

Editorials

Read the Pastoral Before Judging It

No one, not the collective U.S. bishops, not Bishop Matthew H. Clark, not the most ardent supporters of the pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," expects unanimous endorsement of its tenets by all Americans -- not even by all Catholics.

But what can be expected of all is a careful reading of the document, particularly before assailing its contents. And it should be studied in its entirety, not piecemeal according to certain topics. For its tone is as important as its individual points and conclusions. Indeed, the law of physics applies, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

One of the most common misconceptions about the document, and one which Bishop Clark addressed directly at his public hearing 10 days ago in Seneca Falls, is that the bishops called for unilateral disarmament. Absolutely untrue! Anyone who reads the document will know this. "We urge negotiations to halt the testing, production and deployment of new nuclear weapons systems. Not only should steps be taken to end development and deployment but the numbers of existing weapons must be reduced in a manner which lessens the danger of war. Arms control and disarmament must be a process of verifiable agreements especially between two superpowers. While we do not advocate a policy of unilateral disarmament, we believe the urgent need

for control of the arms race requires a willingness for each side to take first steps."

Another unfounded criticism -- the bishops are critical of the United States but not the Soviet Union.

False. For instance, "Americans have no illusions about the Soviet system of repression and the lack of respect in that system for human rights or about Soviet covert operations and pro-revolutionary activities."

Some say the bishops are naive about the Soviet threat.

False: "The fact of a Soviet threat, as well as the existence of a Soviet imperial drive for hegemony, at least in regions of major strategic interest, cannot be denied. The history of the Cold War has produced varying interpretations of which side caused which conflict, but whatever the details of history illustrate, the plain fact is that the memories of Soviet policies in Eastern Europe and recent events in Afghanistan and Poland have left their mark in the American political scene. Many people are forcibly kept under communist domination despite their manifest wishes to be free."

The document has no respect for Americans in military service.

False. "Finally, we are grateful for the sacrifice so many in military service must make today and for the service offered in the past by veterans. We urge that those sacrifices be mitigated so far as possible by the provision of appropriate living and working conditions and adequate financial recompense."

While the bishops in general have been criticized on the last point, Bishop Clark, in particular, has been the subject of unfair comment regarding the

military and civilian staffs at the Seneca Army Depot. His straightforward comments at the Seneca Falls hearing should lay such untruth to rest. The troops and the men and women of the SAD should "be treated with profound respect," Bishop Clark stressed. As with the pastoral letter, his tone was as important as his words. He meant them sincerely.

Others have said the bishop should not speak at the peace rally because of others, such as the pro-abortionist Bela Abzug. This is pure poppycock! In no way does Bishop Clark's participation denote support of Ms. Abzug, or any other individual who might be there that day. Such a contention in biblical days would have impeded Jesus Himself -- and it still would today.

Finally, there are those who say the bishops have no right to meddle in politics. To be consistent, those who feel this way would have to say that the Church has no right to work for legal changes to prohibit liberalized abortion. Both issues have strong moral implications and on that ground all Americans -- liberals, conservatives, middle-of-the-roads, men, women and children, Catholic, Jew, Mormon, Protestant or atheist, black and white and all shades in between, and yes, even bishops, should get involved in the constitutional right to govern.

It is essentially American to be free to choose which direction to follow in these matters. Thank God, we have the right to make up our own minds, to speak publicly, to protest publicly, and to vote privately. All of these pursuits, however, to be used wisely, require an open mind and calm study.

"The truth is rarely pure, and never simple," said Oscar Wilde. To find it, requires work and thought.

and Opinions



LUKE

Home Found For Luke

EDITOR:

The Catholic Courier published an article asking for a retirement home for my seeing-eye dog, Luke. As a result, I had 18 offers from 18 families, offering to give him a home. Luke, aged 12, needs a special diet and also he suffers from arthritis.

I am writing to tell you how grateful I am to you and to the 18 families. Luke will go to the Rohr family in Irondequoit on Oct. 9. They will care for my loyal hard-working friend. In November, I will be training with a new dog and I'll be feeling good about Luke in his new home.

