

Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



This week I have assembled a few comments which I hope might be of some interest to you.

There is a reflection on how our own weakness can call us to an ongoing consideration of the Easter mysteries. Next comes a review of some events of the Easter Season which reminds us of God's love for His people. Third — a word about an exciting trip I'll be taking.

Before you go any further, though, let me ask you a favor. If there is any theme that you would like me to address in this column, I would be happy to receive your suggestion.

It will remain a place where I can share with you in an informal way some of my own thinking and experience as I wend my way with you and among you on our common pilgrimage.

But, if I can do that around aspects of our spiritual life of particular interest to you, please let me know.

The hard part of Easter comes when you are back in the office, the factory, the kitchen or the school.

Lenten consciousness and its special prayer and sacrifice can so easily become things of the past. The beautiful liturgies of Holy Week are over and life is very much back to normal.

If anything, the difficulties of human living and the realities of sin can loom even larger in a post-holiday time. There is, after all, some reaction to every action, and it's not at all unusual to experience a certain depressed feeling after a longer period of special excitement.

At least, that is what I am trying to tell myself. I realized recently that I have been the central figure in a bit of misunderstanding between two other persons who have been very generous in working on a particular project for me. Because I missed something with each of them back down the road, a matter of some delicacy is more up in the air at this time than any of the three of us would like it to be.

It will all be worked out, I am sure, because we all want the same good thing, because there is no substantive issue about which we have serious differences and because the misunderstanding was quite unintentional to begin with.

The fact is, though, that where human beings are involved, unintentional blows still cause pain and there is no automatic recovery from the wounds which can be caused by misunderstanding. People need to be committed to healing and reconciliation.

We need to be able to hear from others that our actions and words or our omissions rate less than top grades with them. And when we have heard it we need to join with them in whatever effort is needed to put things right.

The reverse is also true. Sometimes it becomes the duty of each of us to say the word which may be difficult for someone else to hear. But parents, pastors, teachers, supervisors, managers and resident assistants in campus dormitories have to do it from time to time. If they don't, chances are they are not meeting their responsibilities as well as they might.

In the Easter Jesus we find such a beautiful reminder of what forgiveness and reconciliation and peacemaking are.

He speaks with compassion to Peter who betrayed Him; He addresses the fear of His confused disciples; His care is evident as He explains the Scriptures and offers food for body and spirit to those who are searching and confused.

There is no recrimination — no scolding. Is it possible even to form with the lips the words: "Jesus holds a grudge?"

Jesus lives on in this day doing similar wonders, healing like wounds, offering the same food to His hungry people.

That's what we celebrate in the Easter Season. Jesus is alive and loves us and will never let us go. And by the very realities of His living and loving He calls to respond to Him and to one another in the same way. Still more. He gives us the strength to do it.

You may not deserve the flunking grade for communication which I earned recently. But I wonder if you are aware of anything in this Easter Season upon which you would like the healing, reconciling touch of the Risen Lord.

If so, don't be afraid to place it before Him. He is lover, reconciler, healer. That in part, at least, is what Easter is all about.

One of the beautiful ways I am reminded of the Lord's lasting tender love for His people is to review my calendar.

Between now (April 8) and the end of the Easter Season, I will have a great number of opportunities to be with you and celebrate with you the mystery of our new life in Christ.

My schedule during the Easter Season takes me to each of our 11 regions at least once. During that time we will celebrate together four ordinations to the priesthood, the ordination of 16 permanent deacons, the 100th anniversary

of St. Patrick's in Macedon, and the formal dedication of the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption in Fairport.

I will also have the joy of administering the Sacrament of Confirmation to 30 groups of our young people. In case you ever have been tempted to ask: No — I never get tired of confirming, although I do admit getting tired from it from time to time.

In addition to these activities, work and study go on in preparation for the May meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. This will take place in Chicago on May 2 and 3 and the lone agenda item will be our proposed pastoral letter — The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response.

A major piece in the preparatory work will be our public hearing on the proposed letter to be held on Wednesday, April 20, at St. Anne's on Mt. Hope Avenue in Rochester.

