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Bishop on Nuclear Arms: Pray, Learn, Then Act

A statement by Bishop Matthew H. Clark on Tuesday, May 26:

This weekend we commemorate two events — Memorial Day and Pentecost. It is appropriate for us to acknowledge the coincidence of this dual memorial since it provides an occasion for our reflection as citizens of this nation and members of a Christian community.

In the Scripture readings for Pentecost we see the disciples huddled in a locked room, surrounded by the evidence of Christ's resurrection, yet bound by fears. The rush of the Spirit entering their hearts freed them from their fear and death. Similarly, we find ourselves at this time in a "locked room," a fear-filled atmosphere of nuclear stockpiling which attempts to maintain peace through threat of violence and destruction on an unprecedented scale. Like the disciples, we need the infusion of the Spirit to dispel our fear to release us to proclaim the gospel message calling us to rely on Christ as the true source of justice and peace. Pentecost is our day to celebrate as a community that infusion of the Spirit, and to call for renewed action of the Spirit in our lives.

Memorial Day was established to honor those who have given all or part of their lives in order to build a peace for the future. What better honor can we give them than the promise of self-examination by in-

dividuals and by the community; the promise of an intense look at the obstacles to freedom and peace in today's world?

One fearsome element in our world is the arms race and the continued stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The arms race is, of course, not new, but the crucial factor in determining our stance in relation to nuclear weapons is their ever increasing potential for utter and complete destruction of our civilization.

Almost daily we are reminded of the dimensions to which the arms race has grown. This stockpiling of arms and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in more and more countries forces the voicing of concerns and questions. I am concerned not only about the existence of nuclear arms, but also about the increased talk of the possible use of these weapons. I am distressed to learn of high level discussions which speak of the death of two, four, or ten million civilians as an "acceptable" number of casualties. In addition to the deaths an unbelievable number of people would suffer severe medical and psychological consequences as a result of the use of nuclear weapons. I am also very aware and concerned that the existence and continued production of nuclear war materials causes economic hardship for many on a day-to-day basis. Can we condone diverting of monies, energy, intelligence and human effort away from service to people towards destruction?



Bishop Matthew H. Clark explains his statement at press conference last Tuesday, May 25. In background is Mary Heidkamp, director of the Department of Justice and Peace.

In the Second Vatican Council the Church was strong in its rejection of the arms race. We read in Gaudium et Spes that "Any act of war aimed in-

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Pope Arrives In England, Begs for Peace

Though the journey was planned as a pastoral one, there was little doubt that the Falkland Islands war was uppermost on Pope John Paul's mind as he arrived in England last Friday.

The pontiff asked both sides to work for peace and deplored the war as threatening the peace of the entire world. The Holy Father reportedly made personal additions to his talks prepared for the visit which was planned long before the South Atlantic crisis.

The pope spoke of the "victims" on both sides of the conflict and called for a peaceful solution.

Before his departure from Rome, he announced that he will visit Argentina June 10 after his return from Britain to balance the situation.

He made this announcement as a surprise at his weekly audience Wednesday, May 26.

"I learned that my desire to make a pastoral visit to Argentina has been accepted with gratitude and deep satisfaction by the bishops and the high authorities of the nation and of the Argentine people. The date scheduled for the trip is June 10."

A Vatican spokesman said

Argentina's acceptance of the proposed trip came as the pope was speaking at the general audience. The announcement had been made moments before in Argentina.

The second journey alleviated a situation that many feared may be regarded as pro-Briton.

Neither Britain or Argentina had ever been visited by a pope before.

Mass to Note Mercy Sisters Anniversary

As highlight of the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Sisters of Mercy in the diocese, Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate a Mass at 2 p.m., Sunday, June 6, at St. Mary's Church in downtown Rochester.

On June 9, 1857, Mother Mary Frances Warde and six companions founded the first convent of the Mercy at St. Mary's. The Sisters of Mercy celebrated their 150th anniversary worldwide last year.

A reception will follow the Mass.



Pope John Paul II raises a chalice during a May 22 Mass for Peace in the Falklands which he celebrated at St. Peter's Basilica with Argentine Cardinal Paul Primates and Cardinal Basil Hume, primate of England and Wales. In his homily, the pope said the Mass was "to pray for peace" between the two countries and declared the war had brought "painful consequences" to each. (RNS)

'God Allows Handicaps,' Priest Claims

Father Thomas Coughlin, the first deaf priest ordained in the United States, was the keynote speaker at the third annual Queenship of Mary banquet sponsored by the St. Louis (Pittsford) Rosary Guild on Wednesday, May 12, at Monroe Golf Club.

Blindness removes people from things. Deafness removes people from people.

Father Coughlin said through interpreter Father Thomas Erdle as he explained the loneliness and isolation of the deaf to the 80 guild members and religious in attendance.

"I view deafness as a broken-toy," Father Coughlin continued. "We are normal people with normal minds and feelings. Only our ears are

broken. We just need a little bit of help here and there."

Father Coughlin, a native of Malone, said he was inspired to become a priest by a Sister of St. Joseph when he was a boy. He was rejected by several religious orders until he was accepted by the Trinitarians. He was ordained in 1977, ten years after entering the seminary. He added

that it usually takes nine years to become a priest.

"It was very expensive. The Trinitarians had to hire an interpreter to go to class and study with me. My interpreter was a Jewish girl, a wonderful girl who in the end became Catholic."

As a missionary for the

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