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## Archbishop's pastoral

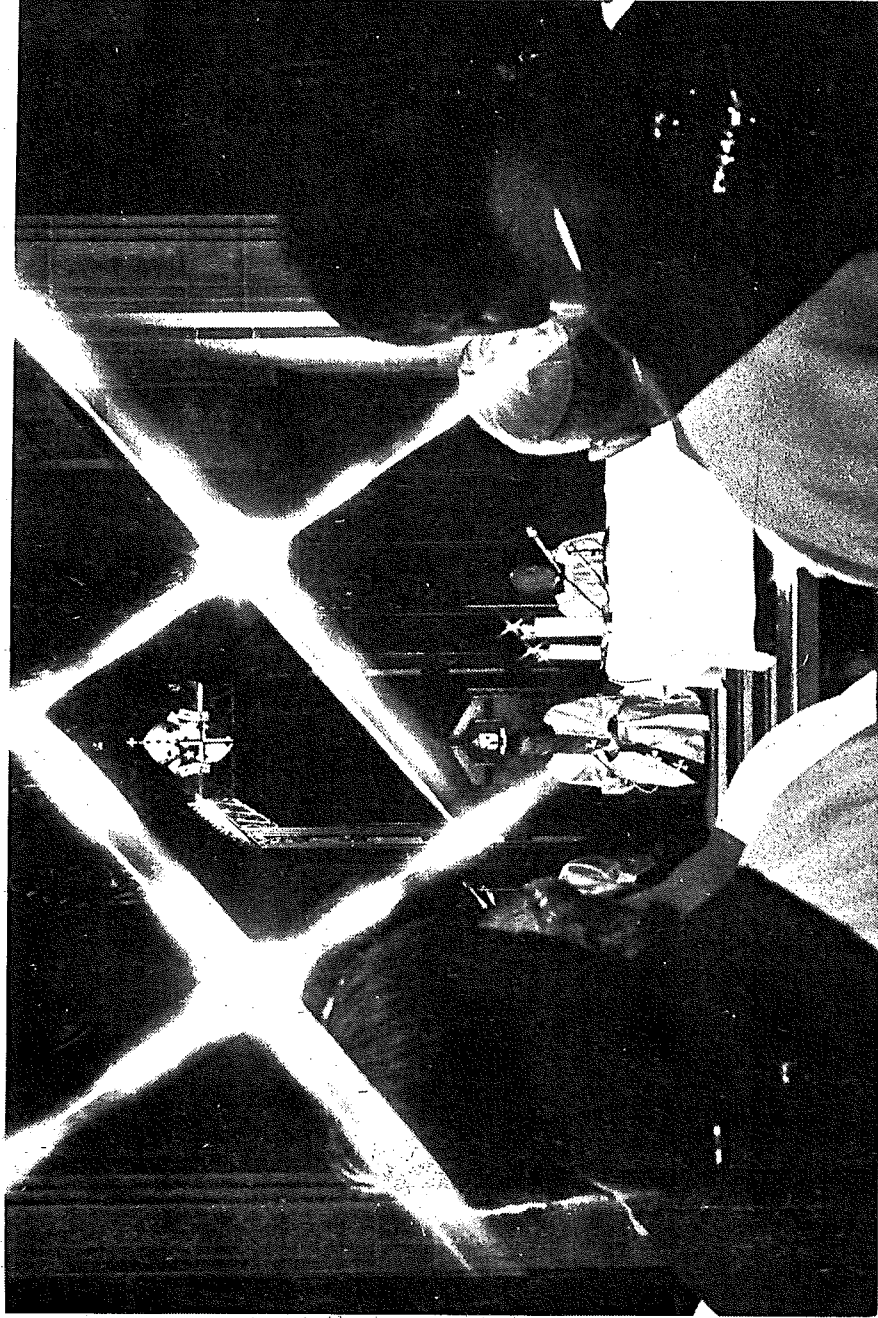
# Pentecost reflections

### Friends in Christ:

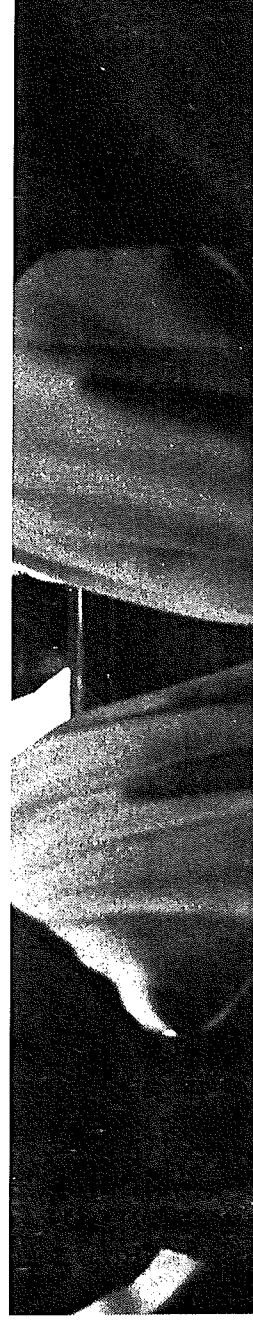
Two years have passed since I received and answered the call to become Archbishop of the Church of Baltimore. I am truly happy to have found dedicated and strong pastoral leadership among the priests of the Archdiocese, a deep sense of the Church in the work of religious and a willing, challenging movement towards a living community of faith in the diverse, yet exciting, cultures of our local Church. Through the media of pastoral letters, I have addressed your good will and faith on several issues and needs. Your cooperation has been generous. In Christ's name, I am grateful that we are a community of believers striving to pray and act in a manner which distinguishes us as His followers.

### Sharing reflections on the Church

Through this pastoral letter I want to elicit another type of response—thoughtful reflection. It is Pentecost; a celebration of the Holy Spirit in our lives. With me, discover some direct, simple way of being thankful that God's providence has called us to be a Church struggling to become His kingdom. And since thoughtfulness bestows latitude and depth to thankfulness, find some moments to reflect on the mystery and responsibility of being a Church. St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, while appreciating the gifts of the Holy Spirit on the individual, emphasizes that efficacy of the gifts appears not in the life of the individual, but in the Church and its mission. This is not surprising, since the author of the Acts is primarily interested in portraying not the salvation of the individual, but the establishment of God's dominion over the world and the success of the mission. St. Luke viewed the salvation of the individual as inseparably bound up with the community. Vatican II documents and theological writings (following the Acts) are available to stimulate reflection, and I recommend them to you. This year, I have relied on these sources while dwelling on my experiences as your Archbishop during these past two years. On this



the ACES) ARE AVAILABLE TO SUBSCRIBE AT \$10.00 PER YEAR, ADVANCE PAYMENT REQUIRED. THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE IS PICTURED AT HIS INSTALLATION CEREMONY.



Review photo

