

Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



Chicago — I spent the best part of last week at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Ill. That Chicago suburb was the site of a first-of-its-kind meeting centered on the theological seminaries of the United States and their future.

Attending the meeting were the rectors of the seminaries, the bishops or religious superiors responsible for them and the Bishops Committee for Priestly Formation of which I am a member.

The three basic themes to which we devoted ourselves were: 1. stewardship — the use we are making of the God-given financial and human resources available to seminaries; 2. our programs of formation — their strengths, weaknesses and means by which we can improve them, and 3. our candidates for ordained ministry — how best to work with those we are attracting and how to interest others in the ministry of the ordained priesthood.

Though it labored somewhat under an awkwardness that is not unusual in a first experience, the meeting was a strong beginning to what all hoped will be an ongoing, common effort.

One thing for sure — there is a strong commitment not only

to the quality of our seminary programs but to the work of identifying and encouraging individuals deeply gifted for the priestly vocation.

The note about this meeting gives me an opportunity to mention some other activities I am involved in as a member of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

At the present time, I serve on our committees for Priestly Formation, Pastoral Research and Practices and Liaison to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. In addition to service on these committees, I am also serving on the teams who at the request of the Holy Father are studying the seminaries of our country.

Service of this kind is one of the concrete ways a bishop has to live out the truth that although he may be given the pastoral care of a particular local Church, he is also ordained for the service of the whole Church and must always be ready to serve the common good.

For all of the demands on time, energy and finances this can involve, I am strongly convinced that this kind of service is an important part of my ministry.

I say that because it is one of the important ways in which I

am called to stay alert to the Holy Spirit alive in and leading the Church. My understanding, preferences, prejudices are constantly being challenged in daily ministry. But this happens with a particular intensity when I gather with persons who bring the experience of other communities to our common tables.

In addition to the challenges I have mentioned, such meetings put me in touch with the creativity, courage, insight and experience of other local Churches.

And so when I return from meetings like the one in Chicago, I am very much aware of the major challenges which face the Church in our country. But I am also aware that God blesses his people abundantly with the gifts of mind and heart which will help us meet them.

And when I return from such meetings I am more and more convinced that none of us — no person, no couple, no family, no parish, no religious community, no diocese — can live in isolation from the larger community and be all that Christ wants us to be.

Peace.

Dutch Bishops Echo U.S. Bishops' War Pastoral

By Jerry Filteau
NC News Service

A pastoral letter by the Dutch Catholic bishops on war and peace basically echoes the judgments made by the U.S. bishops on nuclear weapons.

The Dutch pastoral, completed May 5 and made public in Utrecht, the Netherlands, last month, is one-fifth the length of the U.S. document but virtually identical in its spirit, thrust and major conclusions.

Like their U.S. counterparts, the Dutch bishops condemned virtually any conceivable actual use of nuclear weapons and accepted possession of nuclear weapons for the sake of deterrence only as a temporary strategy within strict limits.

Deterrence can be invoked only for the sake of defense and of preventing nuclear war, and only within the framework of efforts to negotiate the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, they said.

Both hierarchies rejected unilateral disarmament but urged measured unilateral

initiatives to establish trust and get the disarmament ball rolling.

Like the U.S. bishops, the Dutch hierarchy:

- Categorically rejected nuclear (or any other) counterpopulation attacks;
 - Said nuclear countermilitary attacks must be rejected if they would severely affect civilian populations and, citing a study by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, questioned whether any such attacks are possible without severely affecting civilian populations;
 - Rejected any nuclear "first strike," declaring that "the old principle in morals, that we must eschew the first chance to do wrong, must be applied by us to nuclear warfare as well";
 - Rejected the idea of limited nuclear war because of the inherent risks of escalation.
- On defense strategies involving nuclear deterrence, the bishops declared, "It follows from this refusal to admit use of nuclear weapons that nuclear weapons should not then be included in a defensive system in such a way that use of them in case of war becomes

unavoidable, and leads to total war."

That judgment, like a similar judgment by the U.S. bishops, is a rejection of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's current "flexible response" strategy which envisions, as an integral part of its scale of options, a limited nuclear response to a non-nuclear attack.

Striking similarities with the position of the U.S. bishops occurred on other major points in the Dutch bishops' pastoral as well. Among these were:

- The Church's just war teaching, while acknowledging the right and duty of nations to defend themselves, "does not maintain that war in itself is a rightful thing" but rather rejects violence except as a last resort and sets strict limits on the recourse to and conduct of war.

- The role of the bishops in addressing war and peace issues "is not politics and military-strategic decision-making, but it is that of forming consciences." In their pastoral "sometimes we have to make an ethical judgment and uphold the validity and binding character of general Church teaching, and sometimes our thought is more to be regarded as moral direction for particular persons and groups charged in the Church with the service of leading."

