

# Bishop Clark Report

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to find the best crops suited to the land and the ways to cope with marketing techniques for their crops.

Their communication and transportation systems are extremely poor. They have to travel about an hour on foot and then take a boat for another hour to reach any serviceable roads. They are really remote.

**How bad is the poverty in the area? How do the people live?**

They inhabit very simple villages and live in homes of sticks bound together . . . for walls. They live under thatched roofs . . . no electricity . . . no running water and sanitation is a great problem as is nutrition. As a result health problems are very common.

**What are the food staples?**

Beans and rice in many areas. There are also areas blessed with lakes and rivers and fish is commonly eaten there — by the people able to engage in that occupation (fishing). But fish is very expensive elsewhere in the markets.

To return to the kind of people we met. There was a gentleman in a small village who had recently and reluctantly entered into some training to assist in health care in his village — a nurse practitioner offered the training and this gentleman stepped forward, as I said, reluctantly, but with a real sense of responsibility for his community — out of, I believe, a strong faith conviction. He said in his own way that though he was a little afraid of the responsibility, that the great needs he saw in his brothers and sisters made him put aside his fears and take the risk.

Oh, yes, if I may return to talk about some of the places we visited. In Tamulte, I learned that our people have done a lot in helping the citizens fight against the disease of tuberculosis and have trained several in the community in preventive means and treatment. While there, I presented certificates of achievement to those who participated in the program.

**What was your main impression of the trip?**

Make that main-impressions, plural. Some were so very powerful and intense. In Tabasco, we have a church that is faced with very real problems. For example, the poverty of the people in terms of health, nutrition, education and real opportunity. Another impression, the impact of the oil boom taking place in their lives. The shortage of priests . . . and still we have a church that is alive and blessed with leaders who are dynamic, committed and caring. The young people are very much a part of the life of the Church and evidently so. There is a notable return of adult men to the Church.

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Bishop Clark and Father Mulligan visited some major Mayan ruins in Palenque, State of Chiapas. The Indians our diocesans work with are Chols and Chontals, direct descendants of the Mayas.

Photo by Lourdes Perez-Albuerno

“We will not be the Church we were meant to be (in North America) in the years ahead unless our life is very much intertwined with the life of the Church in Latin America.”

A very striking impression is that in the years ahead, the Church of Tabasco with the Church of Rochester will be very important focal points for us in the emerging Church of Latin America.

Still another impression relates to the historic reality of the place. In the 20 years from the mid-20s to the mid-40s, the Church has endured severe persecution in Tabasco. All the churches were closed and the priesthood, for all practical purposes, was eradicated. This, of course, had enormous negative impact on the development of the Church in the region. But the fact is . . . the faith endured in the people. So that when we talk about the strengths and challenges of the Church it is important to remember that they have already been tested far more severely than we can imagine and have come through in amazing fashion.

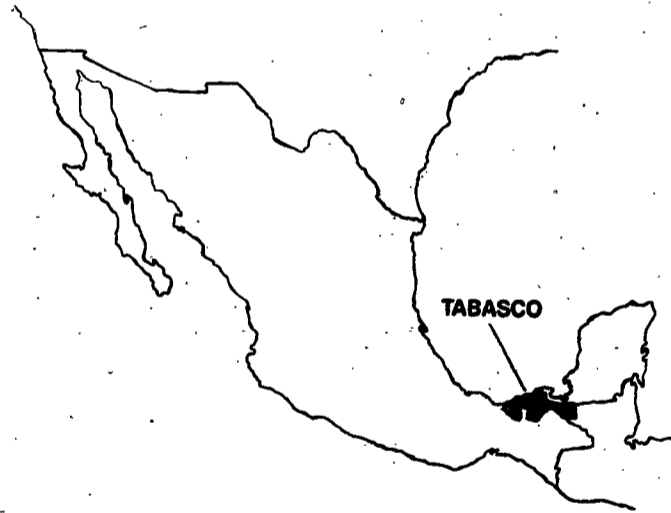
I think another great impact came from the appreciation that our Church is a communion of life. As a bishop I have experienced this at many levels. For example, I feel no parish is fully a parish unless its life extends beyond its own borders and concerns and is linked to those of other parishes. In the same way, no diocese is truly a diocese unless it extends beyond its own borders and lets itself be touched by the experience of other churches. The experience of being in Tabasco confirms this conviction and forces me to think through what I believe is extremely important in North America — namely, that we will not be the Church we were meant to be in the years ahead unless our life is very much intertwined with the life of the Church in Latin America.

