we might vandalize? There is nothing more of our God to give, nothing more that He might spend on our behalf. The Eucharist we

receive with our mouths and hold in our hearts is the very impoverishment and emptying-out of our God!

This is the greatness of our God that we celebrate today--that the total gift of God's own self should be hidden, spent, lost within the sinful, imperfect hearts of men and women who come, who take and eat, who take and drink. So Christ's love is hidden: consumed by sinners.

The lives we see before us today in our sister jubilarians--are Eucharistic lives. They have been constantly nourished by this gift of God--and they have become what they have received. "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3). As Christ was not ashamed to be remembered, to be memorialized--as hidden life: life buried under the form of common bread, to be torn, broken, and shared; wine to be blessed and shared--so our sisters have not been ashamed to follow their Lord in the same dying and hidden ways. This is my body, broken for you. This is my blood poured out for you. Come, take and eat. Come, take and drink.

The world which saw the cross as foolishness and weakness, a stumbling block to the wise and powerful (cf. I Cor. 1:18ff) will find these sisters today as strange and foolish creatures. They will look at them today and wonder why. They would ask: all the years in religious life that

you have spent--was it worth it? Couldn't you have made something of your lives instead of running away from those pursuits common to us all? You could have been mothers--and now grandmothers. You could have made a real contribution in life, in some profession or other. What a waste of life and talent! In those sixty or fifty or twenty-five years--whatever did you do that was worthwhile or valuable or memorable?

"Your life is hidden with Christ in God." Dear Sisters--you cannot hope to answer the world's detraction. There is no answer that would satisfy those who need results, who cannot believe unless they hold it in their hands, or make it themselves, or control it.

" We look not at things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (II Cor. 4:18)

God has not asked you to be successful, as Mother Theresa of Calcutta has observed, but faithful. It has been your business to listen--like Mary our Mother--for the word of God and to cherish it up in your hearts, as she did (cf. Luke 2:51), waiting patiently for the Lord (cf. James 5:8) and strengthening your hearts until His coming as He promised.

Our world wants results. We define even spiritual effectiveness by numbers counted, days filled, jobs done,

missions accomplished--even though the Scriptures themselves caution us that the fruit of our labors is entirely in the hands of our God. "Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." (ICor. 3:7). "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and the branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit." (John 15:1-2)

It is God's will that our lives bear much fruit--but we are not--nor have ever been--responsible for the results. God provides the outcomes--and we often do not see the fruit of our labor. If we do, it is cause to give thanks. If we do not, we must remember our lives are indeed hidden lives, as the seed in good ground is hidden in the earth, to die so that it might bear much fruit (John 12:24).

My dear sisters--you have spent yourselves in the service of Christ and His Church. Like Christ you have humbled yourselves to be the servants of all. Like Christ you have handed over your very flesh and blood obedient even to death itself. You have here no earthly city (cf. Heb. 13:14), and you have no espoused life on this earth to call your own. "The Bridegroom has the Bride, but the friend of the bridegroom only stands and listens for His voice, and he rejoices greatly to hear it. And so this joy of mine is made full.

Joliet Franciscan Sisters
Sunday, 24 June 1984
Page 7

He must increase and I must decrease." (John 3:29-30)

So like spent candles of your years, you DECREASE
in the sight of the world, while the pure light of Christ
shines brightly within bodies and minds and hearts worn frail
in service and in love. ~~And~~ ^S so, like the wise virgins, you
trim your lamps and burn them ever brightly. The Bridegroom
Comes! Go forth in joy to meet your Lord!

Sisters, in the name of the church, I would
like to thank you for all you are and all you
have done. For all you have meant, we might
well quote the old Negro Spiritual and place the
words on your lips on this Day of Jubilee:

God has smiled on me.
He has set me free.
God has smiled on me.
He's been good to me.

The Church of Saint Charles Borromeo
October 21, 1984
Vocation Day
9:30 a.m. Mass

"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's,
but Give to God what is God's."

Introduction

Introduction

- A. Timeliness of today's Gospel: religion & public policy
- B. Counselor at summer camp, leading discussion on the purpose of God had for everything he created. Good reasons for: clouds, trees, rocks, rivers, animals, and just about everything else.

