

(Address given by the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at the National Convention of the Catholic Press Association, April 24, 1974, Denver, Colorado)

One of our alumni recently asked me: Where is the Church going? What will it be like when my children are my age? I have found over the years that our alumni often ask questions like this, seemingly simple, yet requiring a great deal of thought to answer adequately. I do not remember what I answered on the spur of the moment, but it could not have been spectacular. Yet, I did remember the question and would like to try to answer it in a more leisurely and more thoughtful fashion today. I speak, of course, of the Catholic Church, since I know that best.

As we approach the next millennium, futurology, the science of the future, has become a familiar academic pastime. Many books are appearing here and in Europe with the magic year number 2000 in their titles. Even I have contributed one in the form of the Terry Lectures at Yale University last December.

However, most of this futurology deals with the secular world of economic, social, political, scientific, and technological changes. There is very little speculation on the future of the Church or the churches in these books.

It does not take much imagination or information to see that in a rapidly changing world, the churches are changing, too, and especially the Catholic Church, due particularly to the effects of

Vatican Council II. In many ways, the Catholic Church had been the great unchanged and unchanging reality in the modern world of the Twentieth Century. The Protestant Churches had been changing and evolving in many ways since the Reformation, four and a half centuries ago. But during these centuries, the Catholic Church stood on dead center and I use the adjective advisedly, since change -- at least in non-essentials -- is a condition of life and growth. It is fair to say that there has been more change in the Church during the last ten years than during the preceding four hundred and fifty years. Some of the change, in fact, most of it, was good and needed. Some few of the changes, or what accompanied the changes, were silly phenomena that will, I trust, soon become passe' and forgotten, as other secular fads like the hula hoop, come and go without any lasting effect.

However, there were changes that were radical, fundamental, even for the Church, revolutionary. These changes will necessarily affect the whole future evolution of the Church, both short range and long range. We have been living with the short range effects and can more easily describe and, hopefully, understand them. As to the long range effects, we can only speculate and hope.

Among the most basic changes in the Church that emerged from Vatican Council II was what, for want of a better word, I would simply call "openness". Having read practically all the journalistic books that appeared during and after the Council, I believe that one of the

best was Michael Novak's, "The Open Church". Perhaps it is his analysis that influences my choice of the word "openness". Michael Novak, in a recent Commonweal article, explained what he meant by the adjective "open":

"By 'open', I did not mean permissive, or flaccid, or non-committal -- as in the phrase 'open marriage'. I had in mind the image of inquiring intellect, disciplined by concrete fact (in insight) and by evidence (in judgment) -- 'open' to the demands of inquiry, but 'closed', too, by the exigencies of inquiry. I did not imagine that 'anything goes'.

"But by 'open', the contemporary temper, particularly in America, frequently seems to mean 'without limits', 'without negatives', 'without demands'. In the name of transcendence, barbarism is cultivated. 'Liberation' seldom means the acceptance of responsibilities, duties, and limits; it tends to mean doing what one pleases when one pleases; it is sometimes a synonym for infantilism, a flight from social bonds and concrete duties.

"The human spirit, ironically, gains such freedom as is accessible to it by the route of interdiction; by the acceptance of limits; by the disciplines of social and institutional involvement. There is no genuine learning, for example, without the humble submission of intelligence

to the demands and discipline of plodding inquiry,
in community with others who do not allow one to do
simply as one pleases."

I suppose that one might begin to understand this new openness in the Church by looking at its opposite that well characterizes the pre-Vatican Council II Church, namely "the closed Church". There will be those who quibble about my term or Novak's, saying that the Church has always been open to everyone. This objection really reinforces the difference because the Church was open indeed, but only on its own terms. To enter, you had to come home and leave all your baggage behind you.

When I grew up, the Church had all the answers to every conceivable question and the answers were always black and white. We were right and everyone else was wrong. There was no partial truth, no tentative searching, no intellectual modesty -- the leadership simply said yes or no, right or wrong, and that was that. Authority was a force to be reckoned with in the closed Church. The reckoning was simple: authority commanded and you obeyed; no questions asked; no reasons given; only the statement, "You do it because I say do it; do it or get out".

