

COURIER JOURNAL

SPECIAL SECTION

Bishops' Pastoral On War and Peace

In the Courier-Journal's effort to keep its readers informed on the critical issues facing the Church nationally, this week we publish in this special four-page section excerpts of the second draft of the U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace.

Bishop to Convene Hearing on Peace Pastoral

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will convene a hearing to gather diocesan reactions to the U.S. bishops' forthcoming pastoral letter on war and peace.

That hearing will take place at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 20, at a place to be determined.

The bishops' pastoral,

now in its second draft, will be rewritten and voted on when the nation's bishops meet in Chicago May 2 and 3.

At the diocesan hearing time is available for comments from religious and community leaders as well as representatives of special groups and individuals.

The event will be open to the public, but time (three minutes) must be reserved if one wishes to speak. Reservations are made by completing and mailing the form found on this page.

According to the organizers of the hearing, "Requests will be handled on a first come, first served basis because there is only a limited amount of time for people to speak. Those persons representing an organization or group will be given priority over individuals speaking only for themselves, but all who wish are encouraged to request time."

In addition, the organizers, staffers of the diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission, have formulated five "focus questions," points to which speakers must limit their remarks.

The commission will also accept written comments. Speakers "are encouraged to submit written comments of not more than three pages, typed, at space-and-a-half. Persons not speaking at the hearing are welcome to submit written comments of not more than one page, typed, at space-and-a-half," a commission release stated.

My dear people,

For the last eight months, the U.S. bishops have been prayerfully and thoughtfully working on a pastoral letter regarding war and peace. It is important to note that we used a process which allowed persons with different perspectives and expertise to share with the bishops' committee working on the pastoral. Our aim is to help the community of faith to form a conscious choice on the issues and "to contribute to the public policy debate about the morality of war" to "point toward basic common ground which can form a consensus in our community."

In the past few months, many people have shared their opinions with me. It is evident that interest runs high. It is also clear that there are divergent points of view among us on this important topic. As one bishop among hundreds, I cannot promise to present all points of view to the American bishops in Chicago; but I know that the process of developing this pastoral letter has enlightened me and can enlighten all of us. The process consists in listening to God and to each other.

For this purpose, I will be available to listen to representatives of the community, various faiths and Catholic groups at a session to be held on April 12 at 7:30 p.m. I have asked the Diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission to coordinate this effort and this issue of the Courier-Journal outlines the process we will follow to arrive at the hearing. I would also like to urge you to study the document and base your remarks on the focus questions provided.

I ask that we all pray during this season of Lent, so that our Lord will allow us the courage to do what is needed in order to make this world a place where all can live according to God's plan.

Your brother in Christ,


†Matthew H. Clark
Bishop of Rochester

Focus Questions

1. What are the bishops saying their role in issues of war and peace is; and do you agree with their stated position?
2. The bishops outline two positions which are part of the church tradition regarding war: the pacifist position and the just-war theory. What specific suggestions could you offer them regarding these areas?
3. Currently, the two super powers, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., base their nuclear strategy on deterrence. The bishops in their pastoral try to take a look at deterrence from a moral and ethical point of view. What specific things would you want to offer as suggestions for the bishops to take a look at on this issue?
4. The final part of the document tries to outline in a specific way some of its content to certain groups of persons. Should a careful examination of the principles outlined in the document have any impact on my behavior toward my neighbor, my job, my country; and how do I feel about this?
5. Given the reality of the existence of nuclear weapons and their vast power of destruction which threatens God's creation, how does your faith influence your way of thinking and acting in the midst of this reality?

Registration Form

All are welcome and encouraged to attend the hearing, but those wishing to speak must reserve time in advance. To reserve three minutes to speak at the hearing, fill out the form below and return it to **International Justice and Peace Commission, 750 West Main St., Rochester, N.Y. 14611 (328-6400)**. A limited amount of time is available so time will be reserved on a first-come-first-served basis. Those persons representing an organization or group will be given priority, but individuals are welcome and encouraged to request time also.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Will you be representing a group (school, parish, region, etc.)? Yes No

If YES, name of group: _____

Signature of Authorized Representative of Group
(principal, parish council president, coordinator, etc.)