

Editorials

Chance to 'Join' The Missions

The word "unique" is among the most overused in the English language. Yet it comes very close to applying to the opportunity offered us by our diocesan Missions Office.

Considering the charges given us by Jesus Christ Himself to spread the Gospel message to all nations and to help the poor, we can readily see the great value of being able to accomplish both these ends effectively through our missions office.

Right from the start of Christianity, the Church was meant to be a force in the world. That role persists today.

We in Rochester are especially blessed in that our missions office affords us the chance to reach out

beyond our own concerns to become missionaries of a sort ourselves.

The missions director, Father Joseph F. Reinhart said, "Whatever we do to help our mission efforts is our way of carrying the joy and peace and meaning of Easter to others. This affirmation of mission is our unity as the Church of Rochester — united in the missionary spirit and enthusiasm we continue to evidence toward our special missionary works."

The mission works he mentions include that of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brazil and Selma, Ala.; the Sisters of Mercy in Chile and Selma, Ala.; St. Joseph the Worker parish in LaPaz, Bolivia, and our sister diocese of Tabasco, Mexico.

It is important to keep in mind the dire circumstances under which our missionaries work in these areas. Contaminated water, isolation, food shortages, unsanitary living conditions and disease are chronic conditions. In modern years, our missionaries have been caught in the crossfire between developing peoples and oppressive governments and rebels of all sorts. Often, those doing Christ's work have become modern day martyrs.

One of these was Father Luis Espinal who worked at St. Joseph the Worker parish in LaPaz.

"The people do not have a vocation to martyrdom... When they fall in combat, they do so simply, without great fanfare... We must give over our lives by working, not by dying. Let us do away with all slogans that make a cult out of dying! We need men and women who are conscientious and lucid, who are realists but who also have an ideal. And, if one day it is our turn to give up our lives, we will do it in the simplicity of one who is carrying out just another task."

Father Espinal wrote those words the night before he was murdered in 1980 in Bolivia.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has visited the missions evidencing the priority he gives them. Upon his return earlier this year from Tabasco, he said, "Our Church is a communion of life... no diocese is truly a diocese unless it extends beyond its own borders and lets itself be touched by the experience of other churches."

This weekend we can join the venture by contributing the diocesan missions collection. It's an opportunity that is, well, unique.

and Opinions

Pastoral Tremendous

Editor:

I want to congratulate you on the great job done in the printing and distribution of Bishop Clark's "The Fire in the Thornbush."

When I received our copy of the pastoral letter, I devoured it immediately and tearfully. I only wish that I had the words to express what it means to be a member of a diocese that has a bishop who cares so compassionately about his people. I feel as though this pastoral letter was written just for me, and I am deeply grateful for it. I enthusiastically applaud it and praise God for the beautiful gifts of Matthew H. Clark as bishop and as brother in Christ, and "The Fire in the Thornbush" to which I can relate so thoroughly, thanks to the grace of God. For me, it is a gift directly from our Father and couldn't have arrived at a more meaningful time. May 2 was the anniversary of what I recall as the happiest day of my life — on May 2, 1943, I received my

First Communion. And this pastoral letter is one of the most memorable anniversary cards and gift a girl could ever ask for.

I would also like to thank all of those who worked with Bishop Clark on this letter, as I know one can never accomplish such a tremendous task alone. Regardless of the outcome of reflection and discussion on it, I am receiving affirmation and healing through it and feel a surging hope for the future. My faith in God has also been strengthened and renewed with inexpressible joy, peace and love.

I am one of those women whom the bishop speaks of on Page 4, No. 25 — I visibly withdrew from attending the Permanent Diaconate sessions with my husband in order to preserve some fundamental self-respect and peace in my life. For me it seemed to be the only way available to me to express my protest and growing disappointment with the Church's inability or apparent unwillingness to accept my full identity as a Christian woman. I can well relate to the words he used to

describe the attitudes of some women in the Church: "They speak of a quietly persistent disappointment with the Church's frequent failure to seek their contributions and participation in ways that respect their full personhood in the Church."

Even though I know that in Rochester there are women's groups pursuing the women's role in the Church, I live in the Southern Tier and, geographically speaking, there's quite a distance between us, though I am united with their purpose. We have six children, from 11 to 23, two married and we have a grandson and a granddaughter. When I ceased to attend the permanent diaconate sessions with Joe, I did so with a heavy heart, and a resolution that I would still serve the Church and people in whatever way I could. I have found being a "hospice volunteer" rewarding. However, the hurt and pain of feeling second class and unwanted is quite persistent and perhaps with good reason. We are all children of God, no matter the different roles we may have during our lifetime. And I cannot help but see Bishop Clark's pastoral letter as a step in the right direction.

negative approach to the problem of overcrowded jails in New York State has not helped those human beings who have to exist under these miserable conditions, nor will it assist those who are daily being sentenced to prison terms. I cannot help but think of an imprisoned Christ in the person of each of those prisoners, asking Himself, "Why could they have not made my life in prison just a little more bearable?"