I seem to remember President Eisenhower in talking about relationships between our nation and others that these associations should be on a people-to-people basis, not between national entities. Could our sister diocese relationship be described in that way?

It is very much a people-to-people program. As I mentioned earlier, there are funds involved, things done and projects launched. These are all important and without question are of assistance to the people but to me the enduring good that comes from this kind of collaboration is that hearts are changed and lives given new direction. New hopes are born and people embody for one another the Father's love for them.

For that reason, I think it's important for all of us to be invested spiritually in this venture and to realize that, though to date only 18 missionaries are directly involved in Tabasco, they are only signs of a commitment common to all of us in the Church of Rochester.

So . . . the Kodak worker who uses his vacation to develop health measures in Tamulte or the Sister who conducts the biblical reflection group or the woman who helps the children to recreate together so they can have the beginnings of community experience not only help the people in Tamulte but serve us by reminding us of our common responsibility.



## Seneca Depot

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Geneva, on the other hand, said, "There's always a prophetic role for people who want to come and remind us of the moral issues. And we have an increasingly serious responsibility to at least think about those questions."

On the whole, however, he said, "My feeling is we have been around this tree before." He would like to see not so much a focus on the depot itself, he said, but "the more serious questions of nuclear arms and the question of the morality of nuclear weapons."

The moral question is a matter of debate beyond the depot's community, however. An increasing number of U.S. bishops are condemning the maintenance of nuclear ar-

senals as immoral. And even in those ranks a controversy arose, last Christmas, when Cardinal Terence Cooke wrote a letter to chaplains in his capacity as bishop of the Military Vicariate.

In that letter he referred to the sentiment of the anti-nuclear-arms bishops, but said that it is morally defensible to maintain nuclear weapons for defense provided that government not neglect other human needs to provide money for those arsenals.

That teaching is at variance with the teaching of such bishops as Bishop Leroy T. Matthiesen of Amarillo, Tex., who challenged his diocesans working on the assembly of nuclear weapons to seriously

examine their consciences.

Father Shamon called Bishop Matthiesen a "judas," and a "crackpot."

The strength of either sentiment is not so evident in the parish closest to the depot, Father Edwin Wedow's Holy Cross Church in Ovid.

"Ninety-nine percent of the parishioners are calm and proud of their area," Father Wedow said last week. "They are living with (the depot and its contents) as a fact."

Father Wedow said that his parishioners feel most strongly about the "hullabaloo coming in from the outside."

Father Wedow described

himself as "neither a war hawk nor a dove." He said the need to maintain a nuclear arsenal is "unfortunate in this day and age when we should be helping the poor with unemployment and inflation. But we also have to protect all peoples, not just those in our own little bailiwick."

Father Spilly, who with Sister Anne Urquhart, SSJ, runs the area Office of Human Development, and who was a convener of a recent meeting of area priests on the issue, said that meeting gave evidence of the split among the clergy on the question.

One pastor, he said, voiced strong objection to nuclear protest information being sent

out on diocesan stationary, and said further that many priests are now no longer looking to the bishops for guidance but directly to the pope.

In an ironic twist, three of the last four pontiffs have condemned the arms race conducted by the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The only exception was the silence of Pope John Paul I, whose reign was tragically short.

Father Spilly said that the arguments raised against protesting the presence of nuclear weapons at the Seneca Army Depot are akin to raising objections to protests staged at hospitals where abortions are performed. Both institutions, he said, provide a

major service to the community. Both institutions, however, are also seriously flawed in that service.

Nevertheless, Father Shamon cited the depot's own figures that it puts about \$15 million into circulation in the community yearly, and for that reason ranks as a major beneficial institution.

The agitation, Father Shamon said, is "sick — it's so one-sided. It is biased and orchestrated by enemies of liberty." The protestors, he said, "never say a word about Afghanistan, what's happened to Vietnam, Cuba and Poland."

"I think it's so far off base. I get angry," he said.