"If God has a good purpose for everything, then why did He create poison ivy?" Counselor stunned; another child came to his rescue:

"The reason God made poison ivy is because He wanted us to know there are certain things we should keep our cotton-pickin' hands off!"

- I. Some say, "Render to Caesar" = keep your hands off government
 - A. Palestine = occupied territory
 - B. Taxation = symbol of Roman authority & control over Jews
 - C. Jews - believed they were a theocracy: only God w control
 - D. Jesus dilemma:
 - 1. Yes to taxation: Jews would rise up;
 - 2. No to taxation: Roman authorities would rise up;
 - E. Jesus response - left us a principle for Christian engagement in the world:
 - 1. recognize the legitimate domain of government
 - 2. recognize the rightful and fundamental place of God:
SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND ALL ELSE WILL FOLLOW

Decree on Apostolate of the Laity

The laity must take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own obligation. Led by the light of the Gospel, and the mind of the Church, and motivated by Christian Charity, they must act directly and in a definite way in the temporal sphere.... Everywhere and in all things they must seek the justice of God's kingdom."

page 2

Charles Borromeo

II. In other words, there is a place for the Church in the temporal order because there are moral dimensions to government policies and actions

A. Mission Sunday// Kenshasa// Mobutu

1. Help the Church establish itself in far off countries
2. Mobutu -- dictator who used the profits of the country for his own selfish interests
3. Are there no moral dimensions to this question?

B. U.S.

1. Are there no moral dimensions to issues of pornography, child abuse, race relations, arms control, economy, abortion?
2. Are we suppose to keep our cotton-pickin hands off?

III. Relationship between Mission Sunday & Vocations

1. evangelize consciences
2. of the people, by the people, and for the people
of the people's conscience...
of the people's informed conscience
3. We need priests, deacons, and religious men and women to assist the Church in the formation of the consciences of the people....
to preach in season and out of season
to witness

24TH ANNUAL EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION DINNER
SAINT ALEXIS HOSPITAL
28 MAY 1985

Mr. Stitzel

St. Alexis

MOTHER EMMALITA, A DISTINGUISHED GUESTS--MEMBERS
OF THE ST. ALEXIS FAMILY--

I AM HAPPY TO BE WITH YOU THIS EVENING TO HONOR
160 OF YOUR FELLOW-WORKERS WHO HONOR US, THIS
HOSPITAL AND THE CHURCH IN CLEVELAND AND ALL THE
CLEVELAND COMMUNITY--BY THE DEDICATION OF THEIR
LIVES. NATIONAL HOSPITAL WEEK--THIS VERY WEEK
WE CELEBRATE NOW--HAS DESIGNATED "LIFE WORK" TO
BE THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR. BUT YOU EMBODY THIS
THEME WITH THE GIFT OF YOUR LIVES.

WORDS SPEAK POORLY OF SPIRITUAL RICHES--UNLESS
THE WORDS ARE JOINED TO THE WITNESS OF LIVES.
THERE IS A STORY TOLD ABOUT A CONFEDERATE CHAPLAIN,
WHO WAS SERVING THE ARMY LED BY GENERAL BRAGG.
THIS CHAPLAIN, NAMED DR. JOHN MCFERRIN, WAS WALKING
OVER THE BATTLEFIELD OF CHATTANOOGA ONE CHILLY
NOVEMBER DAY. HE WAS CARRYING A BIBLE IN HIS HAND,
AND WAS BRINGING SPIRITUAL COMFORT TO THE DYING
SOLDIERS, BLEEDING IN THE FIELDS.

DR. MCFERRIN CAME UPON ONE YOUNG SOLDIER-- "LET
ME READ A WORD TO YOU," HE SAID. "OH CHAPLAIN,"
THE WOUNDED MAN SAID, "I AM SO THIRSTY, I AM SO
THIRSTY." THE CHAPLAIN FOUND SOME WATER, Poured
IT INTO HIS HAT, AND BROUGHT IT TO THE MAN. "Now,
BROTHER, LET ME SHARE GOD'S WORD WITH YOU." "CHAPLAIN,

"I AM SO COLD!" THE CHAPLAIN TOOK OFF HIS LIGHT OVERCOAT, AND WRAPPED IT AROUND THE WOUNDED MAN, CRADLING HIM GENTLY AS A MOTHER WOULD HER SON. THE SOLDIER LOOKED UP INTO THE EYES OF THE CHAPLAIN AND SAID, "NOW PLEASE READ ME WHATEVER IS IN THAT BOOK WHICH MAKES A REBEL CHAPLAIN TREAT A YANKEE SOLDIER, THE WAY YOU TREATED ME..."

