

More Opinions

Congress Staff Offers Thanks

Editors:

As a followup to your coverage of the Parish Council Congress, we wish to address the enclosed open letter to the many people who played a part in the story behind the Congress:

We write this open letter of gratitude to all of you who gave of yourselves to make the Parish Council Congress the kind of inspirational moment for the diocese that it was. It is impossible to name everyone of you individually who pitched in. We do not want you to go entirely unrecognized, for the workings behind the Congress, are for us a powerful symbol of the shared responsibility about which we so frequently speak.

Many of you had full-time commitments to families, jobs and parishes, and yet, you contributed countless hours to this effort - always lovingly, willingly and joyfully.

To Father Bill Amann, Mary Lou Andrychuk, Arlene Eckert, Father John Hedges, Lucy Nun, Tony Rosati, Pat Schmidt, Pat and Ange Turiano, Sister Marlene Vigna, Judy Wehrin, Nancy Weiner, and Ed Winterkorn, our sincere thanks. Without you, the Steering Committee, the congress might still be on the drawing boards.

The success of the congress does not stop with the Steering Committee. It was a collective effort, the fruits of which bore true signs of shared responsibility in the Church of Rochester.

The renewal groups who offered to help in any way you could and willingly took full responsibility for jobs many people would shun - hosting, serving coffee and lunches, washing dishes, sweeping floors, etc. To the numerous volunteers from Marriage Encounter, particularly Fred and Bette Brown, Cursillo, particularly Ruth Page, and John and Kay Zierley,

and charismatics, particularly Marty Lynch, we say thanks for making our job so easy.

* To you, our co-workers in the diocesan departments, who supported us all the way and provided people to conduct the ministry workshops.

* A special thanks to the Liturgy Office, most especially Mary Lou Andrychuk, who put so much time into planning the prayer services and Eucharistic Liturgy, and offered continual support as well as inspiration to each of us.

* We'd like also to acknowledge the Diocesan Printing Department, Jerry Hanss, who put up with our last minute requests for materials in spite of being overburdened with other printing jobs.

* To the seminarians from St. Bernard's who were called upon at the last minute for on-site assistance. Your willingness to be available wherever needed contributed to the ease with which the congress flowed.

* To the young women from St. Thomas Apostle School, who spent two days at our office collating endless pages of materials, Mary Kate Eileen and Melanie Gallagher, Mary Meehan, Margaret Pizzo, Mary Ellen Krebs, Alice Gorton, Mary Eblacker, Regina-Luken.

* To Milt Schmidt, who gave help all along the way and Mary Fitch, who assisted us during the congress, thank you.

* To Sister Bonaventure, for allowing us to use Mercy High School and being with us as we plotted the best routes and most apt uses of the facilities, and to the many Sisters of Mercy who lent a hand during the Congress, we extend to you our thanks and appreciation.

* To your families and friends who enabled you to be free to contribute - we acknowledge your very important support.

Finally, and maybe this is not something people do in open letters, we thank each other for the concern, and encouragement and

willingness to accept one another's limitations which inevitably emerge under pressure.

The experience of the congress gives us much hope in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring people together around His work. For all we give thanks.

Office of Pastoral Ministry Staff

Sr. Mary Ann Binsack
Linda Decillis
Mary Hoeltke
Fr. Douglas Hoffman
Sr. Elizabeth Hughes

Lay Ministers Needed

Editor:

I would like to respond to the letter of Mrs. Shirley Bement in the 8/4 Courier. I shall summarize my thoughts in three points:

1) The practice of having the laity take Communion to people who are unable to attend Sunday Eucharist is a fine one and should be encouraged. Having her whole family participate in this has probably been a deeply rewarding practice both for Mrs. Bement's family as well as the shut-ins. This kind of exposure for children is valuable and goes a long way to teaching them about the caring mission of the Church today. I feel it is unfortunate that Mrs. Bement and her family have discontinued this practice - unfortunate also for the people that they visited on Sunday.

2) I am pleased that Mrs. Bement felt free to be able to say no to becoming a lay distributor at Mass. Certainly one should be free enough to refuse to do something that she cannot agree with. However, the tragedy was that Mrs. Bement and her family also opted out of the Nursing Home program.

3) Finally, I would disagree with Mrs. Bement when she says that lay people distributing "is totally wrong at Mass." The examples of the postman, doctor, and parents all seem to confuse the point she wishes to make. The doctor does not do the operation alone since he needs others to assist; parents do not raise their children in a vacuum, but have the supportive assistance of school and church. Certainly the priest is the Eucharistic leader of the people gathered around the table, but this does not mean that everything has to be done by the priest. In fact, because of the shortage of priests in many parishes, many parishes have not had the freedom which three priests gives St. Mary's in Canandaigua.

I hope this has helped to clarify the question of Mrs. Bement's letter and assists the dialogue on this subject that should continue.

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THE OPEN WINDOW



Fr. **Louis Hohman**

Dear Father Hohman,

I read your articles this Spring on the three new rites of Penance. At Easter in our parish we had the third rite of Penance one evening. "The Rite for the Reconciliation of Several Penitents With General Confession and Absolution." I was sorry, but I was not able to go that evening. How often will parishes be having this third rite of Penance? At Easter and perhaps Christmas or more often than that?

Signed, Mrs. M.C.K.

Dear Mrs. M.C.K.,

The only thing one can be sure of is that the practice of the Rite of Reconciliation with General Confession and Absolution will vary from parish to parish. There is no way of knowing when it would

be except by looking for the announcement thereof.

I hope you understand that this particular rite of Penance is meant to be extraordinary, reserved in the parishes for times of the year when such a large number of penitents would be wanting reconciliation that there just wouldn't be time for individual confessions. It would be a matter of judgment on the part of the pastor when that condition existed. And, as you mentioned, Christmas and Easter would be the two most likely times this rite would be used in your parish.

Please be sure to realize that if one is in a state of serious sin, there should be an individual confession made before another general absolution is received. This is perhaps a little difficult to understand but it's the way the regulations read at this time in history.

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