

Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



Summer is here! Along with so many others I am hoping it will be a time of renewal and that kind of restoration which comes not so much from a cessation of work as from a change in the pace of life.

Last week I asked you if you had ever wondered what a bishop does in the Summer. Let me respond to that by mentioning some of the activities on my calendar for the coming weeks:

June 28 — I shall join the entire staff of the Pastoral Office for a study day on the pastoral letter of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Challenge of Peace: God's Gift and Our Response.

Monsignor Bill Shannon and Father Sebastian Falcone will be the main presenters of the day. I shall also participate by sharing my experience of the development of the letter.

In the evening we have the annual board meeting of the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation.

June 29 — Bishop John O'Connor will be installed as the Bishop of Scranton. I'll be driving down for the celebration. I'd go in any case because John has been serving as a bishop in Region 2, ie. New York State. But I am delighted to go also because John and I were ordained bishops together in Rome on May 27, 1979.

July 1 — It will be a joy to gather with our priests who celebrate 40 years of ordination this year. We'll meet at Saint Helen's, Gates for the Eucharistic Liturgy and lunch together. That group includes Monsignors Al Schnacky and Bill Shannon and Fathers John Roach, Andy Kalafsky, Gene MacFarland and Jack Hedges.

In the evening I'll join our four Jesuit Volunteers for supper before they scatter for the Summer. Mary Barringer, Bernie McDonough, Greg Bonfiglio and Mike Rae have impressed me very deeply by their spirituality and the generosity of their service.

There will also be a board meeting of Catholic Charities

and a taping with Father George Norton for Listen and Proclaim, our Sunday morning radio show.

July 2 — With our friends at Saint Mary's, Rexville we break ground for their new Church/parish center. Occasions like that are always happy ones but they're made doubly happy when there is an informal parish supper afterwards as there will be that night. (Those occasions are triply happy when there is no head table!)

July 3 — Eucharist with many handicapped persons from the Northeast and Canada who will gather at John Fisher College for a Faith and Sharing Retreat. Please pray for all who have worked so hard to prepare this program and, of course, pour out your prayers to those who will make the retreat.

July 4-July 9 — With the exception of July 7 when I have a meeting in Washington I'll be on vacation with my family.

So far only two events are scheduled - at least that I know of! One is a memorial mass for a cousin who died recently in California. The other is a trip to a photographer for a family picture. Guess who will be the one who moves.

The meeting in Washington is between the Bishops' Committee which relates to the Leadership Conference of Religious Women and the leadership of the LCWR.

July 10 — A Mass in Elmira with the Hibernian groups of the region.

July 11 — A day of reflection, prayer and preparation with our division directors. Father Emmett Halloran has very generously lent us his cottage for the day.

July 13 — A taping for the Thanks Giving Appeal. Eucharist and supper with the leaders of our Sisters of St. Joseph.

July 16 — A visit to our Carmelite Sisters on Jefferson Road. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is their great patroness. It is always a joy to celebrate with these sisters whose constant prayer is a source of countless blessings for us all.

July 17-21 — I'll be in Chicago for a meeting of the

rectors of the theological seminaries in our country, the bishops of the dioceses in which they are located and the Bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation of which I am a member.

The meeting is a first and I believe will have great impact on the future direction of seminary programs in our country.

July 24 — Installation of Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley and her council as the new leaders of our Sisters of St. Joseph.

The opening in Rochester of a Summer mission for the Hispanic people of the city.

Aug. 1-4 — The bishops of our state will assemble in a retreat house in New York City to devote these days to the study of the revised Code of Canon Law.

I look forward to that because it is the first opportunity I will have had for systematic study of a document which will be of considerable importance to us all.

Aug. 5 — The closing in Geneva of a second Summer mission for our Hispanic brothers and sisters.

Aug. 10 — A luncheon with the leadership of our third annual Thanks Giving Appeal.

Aug. 11-12 — A visit to Camp Stella Maris.

Aug. 12 — An evening with all of our seminarians.

Aug. 14 — We commission our permanent mission team to the Diocese of Tabasco.

Those are some of the events on the calendar for the next six weeks.

In between times I want to see a couple of Red Wing games. . . get into Father Zwerlein's biography of Bishop McQuaid. . . visit some friends I have not kept up with through the year. . . do some running. . . begin to do some reading and collect some notes for projects coming up next year. . . pray more than I have been recently.

We'll keep in touch through this column. I hope your Summer will be pleasant and relaxing for you.

Peace.

Father Gleason Dies in Africa

Maryknoll, N.Y. (NC) — Maryknoll Father Walter J. Gleason, recently elected regional superior for Africa, died of a heart attack in Nairobi, Kenya on June 20 at the age of 59.

Father Gleason, a missionary from Phelps, was born in Columbus, Ohio, attended Phelps Central Grammar School and graduated from Phelps Central High School in 1941. He also attended Hobart College in Geneva.

He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. He joined Maryknoll in 1946.