SPIRITUAL COMFORT. GOD'S HEALING WORD. EMPTY COMFORT WHEN ONLY WORDS--USELESS WORDS WHEN ONLY SPIRITUAL. BUT WHEN SPIRIT FILLS UP OUR LABOR AND MAKES IT MORE THAN JUST A JOB WE ARE PAID TO DO, THEN OUR WORK OVERFLOWS WITH LIFE, AND OUR LIFE OVERFLOWS WITH LOVE AND JOY. AND WHEN OUR WORK MAKES OUR LIFE RICH IN THE SPIRIT, THEN THE LIVING WORD OF OUR TOUCH BRINGS THE COMFORT AND HEALING OF THE SPIRIT.

OUR WORK MAY NOT BRING OUR LIFE MUCH PHYSICAL COMFORT--OUR FEET MAY BE ACHING, OUR BACKS PRETTY TIRED, AND HEADS WEARY AND DROOPING FROM LONG HOURS, LONG CORRIDORS, LONG LINES OF PEOPLE, ENDLESS PROBLEMS AND TROUBLES TO LISTEN TO, HARD TIMES AND HARD FLOORS. BUT OUR LIVES AND OUR WORK WILL BRING GREAT COMFORT OF HEART AND MIND AND BODY--TO THOSE WE SERVE. OUR WORK MAY NOT MAKE US WELL-KNOWN. IT CERTAINLY DOES NOT MAKE US MATERIALLY WEALTHY. BUT YOUR LABOR AND YOUR LIVES BRING THE GREATEST WEALTH TO OTHERS-- THE TREASURE OF LIFE ITSELF, RESTORED AND RENEWED. "LIFE-WORK" IS OUR THEME THIS YEAR? BUT OUR WORK

IS LIFE!!!

YES, YOUR WORK IS--NO MORE, NOR LESS--LIFE ITSELF! YOU ARE THE SERVANTS OF LIFE, IN THE SERVICE OF LIFE, WHERE IT IS THE MOST VULNERABLE, MOST SUBJECT TO ATTACK. THE ENEMIES OF LIFE ARE THEREFORE YOUR ENEMIES TOO, FOR YOU SERVE LIFE. THERE ARE THE MORE OBVIOUS ENEMIES: THE DISEASES OF THE ORGANISM, AND THE DISEASES OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURES WHICH MAKE LIFE POSSIBLE, WHICH SUPPORT AND NOURISH IT. BUT HATRED, ANIMOSITIES, WARFARE--IN A LARGER SENSE, ARE YOUR ENEMIES TOO, FOR THEY ARE JUST AS DEATH-DEALING, ALONG WITH PREJUDICE, FEAR AND IGNORANCE, WHICH OFTEN FEED AND FOSTER HATRED AND VIOLENCE WHICH KILL LIFE.

YOU HAVE A SPECIAL VESTED INTEREST IN PURSUING PEACE IN THIS WORLD, AND THAT JUSTICE WITHOUT WHICH PEACE CANNOT BE ESTABLISHED NOR LONG ENDURE. WITHOUT EITHER, LIFE IS IMPERILLED. AND THERE ARE OTHER ENEMIES, HIDDEN ENEMIES, NO LESS LETHAL AND POWERFUL, EVEN IF NOT AS OBVIOUS AS DISEASES, POVERTY, INJUSTICE AND WAR. SUCH ENEMIES MAY EVEN CLOTHE THEMSELVES AS WOLVES IN SHEEPSKINS, AND APPEAR AS HUMAN PROGRESS AND FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT.

THIS IS WHERE WE NEED TO BE MOST CAUTIOUS. FOR EXAMPLE, ECONOMISTS NOW TELL US THAT BY THE YEAR 2000 OUR WHOLE ECONOMIC LIFE WILL BE BASED ON SERVICE, AND NOT PRODUCT INDUSTRIES. THE GREAT EMPLOYERS, IN OTHER WORDS, WILL NOT BE AS IN THE PAST, THE GREAT STEEL MILLS, FACTORIES, FARMS, MINES AND FIELDS.