## “Two years have passed since I received and answered the call to become Archbishop of the Church”

coming months. Do not be surprised if your attention is directed some Sunday morning to the financial condition of your Archdiocese.

I believe your resources have been used for needs which are in keeping with the demands of the gospel. We have even greater challenges facing us, especially with regard to our aged and our youth. I am also concerned with programs to strengthen the family, to educate the poor and develop new ministries to meet pastoral needs. It is time to renew our commitments to these significant problems. The coming year must be a time to improve our financial ability to maintain and develop programs and services which put our Mission Statement into action.

### An ‘Evaluating Church’

We are also an Archdiocese which will commit itself further to hearing an evaluating Church. Consequently to my own insights and after gatherings held during the month of May, I am convinced that while we are searching to give more precise definition to our pastoral efforts for the next five years, we must also begin to evaluate the effectiveness of current programs. The consultation I have received suggests that we begin with programs that originate in Central Services—and we shall do so. In due course we will have to evaluate all pastoral programs. An “Evaluating Church” is an active witness to a constant reshaping of ourselves to the image of Christ; as individuals, as parish communities, and as a total local Church. It is also imperative that we assess the effectiveness of all our collegial structures. In our Archdiocese, we have tried to accept the challenge of Vatican II; now is an opportune moment to recommit ourselves to an effective collegial process and more clearly understand our respective responsibilities.

As you can discern from the tone and direction of this pastoral message, I am concerned and challenged by the new opportunities for effective Church leadership and ministry at this Pentecost time. The Scriptural imagery of this Sunday quickens my memory of that small community of frightened persons driven out into the world to accomplish courageously the mission of Christ. In a similar way, this memory of apostolic times was renewed during the ordination liturgies of our two new Bishops in the Archdiocese. Every detail of that ceremony spoke of the need for a ministry of apostolic service.