Recently, a fire in an overcrowded jail in New Jersey left seven prisoners dead. Will something like this happen here in New York? Will those churchwomen, living out of community in their apartments, and those social-minded clergymen feel in any way responsible for such a tragedy if it should occur? They were all very vociferous when the proposal was being considered, but where are they now? What are they doing now to ease the suffering of the overcrowded Christ? Evidently, they must feel that they did their Christian duty by fighting against the proposal, because one hears nothing from them now.

I am not happy that the proposal was defeated. In fact, I regret very much not having become involved before election day, but at least when I stand before the Overcrowded Christ in judgment, I can at least say that I voted for the prison expansion proposal, and maybe He will not be too harsh in judging me for my many other sins. I am not sure that some of our good religious will be able to say the same.

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Jails Still Overcrowded

Editor:

Last November, voters were given the opportunity of voting for or against a proposal to expand the state's penitentiary system. Many Church voices called out against this proposal, urging alternative solutions to our crime problem other than outright incarceration. They called upon the voters to reject this proposal so that the state would have to come up with more humane methods of dealing with criminals. Many good Christian people followed their advice with the result that the proposal was defeated.

Unfortunately, this

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India Priest Needs Books

Editor:

If any of your readers have the following, I would appreciate it very much if they would send them to me. We are in a great need of any help for my people who need to know about God and His teachings.

Needed are Catholic books, Catholic children books, religious magazines, holy cards, medals and rosaries. Please send them to me.

Correction

A line was inadvertently dropped from a letter written by Mrs. Peggy Bula in the May 5 issue. The paragraph concerned should have read:

If our moderates cry out for the old, ah, then, that is what we shall present to them. They ran for the musty church histories, knocking over sacrosanct monks along the way, and tell us that they find in 600 A.D. that such and such was a practice — though there are FEW of US left from 600 A.D. to verify these "facts." Come now, really.

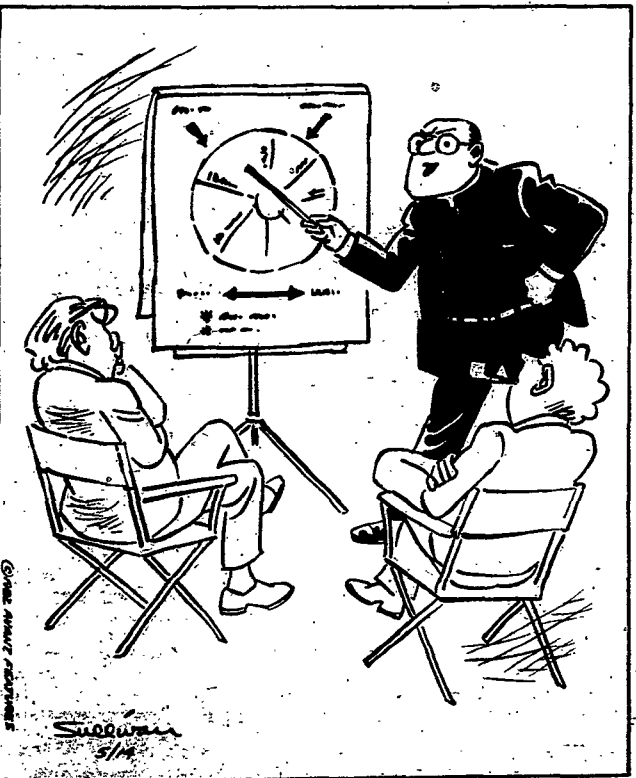
Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union S., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.



WHAT I'M SHOOTING FOR HERE IS A WAY TO INSTILL MEANINGFUL COMMITMENT, DIMENSIONAL ATTITUDE, AND A PARTICIPATORY RELIGIOUS OUT-THRUST IN THE COMMUNITY. I SEE IT ALL COMING TOGETHER NICELY IN A ROUSING PARISH SPAGHETTI DINNER.

Thankful For Bishop

Editor:

I think we all should be grateful to have Bishop Clark in our diocese at this time in history. Faith is alive only if all keep it alive. It is an open mind and heart that will encourage all that is being done in this area to spread the good news.

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