I am, of course, speaking somewhat in caricature, but certainly not altogether so. If even the state wanted to progress, it had better listen to the Church's advice, since we also had the last word of wisdom to say about political, as well as economic and social reality. If

there was evil in these secular worlds of politics, business, or societal life, it was because they were not listening carefully enough to what the Church, the perfect society, was saying. If culture was degenerating, again the Church could give the reason why. Evil books, that is, evil in the Church's judgment, were put on the Index, not to be read by faithful Christians without special permission, even in the university. The Church would tell you what movies to see or not to see as well. Again, these judgments, aesthetic and intellectual, as well as moral, were made peremptorily, finally, with unfailing certitude and enforced rigidly up and down the line. When you said Church, you meant everyone from the Pope to the parish janitor or the head of the Altar and Rosary Society. Everyone's style was the same, from top to bottom: authoritarian, unyielding, righteous, unquestioning, or, if described less lovingly from the outside, cocksure.

This was the salient character of the Church I knew for most of the years of my life, the Church I learned about at home, at school, in the parish, especially in the seminary. It was surely a law and order Church. It was growing larger numerically, even if along rigid lines. There was little doubt expressed. What few revolts occurred were dealt with effectively and quickly -- out you go. It was peaceful in a way, super-obedient and faithful, easy to govern, and for all of these reasons, triumphalistic in style, mediaeval monarchic in governance, as safe and secure as the gilt-edged government bonds of the time, and about as exciting as a graveyard in its easy victory over the world of the flesh and the devil.

Then came along a man named John who opened the windows to let in the fresh air of modern reality. One can argue whether he really knew what he was doing, but certainly the Holy Spirit knew and Pope John did listen well. Earlier Popes had written beautiful treatises about just wages. John did not write. He just doubled the unjust wages paid everyone at the Vatican. His simple deed spoke louder than all the beautiful words of his predecessors.

By opening Vatican Council II, Pope John, in fact, opened the Church. He also opened it to the other Christian churches which had not even been called churches before. He opened it to non-Christians, even welcomed discussions with non-believers and remarked to Khrushchev's daughter that her son's name was the same as his, and could he pray especially for little Ivan? John opened the Church to freedom of conscience. His Council discarded the ancient chestnut that "error has no rights", since rights inhere in human persons, whether or not in error, and not in abstractions like the notion of error. John opened the Church to great theologians who had been abruptly silenced before. He welcomed new ideas from whatever source, apologized to the Jews for centuries of anti-Semitism, declaring with open arms, "I am Joseph (his baptismal name), your brother". John recognized that, in fact, the world was not waiting with bated breath for every declaration from a triumphalistic Church or pontifical Churchmen. He introduced modesty, receptiveness, listening, in a word, openness.

In a very real sense, after John XXIII died, Pope Paul VI has had to pick up the pieces, to restore some semblance of order to the

Church through which the winds of change, pent up for almost five centuries, had been blowing with hurricane force during Pope John's brief pontificate. It is unfortunately, but inevitably the quite unfair task for our age to try to assimilate in a decade or two, the whole world of change that should have been taking place slowly, gradually, and organically, over the past five centuries.

I suspect that central to our problem today is that the leadership of the Church was formed, trained, and accustomed to govern the safe, sane, and secure Church of pre-Vatican Council II. Methods of governance that were perfect then are disastrous now. Attitudes, mind-sets, frames of reference, modes of thought and discourse that worked well then, a short time ago, do not work at all today, in fact, are counterproductive. Habits born of centuries of sailing in halcyon waters do not prepare either the officers or the crew to sail through a sudden and unexpected hurricane with gale-force winds and mountainous waves. Every normal action now must become an unprecedented improvisation. I am somewhat reminded of the world revolution we encountered in the university world in the late sixties. One day I called President George Beadle of the University of Chicago to ask him how he had managed to survive a sudden ten-day crisis. He answered, "Every morning I asked myself, what is the worst thing I can do today, and I didn't do it". This is called negative wisdom, but it is much needed today.