### New leadership model

Bishop Stafford, Bishop Francis Murphy, together with Bishop

Perhaps as much as any other diocese in the United States, under the leadership of Cardinal Shehan and hopefully my own, we have passed beyond theoretical discussions on participative Church governance into the more difficult phase of attempting to practice shared responsibility for the day-to-day life of the Church. Practice has not always been perfect. We are still learning how to have effective meetings at the parish, area and Archdiocesan levels. We are still searching for the right combinations of prayer, information and discussion to shape an informed consultation. This effort is new, at times painful, and not always conclusive. I imagine each of us is trying to improve our sense of identity and comfort with the process of collegiality. I do not always find collegiality easy to understand nor to incorporate on all occasions with my responsibility as Bishop. Not all matters must or can be voted on. There are occasions when I feel that direct, immediate action is necessary. At those times I will make decisions necessary for the well-being of the Archdiocese. At the same time, the experience and criticisms (vertical and horizontal) of the past two years have been useful in learning how to better share and shape the policy process with collegial bodies, to improve our structures and to be assured of their true value in our mission.

### Pride in Mission Statement

While we struggle, this Pentecost reflection requires that I offer a word of deep appreciation to the laity, religious and clergy who have struggled to initiate and nurture our collegial bodies. The witness of these pioneers should stimulate a sense of uneasiness in those who have too easily found excuses from the rigors of direct involvement.

During this past year, I took special pride in the quality of the Mission Statement which we brought to public attention. Christians of other denominations have praised our statement of purpose. I hope you have taken this document in hand and made it part of your reflective prayer. If you fail to make it personal, then the next effort to translate this Mission Statement into a five-year pastoral plan for the Archdiocese might well become an empty, paper exercise.

I have had experiences of apathy and resistance within our Church, and suffered deep pain in those who have drifted away or perhaps in good faith abandoned the Church. I appeal to all to remember that we are a pilgrim Church whom Christ redeemed, and to return to the pilgrimage, imperfect as it may be. Prayer, effort and collaboration are needed to convert our intentions into a practical plan that will guide our growth as a Church over the next five years. The pause in ordering our priorities, while necessary, is momentary—we really have no choice if we take the Spirit seriously.

### What ‘Church’ means

One source of resistance is in the variety of ways we use the word Church. Perhaps you share my awareness of how easy it is to separate and distinguish the words Archdiocese, area and parish, as if they are not each a way of saying Church. Most of you have a feeling of belonging and a sense of loyalty to your parish—you understand how and why it fits into your life as a Catholic. The Church as it tries to make its appearance as an area or Archdiocesan reality is less appealing. It becomes even more difficult to sense or feel a concern for the Church at the national and international level.

## of Baltimore ...” Archbishop Borders is pictured at his installation ceremony.

theast Rural, Northeast Suburban, South Suburban and Southeast Suburban. Bishop Francis Murphy will be Vicar for Western and Central Maryland, the Southwest Suburban and North Suburban areas. It is my expectation that each Bishop will work closely with the Area Pastors within his jurisdiction to insure that that office grows in stature and importance. We expect that there will be regular meetings between the Vicar, the Area Pastors and the officers of the Area Councils to insure a sound development of a Church which witnesses to unity and concern for the whole.

At this time I would like to express deep appreciation for the cooperation of my Pastors. They truly occupy a difficult but indispensable position within the Church. I have asked the Bishops to spend some time in visiting with them and their Associates and encouraging them as they reflect together on their role in the Church.

So that there will be no confusion of authority or conflict of interest, I will not have any other Vicars with canonical authority. Following the suggestions of an organization study done several years ago, all Central Services will be monitored through Secretaries for each department, and they will meet regularly with the Vicars and myself to assure a coordinated approach to the needs of each of these areas. Since it is difficult to do more than outline these changes in a pastoral letter, there will be a more detailed article in *The Catholic Review* describing each of the departments and how they relate to the Vicars and to myself. In a decade of mistrust of secular government, these announcements on a Pentecost Sunday may seem just more complications in an excessively organized and alienated society. My purpose and the intent of my auxiliary Bishops is to maintain and improve what is necessary and good of the institutional Church while quickening the realization of those dimensions of Church life which can be summarized in the expressions community, Word, Sacrament and service.