AUTOMATION HAS ALREADY TAKEN OVER WHAT ONCE REQUIRED MANY HUMAN BEINGS, THEIR LABOR, SKILLS AND CRAFT. NOW THE FUTURE GREAT INDUSTRIES WILL PROVIDE SERVICES, NOT PRODUCTS. AND OUR EMPLOYERS WILL BE THE GOVERNMENT, AT ALL LEVELS, SOCIAL AGENCIES, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, HEALTH FACILITIES, WELFARE AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS. WE WILL SPEND MORE AND MORE OF OUR TALENT AND CREATIVITY AND ENERGY UPON SERVING LIFE AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE ITSELF.

IS THIS PROGRESS? IT CERTAINLY SHOWS GREAT PROMISE AND EXCITING POTENTIAL. BUT IT HOLDS ALSO GREAT DANGER TOO. WHEN PROFIT IS A MOTIVATING PRINCIPLE OF THE ECONOMIC ORDER IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD--GREED IS ALWAYS A FACTOR INFLUENCING HUMAN LIVES. ONCE ONLY FIFTEEN OR TWENTY PERCENT OF OUR ^{Federal} TAXES WENT FOR DEFENCE; ^{Income} BY THE YEAR 2000 ECONOMISTS ESTIMATE THAT MORE THAN 65 PERCENT OF OUR TAX MONEY WILL BE SPENT ON MILITARY ARMS. THE MORE OF THE WORLDS WEALTH THAT WE ACCUMULATE, THE GREATER OUR NEED TO DEFEND OUR EXCESSIVE PROPERTY FROM THOSE OF THE WORLD WHO STEADILY WILL HAVE LESS AND LESS.

THE PARTICULAR DANGER TO AN ECONOMIC ORDER BASED UPON PRODUCING GOODS CAN BE CHECKED BY A JUST DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY, PRODUCTS AND GOODS. BUT WHEN AN ECONOMIC ORDER DEALS WITH INTANGIBLES-- EVEN LIFE ITSELF--IT IS SO MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. HOW DO WE MEASURE THAT WHICH CANNOT BE MEASURED? HOW DO WE PLACE A VALUE ON THAT BEYOND ANY PRICE, OR JUSTLY

DISTRIBUTE ON THE BASIS OF MERIT, THAT WHICH CANNOT BE WEIGHED OR DIVIDED?

WILL THE SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE BE ONLY FOR THE GIFTED AND INTELLIGENT? WILL HOSPITALS BE ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE POTENTIALLY PRODUCTIVE AND USEFUL? WILL WE--WHO ARE SERVANTS OF LIFE--SERVE ONLY THOSE WHOSE LIVES CAN BE MOST PRODUCTIVE AND VALUABLE TO SOCIETY?

THE UPCOMING PASTORAL LETTER OF THE UNITED STATES BISHOPS ON THE ECONOMY--WILL REMIND US THAT MAN DOES NOT LIVE TO SERVE THE ECONOMY, BUT THAT THE ECONOMIC ORDER EXISTS TO BE AT THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY, ALL OF HUMANITY. SO WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT HUMAN LIVES DO NOT EXIST TO FURTHER THE KNOWLEDGE OF THOSE WHO STUDY, NOR TO INCREASE THE SKILLS AND SHARPEN THE EXPERTISE OF THOSE WHO PRACTICE THE HEALING ARTS. NOR IS HUMAN PROGRESS, THE BETTERMENT OF THE HUMAN CONDITION, A PRODUCT OF HUMAN INGENUITY AND EFFICIENT PRODUCTIVITY. "PROGRESS IS OUR MOST IMPORTANT PRODUCT" MAY BE AN ADMIRABLE INDUSTRIAL SLOGAN--WHEN THE PRODUCT IS TELEVISION SETS OR RADIAL TIRES. BUT WHEN HUMAN LIFE ITSELF, IN ITS LEAST AND MOST VULNERABLE FORM, BECOMES SUBORDINATE TO SOMEONE'S IDEAL OF HUMAN IMPROVEMENT--THEN WE ARE IN DEEP TROUBLE. WE ARE NOT CRAFTSMEN, NOR MECHANICS--DESIGNING OR REPAIRING LIFE. WE ARE SIMPLY SERVANTS OF LIFE, AND WE STUDY

LIFE NOT TO MASTER IT, BUT TO SERVE IT ALL THE MORE FAITHFULLY.