The difference between the universities and the Church is that in the universities, the leadership was largely swept out when hard

times came, and the leaders were replaced by those who had proved themselves adept at crisis management, mostly younger men. In the Church, the leadership is practically for life.

If the officers of Peter's Bark are having trouble, you can be sure that the crew is troubled, too. Never before in the Church's long history have so many of the officers and crew jumped ship. Again, one must try to understand and to be compassionate, even while welcoming and applauding the changes that caused all this insecurity. The pre-Vatican II Church, as described above, was so highly structured, so authoritarian and secure, that one could literally lean on the walls and the walls would support all who leaned. There were many who leaned, rather than stand on their own two feet. When authority was first questioned, and showed its feet of clay, when the secure walls began to shake and some of them fell, many people who were leaning on those walls fell with them.

People used to total support, total security, absolute answers to everything, find it hard, if not impossible, to survive in a growing atmosphere of insecurity, reasonable doubt, questioning, and openness. Every crisis, every cataclysmic change has its predictable casualties -- those who cannot change, who cannot adjust to the new reality. We all have to regret this in the Church, but we also have to recognize that the crisis had to come sooner or later, and the hour was already very

late for the inevitable change. Now that it has happened, we must do all we can to help those who were hurt, who still cannot understand, but that is not a reason for turning back the clock, for attempting to reverse the normal flow of history.

If kindness and understanding for former bishops, priests, nuns, and disaffected Catholics is part of the price we pay, it is even more a demand of simple Christian charity in our times. Love for our brethren and sisters needs no justification or explanation. We need to grant understanding and love as well to those at both ends of the spectrum within the Church, those ultra-conservatives who cannot live comfortably with the changes, and those ultra-liberals who want to change everything that is yet unchanged, whether or not it is good or proper or even useful to change it.

Both groups should, I believe, be lived with in whatever peace can be managed during this necessarily interim period. If one group wants a Latin, old-style Mass for themselves (or for their burial as one old friend has prescribed), so be it, and why not? If the other group wants quite awful music and somewhat vulgar ceremonies for one of their celebrations, we should swallow our ancient instinctive anathemas and suffer it -- in the belief that bad music and cheapness die of their own inadequacy in time. If the Pentecostals, somewhere along this spectrum, have their own preferred way, why not let them have the benefit of the Gamaliel principle: "If this movement of theirs is of human origin, it will break up of its own accord; but

if it does, in fact, come from God, you will not only be unable to destroy them, but you might find yourselves fighting against God".

(Acts 5:38-39)

We should have no less love for those who have left the Church altogether, so they think, either because it has changed too much or not enough. Again, they are casualties of a crisis and we should emulate God's understanding, as well as His love and mercy for all. We may well need the same love and mercy ourselves some day.

Thus far, I have been attempting to analyze and describe what has been happening in the Church recently, rather than speculating in answer to the Notre Dame alumnus' question as to where we are going in the years ahead. I have not been avoiding the answer, but laying the foundation for it. One cannot speculate about the future with any assurance unless he understands something of the past and present, where we have been and where we seem to be right now, or in the awful jargon of the day, "seeing where it's at, letting it all hang out". Having done just that, however cursorily and in short hand, now we shall look ahead.

