ABSTRACT

ANDREW G. GRUTKA, FIRST BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF GARY, INDIANA (1957 TO 1984): "WHERE THERE IS CHARITY, THERE IS GOD."


Marquette University, 2012

Andrew G. Grutka (1908 to 1993), son of Slovak immigrants, grew up in a working-class, immigrant neighborhood in Joliet, Illinois. He was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1933 and was consecrated the first Bishop of the Diocese of Gary, Indiana in 1957. His impact was felt locally, nationally, and internationally. He crossed interreligious, interracial and civic boundaries to address religious, social and civic affairs that anticipated many themes of the Second Vatican Council, including racial justice and charity, yet very little is written about him in the histories of American religious life and thought.

The virtue of Christian Charity and his image of humanity as God’s Mosaic were at the heart of his teaching and ministry. His episcopal motto, “Where There is Charity, There is God,” reflected his core belief that "charity is meaningless until it is applied to dealings with our neighbor, and then it becomes a vibrant force." His pastoral letter on racial justice, his address at Vatican II on racism, his leadership to promote and oversee the establishment of the Institute of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Rome, and his ministry as Episcopal Advisor for the American Catholic Correctional Chaplains Association demonstrates his comprehensive commitment to justice.

After the introduction, Chapter One focuses on his family origins, education and theological formation. Chapters Two and Three examine his pastoral and civic experiences and his selection as bishop. Chapter Four focuses on the establishment of the Gary diocese and Grutka’s first five years of Episcopal leadership and priorities. Chapter Five concentrates on his involvement in the Second Vatican Council and race relations in the 1960s. Chapter Six examines the implementation of several post-conciliar initiatives. Chapter Seven examines the challenges that Grutka faced in the post-conciliar years into the second half of his episcopacy through his retirement and death.

This dissertation is a biographical study that uses an historical-critical method to examine Grutka’s thought, leadership and life in light of the American Catholic experience in the mid-twentieth century. The successes, limitations and efforts of this Catholic leader provide valuable lessons for today.