



# COURIER-JOURNAL

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## 'THE CHURCH BELIEVES...'

### Vatican Document Reaffirms Existence of Heaven, Hell, Purgatory

Vatican City (RNS) -- Concerned about modern assaults on traditional belief in life after death, the Vatican issued a document reaffirming the existence of heaven, hell and purgatory.

The document, approved by Pope John Paul II, did not single out specific theologians for questioning ideas of life after death, but noted that "doubt is gradually insinuating itself deeply into people's minds," and cited "theological controversies given wide publicity."

The 8,000-word statement by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is being sent to the bishops of the world.

It cautioned theologians that they had a duty to strengthen the faith of believers.

Although acknowledging that the term "soul" has different meanings in the Bible, the document states that "the Church believes in the continued existence and life after death of the spiritual element endowed with consciousness and will in such a way that the human 'I' continues to exist."

It reaffirms the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and that "the just will sometime find themselves together with Christ."

"The Church believes that some kind of punishment will be inflicted on the sinner who will be deprived of the vision of God," it went on. The Church also believes, the document said, "that the punishment will be inflicted on the whole person of the sinner."

"The Church also believes that as far as the chosen ones are concerned they will eventually be purified before they will be allowed in the presence of God. This purification is quite different from the punishment inflicted on the condemned. This is what the Church has in mind when speaking about hell and about purgatory."

The document says that "the Gospel and theology do not throw enough light on the subject of life after death," but that "the Christian should adhere strongly to two essential rules.

"On the one hand he must believe in the basic continuity which exists through the Holy Ghost, between present life and future life . . . On the other hand, a Christian should be able to see the basic difference existing between present and future life on the basis of the fact that the order of the faith will sometime in the future give place to the fullness of light when we shall be together with Christ and we shall see God."

## Bishop Thanks Diocese

My Dear Friends:

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the hundreds of people who planned and prepared for my installation as your new bishop.

Everywhere I go people remind me about the joy and prayerfulness of that celebration. I shall always be grateful to all of you for the warmth of your welcome.

In these few short weeks since my arrival you have made me feel at home with my new family.

May we continue to share the gifts that flow from His enduring love.

Your brother in Christ,

+ *Matthew H. Clark*

+ Most Reverend Matthew H. Clark, D.D.

Bishop of Rochester



Photo by Martin Toombs

Bishop Clark responds to the presentation of a clown hat from Linda Ruvelo of the Holy Fools of St. Mary of the Lake, Watkins Glen, by presenting her with his zucchetto. Laughing along with the audience are, from left, Paul Holland, Father Walter Wainwright, Livingston-Stauben regional coordinator and Father Albert Cason, Tompkin-Tioga coordinator.

### In Southern Tier:

## Bishop Clark Delivers Message of God's Love

By Martin Toombs  
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — As bishop, "it is my job to proclaim the good news that the Lord loves you," Bishop Matthew H. Clark told Southern Tier Catholics last weekend.

He took that message to the parishes of St. James, Waverly, and St. Mary's, Elmira; to the inmates of the Elmira Reception Center, to patients at St. Joseph's Hospital, and to the more than 1,000 who attended a reception for him at the Clemens Center Sunday.

The two-hour, "spirit-filled" reception featured several singing groups, speakers, and a slide show on the Southern Tier. Laughter and applause frequently punctuated the program; Bishop Clark commented that he "expected to have fun" at the event, "but not this much."

A prayer service opened the program, and later representatives of the three diocesan regions involved spoke about their regions, and made presentations to the bishop.

Among the items the bishop received were some Steuben glass, a "Podunk" road sign from residents of

that Tompkins County community, and a pit pass and invitation to say Mass on race day at the Watkins Glen Grand Prix in October. He later said that he would attend the race.

It was Marion Geiser's description of the Tompkins-Tioga region as patches for a patchwork quilt that the bishop picked up on when speaking.

He described his reactions last year in Rome, when Catholics from throughout the world journeyed there for the papal funerals and elections. It was then that he came to appreciate "what a lot of patches go to make up our Church," Bishop Clark said.

They were various peoples, he said, but being Catholic gave them "something deeper, more profound and unifying" that was stronger than what made them different. "Today," he said, "you

continue that lesson for me."

The diocese is a "range of patches," he said, that come together because of this unifying force. The events of last year, and the opportunity to meet people throughout the diocese, will "help me," he said, to pray and think about "the mystery of the Church."

Addressing 135 inmates at the Elmira Reception Center Saturday evening, Bishop Clark repeated his statement that his job is to "tell everybody, everybody in the diocese, that God loves them."

He talked of freedom, describing three physically handicapped persons. Of one infirm elderly lady he had seen that morning at St. Joseph's Hospital, Bishop Clark noted that "her conversation is filled with concern for others."

"That woman is free

To 2

## The Pope Is Coming

Pope John Paul II will come to the United States in October, the Vatican announced last weekend. On his way, he will spend three days in Ireland. He will address the United Nations General Assembly on Oct. 2.

The Vatican announcement confirmed widespread reports that the Pope had been invited by both President Carter and the U.N. secretary-general, Kurt Waldheim.