Ordained in 1955, Father Gleason was assigned for missionary work in Tanzania. He worked in the dioceses of Musoma and Dar es Salaam. In 1979, he was assigned to Kenya. Since 1981, he has been Maryknoll assistant regional superior for Kenya.

Father Gleason was elected Maryknoll regional superior for Africa in May and was to take office in October.

He was buried in Nairobi



FATHER GLEASON (1955 Photo)

on June 23. He is survived by his father, Joseph P. Gleason; and two sisters, Mrs. Eleanor Beach of Phelps, and Mrs. Joseph Hausman of Newark.

At a memorial Mass held here last Wednesday, Father Thomas Keefe was principal celebrant, Father James Weckesser, homilist, and Father Morgan Vittengl, biographer.

A Historic Letter ... The Beginnings

First in a Series
By Jim Lackey

Washington (NC) — The date was Nov. 11, 1980. Gathered in Washington for their annual general meeting, several U.S. bishops clearly were concerned about the course of the nuclear arms race.

For one thing it had been 35 years since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and yet there seemed to be no letup in the stockpiling of atomic weapons.

But there also had been political developments. President Carter three months earlier had ordered a shift in nuclear targeting. Instead of a policy of "mutual assured destruction," in which the United States threatened massive retaliatory strikes against Soviet cities, Carter issued a directive shifting priority to attacking military targets.

Bishop Edward O'Rourke of Peoria, Ill., noting the shift, told his fellow bishops that while mutual assured destruction was clearly immoral, the policy that replaced it might make nuclear war more likely by encouraging tactical nuclear exchanges.

Meanwhile, only one week had elapsed since the election of Ronald Reagan as 40th president of the United States. That prompted Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, president of the U.S. branch of Pax Christi, to argue that Reagan wanted nuclear superiority, that Vice President-elect George Bush thought nuclear war was winnable, and that with "that kind of thinking going on" a no-win nuclear war would be even more likely.

Several other bishops joined in the discussion that afternoon, and the consensus that seemed to develop was that the time had come for a new pastoral statement on nuclear war.

Thirty months later, at a similar gathering in Chicago, the bishops overwhelmingly voted to issue "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response" as a national pastoral letter. The 238-9 vote for the pastoral made it one of the most strongly supported documents to be issued by the bishops in recent years.

The pastoral, which runs more than 160 typewritten pages (plus footnotes), also is one of the longest and most complex documents ever issued by the bishops. So why was such a detailed document written?

Like the bishops who spoke at that November meeting, the pastoral says the world is at a "moment of crisis" which must be addressed with faith and intelligence. It says "fundamental moral choices" are involved in decisions about nuclear weapons.

"The crisis of which we speak arises from this fact: Nuclear war threatens the existence of our planet," the pastoral remarks. "This is a more menacing threat than any the world has known."

Americans have a particular responsibility for addressing the arms race, the bishops say, because the United States was the first nation to produce atomic weapons and the

only one to use them. Today it is "one of the handful of nations capable of decisively influencing the course of the nuclear age."

The pastoral notes that nuclear weapons and nuclear strategy raise what the bishops call "new moral questions."

"The task before us," according to the bishops, "is not simply to repeat what we have said before (about war and peace); it is first to consider anew whether and how our religious-moral tradition can assess, direct, contain and, we hope, help to eliminate the threat posed to the human family by the nuclear arsenals of the world."

The effort to contain and eliminate the nuclear threat cannot be avoided, the pastoral adds. "We are the first generation since Genesis with the power to virtually destroy God's creation. We cannot remain silent in the face of such danger."

Helping form public opinion is a responsibility of religious leaders, the bishops also say, citing a quote to that effect from Pope John Paul II.

"Especially in a democracy," the bishops remark, "public opinion can passively acquiesce in policies or strategies or it can through a series of measures indicate the limits beyond which a government should not proceed."

"Because prevention of nuclear war appears from several perspectives to be not only the surest but the only way to limit its destructive potential, we see our role as moral teachers precisely in terms of helping to form public opinion with a clear determination to resist resort to nuclear war as an instrument of national policy."

In addressing the issues of war and peace, the pastoral remarks, the church has had a long and complex tradition reaching from Christ's Sermon on the Mount to the teachings of Pope John Paul II. It is a tradition which "seldom gives a simple answer to complex questions."

Adding even more complexity is the fact that there are different levels of authority for the judgments the bishops make about nuclear arms. Some judgments, such as those on the immunity of non-combatants, are "universally binding moral principles." Other judgments, such as the bishops' efforts to apply moral principles to specific issues or weapons systems, are not binding but nevertheless "are to be given serious attention and consideration by Catholics."

In laying the groundwork for the remainder of the pastoral, the bishops also note that Catholic teaching on war and peace has had two purposes and thus has served two audiences. One purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences, and so the first audience is the Catholic faithful. But a second purpose is to contribute "to the public policy debate about the morality of war." Thus a second audience for both Catholic teaching in general and the pastoral in particular is the wider civil community.

NEXT: Is a "just war" possible?