As a kind of academic leitmotiv to all that follows, I would like to quote from a recent article of the American theologian, Anthony Padovano:

"The Catholicism of the Council is the one which confesses that the Church has no hope of controlling, by its concepts or its energy, the creative process, the secular order, the

experience of religion, or the full scope of the Church. Catholic experience is always at its best when it becomes less self-conscious: we cope best when we lose control. Many in the Church fear this because they have no faith in the process, in reality, in the future, in the central mystery of the universe. They are right when they say that the Church is troubled with a lack of faith. But they may not know what they say. A lack of faith in definitions of the Church, or even in God, is not the problem. The modern crisis in faith expresses itself in the doubt we harbor about the reliability of life, or of reality, to achieve its own meaning and encounter the proper center. The most fatal skepticism of the moment is the skepticism of those in the Church who distrust what they cannot control or conquer; the most deadly heresy is the heresy of those who refuse to open the Church so that it can find its center. In effect, they are saying that the universe has no center, or that the center is controlled by an elite or that God had chosen a very limited place to be central." (A. Padovano, "The Inevitable Catholic", Critic, Vol. XXXII, No. 4, p. 19)

Against the background of all that has been said thus far, I would now like to make some definite predictions for the Church in

the future, based on dynamisms already in being and at work. I claim no special wisdom or foresight, just enormous interest and concern.

"Openness" will continue to characterize, more and more, the post-Conciliar Church. There will, of course, be counter movements, nostalgia for a more serene and settled past, the constant drag of ultra-conservatism from authoritarians, but the flow of history will not be reversed: no more Index; no more Holy Office and modern Inquisition; no more suppression of university theologians who speculate on the frontiers of theology; no more quiet exiles for those who dare to question; no more secret and hidden agendas of the powerful clerical few; no more triumphalistic lording it over other Christian communities; no more arrogance of "our" truth or suppression of "their" error; no more unconcern for a vast world formerly labeled heathen or pagan; no more disdain for insights from a world formerly called profane; no more seeming to control, for our own purposes, Our Lord and Savior's grace or the Holy Spirit's movement; no more pretense of having the ultimate answer to every question; no more inhumanity of Canon law applied like Roman civil law before Christianity changed that world; no more insensitivity to immense problems like poverty, population, racism, global justice; no more one-man rule on every level of authority; no more unconscious assumption that the Church is a male preserve, or a Roman one either; no more unconcern for the voice and presence and will of the people of God in the Church which

is to say, the laity. Again, such lists tend to caricature reality, but there is no item I have mentioned without its own historical reality in the past. The overriding of all of this dismal reality is precisely what Popes John and Paul accomplished by inaugurating the Council and bringing it to a successful conclusion. It was not so much the vast production of documents that changed and is changing the Church, but the vital tension of the debate that preceded their writing and the prophetic spirit that voted their passage and has continued to be concerned with their implementation, despite growing opposition.

Openness is here to stay, thank God, and the Church is much better because of this fundamental change. The Church is not more secure, safer, more peaceful, more orderly, but it is more modest and less triumphant; more Christlike and less worldly and wealthy; more conscious of its central apostolic mission and less cluttered by interference in secular affairs that are none of its business; more involved in the world's growing problems of justice and peace and less immersed in politics; more concerned with ecumenical "oneness in Christ" and less conscious about others finding us; more ready to learn, less sure of teaching everyone, everything; more ready to serve than to control others; praying for forgiveness for ourselves and pardoning all others; more totally dedicated to Christ and His Kingdom; more open to the Spirit -- the most fundamental openness of all.

The Church of the future will be more decentralized in every way, from the new collegial structures of the Vatican to the moral weight placed upon the informed individual conscience of the lay Christian. The gradually changing leadership of the Church, from top to bottom, will be ever more conscious of the collegial mode of governance on every level; of the importance of hanging loose, of not solving every problem the day it occurs, not having a definitive answer for every question, not judging too quickly, depending more upon the Holy Spirit and His inspiration to guide the Church through these difficult days.

Leaders will learn increasingly that to lead in the Church, they will need for their personal credibility more than the simple fact of having been appointed to an office by a distant authority. They will often have to establish personal credibility after their appointment by the continual moral stature of their lives, actions, judgments. No more will ^{our} ~~the~~ country indulge in a century of unbridled racism without strong words and actions from religious leaders. No more will an immoral war go uncriticized for the most part by official religious leaders until it has been condemned by almost everyone else. No more will world poverty be of no concern as long as we are affluent.