### ‘We are buoyed by hope’

On this birthday of the Church, I am happy with the growth of the local Church in the ideals which unite us in faith to each other and to the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI. We are entering upon a year that will require generous and gifted leadership. We will be attempting to develop more extensive funding for programs that will better promote the Gospel at a time when considerable skepticism is developing among our people about the use of monies collected by religious groups. We are expecting your cooperation in the setting of Diocesan priorities at a time when most persons already generous with their

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I am asking each of you to shape in yourselves, and in those who look to you for guidance, positive attitudes and responses to the total Church. Developing such responses exacts an effort to read and reflect on issues which do go beyond the limits of your own parish, school or special apostolate. An understanding of a need for a deeper insight into the broad apostolate of the Church has been such a part of my experience during the past two years that I am commissioning the Archdiocesan Division of Telecommunications to develop a film which can be shown in the churches of our Archdiocese describing the concerns and programs which are ours precisely because we are the Church of Baltimore. Since I have used that phrase several times already, I would like to pause and explain its significance. The local Church since apostolic times always has recognized its identity from the See city. St. Paul wrote to the Church of Ephesus, the Church of Corinth and the Church of Rome. In apostolic times, as of now, the local or diocesan Church is the fundamental faith community which accepts the mission and commission of Christ. We honor tradition in the usage rather than an accurate description of each area for whom I have special concern.

### Finances and services

No small part of the past two years has been my involvement with the financial condition of the Archdiocese. Inflation, sustaining worthwhile education, urban commitments, supporting retired priests who have given such faithful service, and creating programs demanded by Vatican II have had serious impacts on our resources. Since March 15, we have been taking steps to explain our fiscal condition to collegial bodies. We will be sharing this message even more widely during the

gatherings held during the month of May, I am convinced that while we are searching to give more precise definition to our pastoral efforts for the next five years, we must also begin to evaluate the effectiveness of current programs. The consultation I have received suggests that we begin with programs that originate in Central Services—and we shall do so. In due course we will have to evaluate all pastoral programs. An "Evaluating Church" is an active witness to a constant reshaping of ourselves to the image of Christ; as individuals, as parish communities, and as a total local Church. It is also imperative that we assess the effectiveness of all our collegial structures. In our Archdiocese, we have tried to accept the challenge of Vatican II; now is an opportune moment to recommit ourselves to an effective collegial process and more clearly understand our respective responsibilities.

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### New leadership model

Bishop Stafford, Bishop Francis Murphy, together with Bishop Austin Murphy and myself, have met frequently since that time to pray and discern how we might share this service with the Archdiocese in a simple, direct and effective manner. We are sensitive to the collective fatigue with complex bureaucracies and also the widespread desire for authority to have a human face. Since coming to Baltimore, I have attempted to delegate a maximum amount of authority to allow a more personal handling of issues which traditionally fall within the jurisdiction of an Archbishop. I am also aware that at some point dispersion of authority can lead to confusion. With these considerations ever before me, I have decided to implement a model of leadership service which we, your Bishops, believe balances the sharing and the proper concentration of authority. In our discussions, we assumed the continued development of all collegial bodies.

For the past six years the practice of having an Urban Vicar has worked very well in establishing a unified and cohesive Church presence in the Urban Area. While not without its problems, the presence of a Bishop who supported and encouraged the development of cooperative planning and programming has been of benefit to the Church in this area of the Archdiocese. The role of the Area Pastor and the effectiveness of the Area Councils have benefited by the presence of an Episcopal Vicar. Directed by this experience and in keeping with a desire to make episcopal authority as present and personal as possible, I have decided to develop two more Vicariates in the Archdiocese.

### Vicars for all areas

Bishop Austin Murphy will serve as Vicar for the areas of Nor-

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I'll conclude my reflections with a paraphrase of a modern theologian: I am your Archbishop, and I enjoy being your Bishop, but I don't think that too many people are influenced by episcopal admonitions. We are influenced by the moral atmosphere in which we live. Most of the good we do is but a step toward the good desired; we recognize some progress—but we are buoyed by hope. Nothing true or beautiful is accepted totally in the immediate context of history; therefore, we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore, we are saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as from our standpoint. Therefore, we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness. The forgiving love of God gives life purpose and makes human effort truly worthwhile.

*William D. Borders*

William D. Borders  
Archbishop of Baltimore