More about this effort later. In the meantime, I ask you please to pray with your loved ones that God will give rich blessing to this effort.

One last note about things to come. From Sunday, April 10, through Saturday, April 16, I shall be in Rome with 13 other bishops from New York State.

We will be there to visit with Our Holy Father and, in conjunction with that visit, to present to the Holy See a report on the life of our faith community.

Our schedule calls for us to see the Holy Father some time on Thursday, April 14. Although we do not have details we have been told that Pope John Paul would like to speak privately with each of us, as well as to share a meal with us as a group.

Much of the remaining time will be taken up by group visits to several of the Vatican Congregations.

But — I have to tell you that I am also looking forward to seeing and spending some time with our priests and seminarians from Rochester and some of my old friends still in the city.

If an opportunity comes up now and then for a bowl of pasta in a trattoria, I won't fight it.

In any case, I will tell Our Holy Father that we have a wonderful diocese and that we love him very much.

Next week in this space you will find the story of the trip. Peace.



Bud Ross, second from right, deputy knight of K. of C. Council 1445, makes a surprise presentation to Sister Benedicta on her 50th anniversary as a Sister of St. Joseph.

Knights Hand Out \$3,000

Canandaigua — More than 300 attended the St. Mary's Benefit Dinner and Vocations Night recently sponsored at the Sheraton Canandaigua Inn by the Knights of Council 1445.

The council was able to donate some \$3,000 to church groups, according to Bernard "Buddy" Rockmaker, dinner chairman.

Father James C. Burke, pastor of St. Mary's Church, received \$1,500 toward the cost of a new fence for Calvary Cemetery, to cost \$6,000.

Notre Dame Retreat House, Becket Hall and the Propagation of the Faith were among other organizations

benefiting from the council's efforts.

Diocesan Appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark appoints:

Father Louis Hohman to pastor, St. Louis, Pittsford.

Msgr. Gerard Krieg to pastor, St. Mary's, Scottsville.

Father Richard C. O'Connell to pastor, St. Joseph's, Rush.

Father Robert Macnamara to pastor, St. Vincent's, Corning.

Father John Rosse to pastor, Holy Name, Rochester.

Fr. O'Neill to Head State Priests Council

By Joan M. Smith
 Father Robert O'Neill, director of the diocesan Marriage Tribunal and president of the Rochester Priests Council, has been elected president of the Priests Councils of New York State (PCNY). He succeeds Msgr. George Graham of Rockville Centre as head of the organization which began in 1968 and whose prime function is "to share information and work from each priests council and be an instrument in aiding our bishops," Father O'Neill said.

Father O'Neill, who, as outgoing president of the Rochester Priests Council, will coordinate that organization's elections for new officers, is already in action with PCNY. As new president, he will be an observer at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, May 2-3, when the final draft of the pastoral letter on peace and war is expected.

"It will be a very historical scene, an interesting thing to be a part of," Father O'Neill said.

It is the sharing, through PCNY, of information from

other diocesan councils and the "picking up of ideas, especially in the peace and justice department," Father O'Neill said, that is important. PCNY, through its peace and justice committee, led by Father Peter Young of Albany, has offered support and action in such issues as the farm workers problem, casino gambling, and the Nestle and J.P. Stevens boycotts.

According to Father O'Neill, the usual procedure in tackling an issue is for PCNY to discuss the topic, look into the issue with the individual councils, and then decide upon what action to take.

Another area of importance for the PCNY, Father O'Neill feels, is the yearly meeting with the bishops of New York State. The PCNY "is not a pressure group," he explained, "but a group of concerned priests."

Out of these meetings, he said, have come the Update/Update training program for new pastors; "a good dialogue with the bishops," on morale; and an in-depth discussion regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



FATHER O'NEILL

Father O'Neill considers serving on the PCNY as beneficial. "It has made me aware of issues I would never have thought of before," he said.

PCNY meets four times a year (twice in New York City and twice in Schenectady) and those serving on local priests councils are eligible for membership.