Our moral indignation can no longer be selective either, if moral credibility is to be established. We cannot be loud in condemning abortion after being silent about napalmed Vietnamese

children or seemingly unconscious of the horrible present fact that ⁵⁰~~60~~% of the children already born in the poorest countries, with more than a billion inhabitants, die before the age of five. We can and must do something about abortion, but it must be one of several equally horrendous problems that we are doing something about. It must not be booked as a Catholic problem either; it is a human problem.

Finally, we must be effectively concerned and thoughtfully articulate about abortion, not backing unworkable solutions, not engaging in calling the opposition murderers, not being politically naive and, thereby, repeating our past ineffectiveness and dividing the forces for good, many of whom do not want to be identified with mindless and crude zealots who have neither good judgment, sophistication of procedure, nor the modicum of civility needed for the rational discussion of disagreements in a pluralistic democracy.

While on the subject of leadership in the Church, it will, I believe, be not only generally more decentralized and collegial in the future, but also less official. In times of great change, leadership is where you find it. This is especially true of moral and spiritual leadership. I would expect to see more varied leadership in the Church in the future, more leadership from religious brothers and sisters (a particularly underemployed source of great talent) and, of course, more leadership on the part of

laymen and laywomen who will begin to understand in an increasingly decentralized and declericalized future that they do not just belong to the Church, but that they are the greatest part of what the Church is, the people of God. Contrast this reality with the number of articles on de clericis and de laicis () in the Code of Canon Law. As one who wrote his doctoral thesis thirty years ago on "The Theology of the Laity", I am delighted to see this new development, this new openness to leadership from all quarters in the Church.

I would hope that the Church of the years ahead would be less polarized than the Church of today, more concerned about substantive religious problems and less divided over peripheral issues. The language of the liturgy, the mode of receiving Holy Communion, the kinds of sticky problems that we openly discuss on university campuses, these are all much less important in themselves than praying well together in a meaningful liturgy, receiving the Lord with love and devotion and delight, being willing to meet and discuss with civility and courtesy any of the great moral issues that divide us from our fellow citizens. Even worse than not discussing problems is to be divided on non-problems that do not deserve our time, attention, or energy. There is nothing worse than Christians abusing and name-calling each other, destroying Christian peace and unity in Christ, fomenting division, distrust, and malice. I can hope with some fervor on this subject, because I and my

institution, Notre Dame, have all too often been whipping boys for a narrow-minded, super-orthodox, and ultra-righteous segment of the Catholic press. Having received such superlative treatment from the secular press, I resolved long ago to ignore these few Catholics, but in speaking for a future hoped-for depolarization in the Church, I must hope as well that these super-Catholics will cease their search and destroy tactics which are unworthy both of the press and of Catholicism.

I really expect that there will be one Christian Church in the years ahead, one characterized by unity, but not by uniformity. It is possible to imagine a union of all Christians in the faith, together with a variety of liturgies and communities such as already exist within the Catholic and Protestant and Orthodox churches. Even the Papacy is no longer an insurmountable obstacle with the advent of collegiality and the acknowledged need for a center of Christian unity, a strong voice for spiritual and moral concern. Petrus redivivus.

It must be said that for the moment, despite the yearnings of Christians, the official ecumenical movement is moving at snail's pace. But we tend to forget the high plateau that was attained by Protestants, Orthodox, and Catholics so quickly and seemingly so easily like an idea whose time had come. Suddenly during and after the Council, the ancient antagonisms faded away, to be replaced by understanding and cooperation.

the most patriotic of Americans. They faithfully paid all their taxes, kept the law, served in the Armed Forces, died generously for their country in every war, did much of America's dirty work -- dug the canals, built the railroads and highways, manned the industrial revolution, bought and paid for their modest homes, supported their Church, and educated their children in their own patriotic and religious context. They did not ask a great deal from America, but they were victimized for awhile for their religion and later proved it could help them be the best of citizens and patriots. Meanwhile, they grew in numbers, but did not use their strength for special favors. Now they number 50,000,000, about a fourth of all Americans.

