

Father Valenti
Named Vocations
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Help Haitian Refugees Bishop Asks President

Following is the text of a letter sent by Bishop Matthew H. Clark to President Jimmy Carter.

Dear Mr. President:

Our nation is proud of its long history of refuge for those fleeing persecution because of religious or political reasons. Most recently we have lived up to this tradition by opening up our shores to thousands of Southeast Asians and are presently helping the wave of Cubans fleeing their country. As recently as last Tuesday you declared a state of emergency in South Florida thus releasing appropriate funds to deal with the Cubans reaching our shores. May I commend you on this action which demonstrates to the world and these suffering people our concern for them.

Today, I write to you on the plight of another group of refugees reaching the shores of our country, the Haitians. These people risk their lives daily in small crafts in order to flee the oppression in their country in the hope of finding freedom in our land. Unfortunately, the oppression from which the Haitians flee is that of a right-wing dictatorship which enjoys good relations with the United States. This fact, though, should not obscure the plight of these people. Therefore we strongly ask that you grant the political

asylum status to these refugees before May 15th in order to enable them to start a new life in this country. We also ask that you provide funds to deal with the social services which are so desperately needed by these people and that they be provided with work permits pending the resolution of their hearings. The decision to leave one's country is not an easy one and is taken after all hope for living out a full human life is given up. To reach a country where one expects to find the conditions to fulfill this hope and then find that one is deprived of the basic right to seek work to support oneself must be a truly inhuman situation.

I join with my brother Bishops from Florida in raising my voice on behalf of these Haitian people and ask your special attention to their situation. Hoping that you will act in a way which will show the rest of the world the commitment of our Nation to its proud ideal of human rights and love for our fellow Haitian brothers and sisters.

Very respectfully yours,

Matthew H. Clark

Matthew H. Clark
Bishop of Rochester



Pope John Paul II embraces one of eight new African bishops he ordained on May 4 during an open air ceremony in Kinshasa, Zaire. (RNS)

Pontiff Home From Africa

Pope John Paul II was due home last Monday from a ten-day journey in Africa, where he visited six nations, celebrating outdoor Masses for millions of Catholics and greeting public figures. A high spot in the tour was his meeting with Dr. Robert Runcie, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, who is titular head of the world's Anglicans.

The pope's pastoral visit, as he termed it, was marred

by tragedy at the outset. On Sunday, May 4, nine persons were killed in the rush to find space at an open-air Mass in Kinshasa, Zaire, the capital city of the former Belgian Congo. The crowd was estimated at 1.5 million people, who began assembling before dawn on a vast concrete plaza before the People's Palace. Apparently unaware of what had happened in the crush, the pontiff continued with

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Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

Special Confirmation

More than 300 people attended the Mass last Monday in the gymnasium of the Monroe Developmental Center on Westfall Road when 10 clients of the center were confirmed by Bishop Matthew H. Clark. Above, Bishop Clark anoints the forehead of Toni Gerstner as her sponsor, Kathy Perry, stands at her shoulder. Assisting the bishop is seminarian George Norton.

Pope Sends Cable to Diocese

Having learned on returning from Africa of the death of Bishop McCafferty, the Holy Father asked me to send his prayerful condolences to you and to the entire church of Rochester, giving thanks to God for Bishop McCafferty's generous service to the Church. His Holiness imparts his Apostolic Blessing upon all who mourn his death in Christian hope.

Cardinal Casaroli

Priests Go on Record In Opposition to Draft

See other story on page 5.

By Michael Groden

The diocesan Priests Council went on record last week as opposed to a military draft in peacetime. At a regular meeting, in Becket Hall, members unanimously accepted a resolution in support of a statement on conscription issued by the administrative board of the U.S. Catholic Conference. (The USCC is the action arm of the nation's bishops' organization.)

The bishops' statement said, in part, that they "acknowledge the right of the state to register citizens for the purpose of military conscription" as long as "convincing reasons" for the action are presented. The bishops oppose re-institution of military conscription "except in case of a national defense emergency."

Commendations were given to Father Robert Kennedy, director of the Liturgy Department, for the work

done on Bishop John McCafferty's funeral ceremonies, and to Father Thomas Statt, rector of Becket Hall, for his continued support of the Priests Council throughout the years.

Msr. John Maney praised Father Kennedy and everyone involved in the planning of "such a beautiful ceremony." Father Louis Hohman thanked Becket Hall for hosting Priest Council meetings. Both resolutions were passed unanimously.

Representatives reported opinions gathered in their constituencies on how best to use money raised in the annual Communications Collection. Bishop Matthew H. Clark had asked at the April meeting for such reports.

The majority of council members reported that television and radio messages could be used and the message should be simple and compassionate. Council members said that the message sent should assure individuals not

presently attending Church that they are always welcome to return.

Some representatives felt the money should go to a national effort which would represent the entire American Church. The television and radio messages should be professionally prepared, council members said.

Father Richard Tormey said that he felt the Courier Journal is not effective because of the small percentage of diocesans who receive the paper. He said that the Courier should be analyzed and improved in order for it to be effective.

Father Tormey also suggested that the homilies given on the TV Mass for shut-ins, currently shown on Channel 10, Rochester, be improved and that perhaps the time allotted to the Mass now one-half hour, be increased even if the diocese has to pay for it.

Other council members
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