THE SICK OF THE WORLD WHOM WE SERVE, ARE THEN OUR MASTERS. THE WEAKEST AND LEAST OF THESE CALLS FORTH OUR GREATER DEVOTION. OUR SICK ARE OUR BEST TEACHERS AND GUIDES--AND THE VALIANT STRUGGLES FOR LIFE THAT WE OBSERVE DAILY ON OUR ROUNDS--INSTRUCT US AND LEAD US INTO THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND WISE DESIGNS. OUR PATIENTS HUMBLE US WITH THEIR COURAGE, INSPIRE US WITH THEIR PERSEVERANCE, AND ENCOURAGE US TO DO OUR BEST AND GIVE OUR ALL, WITH THEIR TOUCHING AND LOVING TRUST IN US AND IN OUR CARE. THESE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE THE VERY BOOK OF LIFE ITSELF--FOR THERE WE LEARN OUR LIFE AND OUR WORK, THERE WE FIND THE MEANING OF SERVICE, AND THERE WE FIND THE HEART OF OUR PRAYER--FOR AT OUR SIDE, IN OUR HANDS AND UNDER OUR TOUCH WE FIND THE ONE WHO ONCE SAID AND SAYS EVER STILL: "I CAME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY." [JOHN 10: 10]

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
Saint John Hospital
Volunteer Recognition
May 1, 1985, 6:00 p.m.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

"Let us love in deed and in truth, and not merely talk about it." So we hear in the first letter of John.

Dr. John McFerrin was General Bragg's chaplain in the Confederate Army. One chilly day in November he was walking over the battlefield of Chattanooga, with a Bible in his hand. He was reading to the dying soldiers as they lay bleeding on the field. He walked up to one wounded soldier and said, "Let me read to you."

"Oh, Chaplain," said the soldier, "I am so thirsty; I am so thirsty." Wise chaplain that he was, John McFerrin ran to the nearest water he could find. Pouring some in his hat, he carried it to the soldier, and lifted it to his head, pressing the water to his lips. "Now, brother, let me read to you," said McFerrin.

"Oh, Chaplain, I am so cold!" The chaplain doffed his light overcoat and put it around the wounded man, touching him as tenderly as a mother would have cared for her baby. The soldier looked up into the face of McFerrin and said, "Now, Chaplain, if there is anything in that book that makes a rebel chaplain treat a yankee soldier this way, - read it to me."

page 2

Volunteers, St. John's Hospital

Yes, "Let us love in deed and in truth, and not merely talk about it." My friends, we are here today to recognize, to thank, and to praise sisters and brothers from the Christian Community who, as we heard in last Sunday's Gospel, follow the way of the Good Shepherd and give themselves, their time and their talent, to care for the ill members of the Lord's flock. They serve the sick members of the Body of Christ because they recognize in them the wounded Christ: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me.... I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me."

Dear volunteers, in the faces of the poor and dependent sick, you did not ask whether the person was a yankee or a rebel, you did not ask the social or economic class, the ethnic or racial background -- instead, in human persons created in the image and likeness of God, you saw the face of the wounded Christ. And so, you were an instrument of the Lord's healing, a caring that goes through a person's body and touches the heart and the soul. Yes, you loved in deed and in truth - in the deed of exemplary action, in the truth of the dignity of the human person. You did not simply "talk"; you witnessed, in a spirit of faith, hope, and love. You were an instrument of God's healing power where it counts: in the depths of the person's soul and conscience. How well do the words of the poet reflect your lives:

page 3

Volunteers, St. John's Hospital

The living truth is what I long to see;
I cannot lean upon what used to be,
So shut the Bible up and show me how
The Christ you talk about is living now.

My sisters and brothers, what you do, your witness,
is so important for the ^{VALIDITY OF THE GOSPEL} life of the Church, for its credibility
and authenticity. Do not think of your service as small or
insignificant; do not say it is not worth not even "a drop
in the bucket."

