

# Bishop Clark

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discriminately at the destruction of entire cities, or extensive areas along with their populations is a crime against God and humanity itself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation." (No. 80) Further it states that "the arms race is an utterly treacherous trap for humanity and one which injures the poor to an intolerable degree." (No. 81)

In line with the Council documents, many of my brother bishops have expressed their concerns about the arms race and nuclear weapons. Bishop P. Francis Murphy of Baltimore said in 1980, "Peace is the work of justice. There is a moral imperative to halt the arms race because of the twofold impact it has on the world community. It poses a continuing threat of devastation on a scale unprecedented in human history; and it distorts the priorities of all nations by diverting massive resources." And in an Easter pastoral letter to the people of Boston, Bishop Medeiros called for a bilateral freeze of testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons, saying, "Serious consideration of this action I believe to be the minimal moral response to the present highly dangerous circumstances."

This stance of the Church, and our own innate belief in the sacredness of life, requires us to question the morality of the very existence of nuclear weapons. It also requires that we be informed and educated on the subjects of peace, disarmament and alternatives to our situation. And lastly, we must allow the Spirit to guide our actions in the work of peace.

Today, I am urging the people of the Diocese of Rochester to make a commitment to these three steps: prayer, education and action. First, I ask that we make a deep commitment to prayer and a personal conversion from trust in the powers of this world to trust in the power of Christ's peace. We must learn what the

power of Christ's peace means in our own lives in order to recognize it in our world.

Secondly, today I am urging all people in the diocese to enter into a program of education on the issues surrounding our national policies and actions in regard to nuclear armament. We must make faith-filled and informed decisions on these matters. To facilitate this education process a Task Force on Nuclear Disarmament has been established as part of the Diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission. This Task Force was formed to deal with the nuclear weapons issue and will have as one of its major objectives the formulation and dissemination of educational materials which will be available in September.

Thirdly, I encourage you to action in this work for peace. Very often the outgrowth of prayer and education on an issue is an urging by the Spirit to some specific work to bring about the kingdom. In the diocese now there are many opportunities to join groups actively working on the disarmament issue, and there are many actions that individuals can take to express their concerns and their support for movements towards peace. I urge you to listen to the Spirit and heed his call.

I ask you on this feast of Pentecost to remember that the gifts that Jesus gave his disciples to enable them to spread the Good News are the same gifts that he has given to us. The Spirit filling the hearts of the first disciples is the same Spirit that enters and enflames our hearts. The work of the Spirit is peace. To embark on such a program of forming one's conscience, of praying and working for peace is indeed appropriate for all of us as disciples of Jesus and as a memorial to those whose very lives were given to establish a more peaceful world for us.



Father Thomas Coughlin, the first deaf priest ordained in the states, with Nancy Fine, chairman of the St. Louis Rosary Guild's annual banquet.

## Deaf Priest

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International Catholic Deaf Association, Father Coughlin travels across the country tending deaf communities.

He is also founder of the Mark Seven Deaf Foundation which encourages the deaf to enter religious life. The organization is striving to establish a youth leadership among the deaf as well as a camp in the Adirondacks.

In his tenure as a priest, Father Coughlin said that wherever he travels, parents are always asking why God made their children deaf, admitting that parents often view it as a punishment.

"But God does not make junk," he said. "All people are good even if we are disabled. God allows handicaps and suffering to make us all one. To give our lives meaning."

## Sister to Head State Unit

Sister Shirley J. Pilot, SSJ, director of the Department of Campus Ministry, has been elected chairperson of the Board of Diocesan Directors for State Campus Ministry.

In this position, Sister Shirley will act as convener and coordinator for the joint efforts made among the eight dioceses in the state for Campus Ministry, and act as liaison for Campus Ministry to both the State Catholic Conference and the National

Convention of Diocesan Directors. She will retain as well her position on the Campus Ministry team at RIT.

Father Gerald Appelby, director of the Division of Special Ministries, commented, "I am delighted that Sister Shirley's gifts and skills have been recognized on the state level, and will be in service to other ministers in other campus ministries of the Rochester diocese."

Fr. John Reedy

Looking for the Lord



## A Vote Against Amendment

I've been trying to sort out my thoughts on President Reagan's proposal of a constitutional amendment to allow voluntary prayer in public schools.

Given his overall view of what is good for American life, there's no reason to doubt Reagan's sincerity in this position. At the same time, it does not seem overly cynical to suspect that there are political considerations in his formal endorsement at this time.

Surveys indicate that a substantial majority of the nation favors the position espoused by Reagan; it is supported much more heavily by the politically conservative voters who have been the solid base for his political career.

Will such an amendment pass? I doubt it — for the same reason that I had doubts about the passage of the equal rights amendment, the pro-life amendments and other efforts to build disputed convictions into the basic law of the land.

But what about the other question: should the voluntary prayer amendment be passed?

The U.S. Catholic Conference has commended Reagan's position. As a Catholic and as a priest, I take seriously the thinking of the conference, but I

don't believe that religious loyalty obliges me to support this political judgment. Moreover, I'm sure the bishops do not expect all Catholics to accept this position as a matter of religious loyalty.

In an ideal society, all institutions, including schools, would find appropriate ways to express the fundamental reverence of the citizens — without abusing the human rights of those who might disagree with the religious beliefs of the majority.

But a political society is never ideal. It is a network of practical compromises to pursue the common welfare, common goals, and to protect a limited number of basic rights even against the tyranny of a huge majority.

This is the basis of my reservations about the prayer amendment. In our nation, with its history and diversity, I don't see such an effort as being politically practical. I don't see the good that might be achieved as being proportionate to the divisiveness and bitterness which would be engendered and to the potential for abuse.

The present law does not prevent children from being introduced to prayer, from practicing prayer. Families, churches and other non-public agencies are expected to encourage religious reverence and prayer. The law cannot and does not prevent a child from praying privately during his or her time in a public school.

## Ithaca Festival Saturday, Sunday

Ithaca — The Immaculate Conception Parish Festival will take place Saturday, June 5, and Sunday, June 6, on the school grounds.

There will be games for children and adults, a chicken barbecue, pancake breakfast on Sunday, and many other food offerings.

There also will be a white elephant sale.

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- \$15 a week will enable an aged person to spend his or her declining years with simple dignity cared for by our Sisters.

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