- Besides the increased danger of war it provokes, the arms race is an injustice because of the relationship between "overarmament" and "underdevelopment." "In 1982 more than \$600 billion were spent on armaments, while more than 1 billion people live in absolute poverty. The whole population of the world amounts to more than 4.2 billion... An average of \$143 a year per capita is devoted to armaments. For many people this roughly represents an income on which they must live for a whole year."

- While nuclear deterrence has worked so far, it is "a balancing act on the brink of an abyss," and the moral requirement to reduce or eliminate the danger of explosion "is

determinant for moral judgment of possession of nuclear weapons."

- Thus, "the peoples must bring an end to deterrence, but that cannot be done at once or unilaterally, for such rapid dismantling brings dangers of its own... Disarmament, the dismantling of the deterrence system, must be a prudently conducted process."

- On the moral limits of nuclear deterrence: "Acceptance of possession of nuclear weapons in their deterrent intent may simply be temporary and provisional, a phase in a process of progressive disarmament, and with true peace in view. Acceptance has its limits and may not be extended to ever further development and production... Provisional acceptance of the deterrent function is limited to this level of nuclear armaments adequate for deterrence."

- Further, "functions of nuclear arms which go beyond deterrence, such as for the purpose of war preparation, or exerting political pressure, and to further the arms race instead of defense, ought to be rejected... Weapons, nuclear weapons and disarmament are too important in themselves simply to be made accessories to a strategy which would exploit the great importance which they have in themselves for the sake of a political goal or other interests."

- Disarmament negotiations "must be kept going," and in current U.S.-Soviet negotiations in Europe "not only are major security matters at stake, but major moral questions as well."

Like the U.S. bishops, the Dutch bishops addressed specific negotiations and weapons issues. They restated, for example, their earlier opposition to neutron weapons on grounds that these would further blur the boundary between conventional and nuclear war, and they urged progress in negotiations to remove Soviet tactical nuclear weapons in Eastern Europe in exchange for withdrawal of U.S.-NATO plans to install nuclear cruise missiles in Western Europe.

Bishop Attends Assembly On Theological Schools

Mundelein, Ill. — Bishop Matthew H. Clark, representing the bishops' Committee on Priestly Formation, joined 127 persons at the first major assembly on theological schools here last week.

The purpose of the assembly was to provide an opportunity for those responsible for priestly formation to hear presentations and to discuss three topics: the quality of

priestly educational and formation programs; the quality of candidates; and the stewardship of resources.

Bishop Thomas J. Murphy of Great Falls-Billings and chairman of the committee on which Bishop Clark sits, was the introductory speaker.

On behalf of Pope John Paul II, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, papal secretary of state, wrote to the assembly participants, "With an appreciation of the vital role

which faculties of theology are called to fulfill in the Church, His Holiness offers encouragement to all those present at the assembly in Mundelein."

After discussing both the ideal and the real candidate for the priesthood, Bishop Murphy said, "There is less and less the temptation to be conscious of the numbers ordained in contrast to the quality of those ordained."

Pilgrimage: Symbol of the Human Heart

By Father Robert F. McNamara

The news media made of Pope John Paul's recent trip to Poland a mainly political event. For the Holy Father himself it was a religious event. Having proclaimed the period March 1983-May 1984 a special "holy year" in honor of the Redemption, this journey, as he himself stated, was his own Holy Year pilgrimage.

It was clear from the television views of the crowds of Poles who greeted him, at Czestochowa and the other religious sites

he visited that the Polish people were also making these gatherings their Holy Year pilgrimages. What a touching sight it was to see thousands of young people marching, many singing, miles to join the pope and pray with him. Piety made the long trek easy.

Over the Christian centuries, pilgrimage has been one of the favorite expressions of devotion. Remember the great medieval pilgrimages in England to the tomb of St. Thomas Becket in Canterbury. Each spring, wrote the English poet Chaucer, "longen folk to goon on pilgrimage." What a thrill today to join the devout journey to Lourdes or Fatima; or in our own hemisphere, to St. Anne de Beaupre, to the American martyrs shrine at Auriesville, or to the great sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe outside Mexico City.

Why does pilgrimage so captivate the human heart? Is it not because we instinctively see ourselves as what Vatican II described as "a pilgrim people"? We know this world is not lasting; and pilgrimage is a way of expressing agreement with St. Augustine who said to God, "You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

If we cannot go to Rome this year to cleanse our souls of sin and receive the "gift of the jubilee indulgence, we can at least make a pilgrimage to one of the special pilgrimage churches designated for this diocese.

Further articles in the Courier-Journal will identify and describe these pilgrimage churches and chapels.



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