Lately, I have perceived some stirrings among these quiet, faithful, patriotic, modest American Catholics. They are beginning to feel set upon, ignored, even badly used and unappreciated. Let me illustrate from the past year's happenings. Last year, 50 million American Catholics wanted two things, first, some help -- even modest -- to the parochial schools that educated many of their children as they desired, and, secondly, no liberalization of the laws on abortion. What happened? The Catholics were denied help to parochial schools and abortion was made legal practically on demand for any reason. Even I am upset when my own brother~~s~~ says he could today get a tax credit if he paid for an abortion, but not for the considerable expenses he pays for his children's attendance at three different Catholic schools.

Last year is last year, but memories remain. The next time, I expect that Catholics will have better leadership, will be more highly politicized, more conscious of their inherent strength, less ready to be promised help by a President who, once he had their votes, hardly lifted a finger to help them or their two causes. The Catholics could well learn from Jewish leadership which also wanted two things last year and achieved both of them: massive aid to Israel and denial of trade favor to Russia until emigration is liberalized.

Having now said enough about leadership and the Church of the future, I would hope to make a final point about the place of Catholic colleges and universities in all of this. I do not truly believe that the good I have been imagining can possibly take place without the great and growing influence of Catholic colleges and universities in the total life of the Church.

First of all, here is the source of the Catholic leadership that will be needed to direct, sponsor, and support many of these new movements in the Church. Already, about 40% of our Catholic laity are college-bred, many from Catholic schools. Christian intelligence is not produced automatically, but professedly, and those Catholic institutions that survive the present financial and moral crisis will, in my judgment, be those and only those which are professedly committed to Christian values, both intellectual and moral.

Producing Catholic leaders and surviving as Catholic institutions will also depend largely upon our ability to produce, directly or indirectly, the kinds of mature, committed Christian scholars and scientists who will chiefly, but not exclusively, man (and woman) our faculties. Not only will they teach. Even more, by their lives, they will exemplify their commitment to their faith and their profession.

Moreover, if the Church is to become less immigrant-minded and more sophisticated in its total approach to the world, and to the Kingdom of God in this world, we will need greatly increased research to bring the light of Christian wisdom to bear on the great human problems of our times, all of which have a fundamentally moral dimension. Only in great Catholic universities does one find all the arts and sciences, the vast panoply of human knowledge needed to understand these problems at their deepest roots. Only in great Catholic universities will there be faculties of Catholic theology adequate to study in depth the relationship of theological science to the solution of these problems in any profound Christian and human manner.

Vatican Council II's Constitution on the Church in the World Today raised many serious questions of global importance. Only universities can address solutions. Only Catholic and other universities with excellent theological and secular faculties have the intellectual instrumentalities necessary to search for any complete solution.

The Church is simply not organized to do this task, although it must be concerned and supportive about the task being done. Only great Catholic universities can do it for the Catholic Church.

It is no chance or casual fact that all of the good changes that I have been envisioning in the Church of the future are completely congenial to that company of scholars that make up the teachers and learners, old and young, in the Catholic university community. All universities are essentially open societies, searching, learning, communicating, caring, criticizing. It is no mistake that the best of the presently changed Catholic Church is completely at home in the modern Catholic university, intellectually, morally, socially, liturgically as well.

Recently, I had this reaction from a very sophisticated New York priest regarding an article about Notre Dame in the Wall Street Journal:

"There is (in the article) the failure to note how significant the University is for the development of Catholic life in America. The University has both provided and supported initiative in critical areas of Catholic life, liturgy, theology, spirituality, urban and social ministry, Church organizational development and others. This relationship to the developing Church has been of great importance and, of course, I am personally grateful for what you and

the University have meant for the Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry."