"Be careful of your words. One drop of cleansing
disinfectant can neutralize a whole bucketful of poisonous
material. One drop of germ culture can turn a bucket of
water into something contagious and deadly. One drop of
water falling into a bucket of acid can create an explosion.
The "drop in the bucket" can be something of very great
importance. ::: ONE DROP OF YOUR CARE CAN DRAW YOU AND
OTHERS CLOSER TO JESUS. Indeed, is this not your reward.
Listen to the words of John again:

His commandment is this: ^{commandment} we are to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,
and are to love one another as he commanded us.
Those who keep his commandments remain in him
and he in them.

FCCS Leadership Development Retreat
Liturgy
Saturday, May 4, 1985
11:30 a.m.
Parnadale

Sisters and Brothers in the Christ:

"Let us love in deed and in truth, and not merely talk about it." So we hear in the first letter of John.

Dr. John McFerrin was General Bragg's chaplain in the Confederate Army. One chilly day in November he was walking over the battlefield of Chattanooga, with a Bible in his hand. He was reading to the dying soldiers as they lay bleeding on the field. He walked up to one wounded soldier and said, "Let me read to you."

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Yes, "Let us love in deed and in truth, and not merely talk about it." Leadership volunteers, I am here today to recognize, thank, and praise you for your willingness to serve, for your willingness to follow the Good Shepherd and give yourselves, your time and your talent, to care for the needy brothers and sisters of the Lord's flock. You shall serve them because in them you recognize the hurting Christ: "For I was hungry and you have me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, in prison and you visited me.... I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me."

Volunteers, in the faces of the poor and dependent, you will not ask whether the person is a yankee or a rebel, you will not ask the social, ethnic, or racial background of the person. Instead, in human persons created in the image and likeness of God, you will see the face of the wounded Christ. You will be an instrument of the Lord's healing, a caring that goes through a person's body and touches the heart and soul. Yes, you shall dare to love "in deed and in truth"-- in the deed of exemplary action, in the truth of the dignity of the human person. You will not "merely talk"; you will witness, in a spirit of faith, hope and love. You will be a sign of Jesus' healing power where it counts: in the depths of a person's being and conscience. How well, we pray, will the words of the poet reflect your own life and leadership:

The living truth is what I long to see;
I cannot lean upon what used to be,
So shut the Bible up and how me how
The Christ you talk about is living now.

In this call and challenge of service, Volunteers, you will understand that, gifted and blessed by God, you can emulate God's creative activity and arouse in the poor you serve a sense of their own self-hood and giftedness.

In this call and challenge of service, you will find Christ in new and surprising ways, as you discern the miracle of God's image on the Holy Shroud of the faces of the poor and needy.

In this call and challenge of service, you will discover your own salvation, find peace of mind, and literally feel the Lord's blessing upon your own person.

In this call and challenge of service, you will find your own humanity and the wealth of generosity, selflessness, compassion and commitment that you instinctively recognize as the truest expression of your own happiness and the most sublime vocation of human personality.

In this call and challenge of service, Leaders, you will learn a way, through the Federation of Catholic Community Services, to link yourselves with the Church as a community of disciples - to help the Church be and do in the here and

now what Jesus did in his time.

In this call and challenge of service, you shall discover that you, yes, you will be evangelized by the very poor whom you shall serve. The more you touch the minds, hearts, and bodies of the poor, the clearer and sharper will be your own image of the face of Christ. Like Thomas, ~~so~~ you will be able to put your hands in the wounds of the Lord's body, as you serve the hurting Body of Christ. Like Paul and Barnabas, you will experience the distaste and even wrath of those who do not understand. But, like Paul and Barnabas, you will be "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit." Indeed, well might the Lord say directly to you:

I assure you,
the man who has faith in me
will do the works I do,
and greater far than these.

My Sisters and Brothers, in these years ahead you will have the privilege of nourishing the poor among the People of God. In every Eucharist, however, God nourishes you with the Body and Blood of His Son. See how much he cares for us in offering us the gift of Himself. Truly, God loves us "in deed and in truth."

Acts 13: 44-52

John 14: 7-14

(1 John 3:18)