I might add that the Catholic university is more at ease in the Catholic Church today than ever before. When the first university, also Catholic, was founded in Paris in 1205, it was not long before it needed and received a Papal Charter to protect it from the unwanted interference of the Parisian ecclesiastical and civil authorities in the lives of the faculty and students. Over the years that followed, there was always an uneasy truce, in Bologna, Pavia, Salamanca, Alcala, Oxford, and Cambridge. In the end, all of these universities ceased to be Catholic for a variety of reasons, but not the least to maintain their academic freedom and autonomy, so necessary to any authentic university.

Today, while great Catholic universities like Laval in Quebec, Montreal, Lovanium in Zaire, are ceasing to be Catholic in the old tradition, others like Notre Dame and Georgetown are reasserting the priority of their Catholic and university commitment. Thanks to seven years of difficult negotiation, the International Federation of Catholic Universities and the Congregation of Christian Education in Rome are in agreement on a basic document, outlining and acknowledging for the first time, the legitimate academic freedom and autonomy of all Catholic universities in the world.

I trust you will forgive me this slight diversion about Catholic universities and colleges, since they will be very much

a part of the shape and significance of the Church of the future. A British scholar recently wrote: "All civilized countries depend upon a thin, clear stream of excellence to provide new ideas, new techniques, and the statesmanlike treatment of complex social and political problems." The same can be said of the Church. In a later paper, this scholar said that the education of the innovators in intellectual life, and the pacesetters in cultural and moral standards requires "sustained dialectic with a master whose intellectual and cultural achievements are distinguished". This is just another way of saying that the Church, especially in time of abrupt and fundamental change, needs such scholarly masters as are found in the best Catholic universities, where the intellect ranges widely in an atmosphere of faith.

It would be fair to say that before Vatican Council II most of the leadership in the Church was ecclesiastical, the Bishops. Today, Catholic scholars, having proved themselves in the Council, are ready and willing to work with the Bishops for the total good and growth of the Church. No longer can the Church afford the luxury of unused human resources. There need be no tension between the two groups of leaders, in the hierarchy and in the universities. They may well be operating on a different set of tracks, but there are multiple areas today where the tracks converge, particularly in the areas of social justice, human development, medical ethics,

culture and the arts, political action, and continuing education. As Bishop Rausch, the spokesman for the United States Bishops, said recently: "If there is any single issue which requires attention, it is indispensable cooperation between Catholic scholars and Bishops". Here is an idea whose time has really come.

May I conclude with one last personal note. Whatever the actual state of the Church in the future, and whatever our basic agreements or disagreements about what might and should come to pass, at least might we all face the future together in faith, hope, and love. These are the virtues that guide us Godward and the only virtues that can help us guide the future Godward. We all share our faith in God, in His Son, our Saviour, and in His saving message and grace, and in the Holy Spirit He sent us so that we would not be orphans. With that kind of faith in the Providence of God, in His salvation, and in His inspiration, we can share a hope for the best in the future. That leads us to love which is the one virtue that remains when our faith gives way to vision in eternity and our hope has reached fulfillment. Possessing God through love is what heaven is, but we get there, through the past, the present, and the future by loving God in our neighbor. And everyone is our neighbor aboard spacecraft earth.

Last Summer, I read through Philip Hughes' version of twenty centuries of Church History. It was incredible how low the Church sank on occasion, and how high it rose in other times. The peaks

and valleys succeeded each other through the long centuries and there never was a time when it was all peak or all valley. Saints lived in the worst of times, and great sinners in the best of times. It seems to me that we should now leave this present time unjudged as better or worse, being grateful for the holy ones we have with us, the good leaders wherever they emerge, the great inspirations, the quiet heroes and heroines, the high hopes and the roads leading to them. Let us only move ahead into the future with faith and hope and love -- knowing that the Church will somehow survive as it always has, as has been promised by the Lord Himself. But beyond survival, let us strain to catch a glimpse of a peak up ahead and let us press onward whenever the path, however uncertain, seems to lead upward.