Thank you and all the families who cared enough to house an old faithful dog.

Marcia A. Eggert
919 S. Clinton Ave.
Rochester, N.Y.

Immaculate Backs Bishop

EDITOR:

Following is a statement by the Immaculate Conception, Rochester, Parish Council in support of Bishop Matthew Clark and his appearance at the peace rally Oct. 22 at Sampson State Park.

The vast and expensive buildup of weapons systems over the past 2 1/2 years has come directly at the expense of human needs. It has been done in our name and in the name of our "security." We have supported this, in effect, with our tax dollars and by our silence.

After study, reflection and

discussion on what our country and other nations of the world are doing, we feel it necessary to begin dealing with the results: large and small-scale fighting, and increased human misery and deprivation.

The United States bishops approved last May, a thought-provoking and far-reaching pastoral document that calls on all Americans, but particularly Catholics, to familiarize themselves with the morality of our country's possession of these highly destructive nuclear weapons. Their objective: an informed public and an informed conscience.

We are reminded of this obligation by the upcoming peace rally at the Seneca Army Depot where Bishop Clark will be one of the principal speakers.

We acknowledge that our ignorance, and in many cases our apathy, of the nuclear weapons issue, is as much a burden for us as for the employees of the depot who have a direct involvement in the handling of these nuclear weapons.

With the depot in our diocese, and in the spirit of the U.S. bishops' pastoral, Bishop Clark feels that this occasion is an important opportunity to address the question of the morality of our present military posture.

We, the community of Immaculate Conception Parish, want to give our collective support of our bishop's courageous witness. We would encourage as many people as possible to support him by being present on Saturday, Oct. 22, at the rally at Sampson State Park.

Parish Council
Immaculate Conception
445 Frederick Douglass St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14608

Peace-Abortion Connection

EDITOR:

On Saturday, Oct. 22, two important movements will conduct activities toward long-term legitimate moral goals.

The peace movement will engage in mass demonstrations and civil disobedience for the laying down of nuclear arms to avoid possi-

ble nuclear holocaust from abroad.

The pro-life movement will have a convention for support of legal laws to avoid the actual medical holocaust of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia from within.

Unless the peace movement combines with the pro-life movement to restore the sanctity of each life, born and unborn, their efforts are doomed to failure. Just as the pro-life movement could not expect to end abortions simply by forcing doctors to reduce or destroy their abortion suction machines. The bishops' peace pastoral letter explicitly recognized the need to restore the societal value of life to the unborn child, the handicapped individual and the elderly as essential to achieve the worthwhile goal of peace.

Hopefully, the peace spokespersons of our diocese at all levels will make this connection understood by those in the peace movement, who have been the staunchest advocates against the legal restoration of the sanctity of each life.

William Polito
65 Broad St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14614

Propaganda Charged

EDITOR:

Why red, white and blue highlights for the front page of the Courier-Journal of Sept. 21? Why not red, or at least, pink? Have the sheep of the diocese noticed the features for the past months on the front page and in the centerfold? These front page stories have been on the pace movement, as expressed in the bishops' pastoral letter, or as in the Women's Peace Encampment. Months of unrelenting propaganda ad nauseum! Did you also notice that the savage attack on the Korean airliner by the Russians and the related articles did not receive front page status? There was a Page 7 feature in the Sept. 14 Courier-Journal. Also, the editorial in the same edition, while condemning the Russian action, turned that tragedy into a support for the nuclear freeze movement.

Readers beware of such blatantly biased and unjust reporting even under the guise of Catholic journalism.

Barbara Jackson
10 Highland Drive
Corning, N.Y. 14830

Editor's Note: The attack on the Korean airliner was headlined on Page 1 of the Sept. 14 Courier-Journal, "Bishops, Vatican Condemn Soviet Attack on Airliner." One Page 7, there were two stories to reflect these positions as well as an editorial on Page 13 strongly critical of the U.S.S.R. action. Yes, it did tie in such action with the nuclear freeze movement, pointing out that some day some Russian pilot may have his finger on a button on a nuclear device, and either by design or mistake, destroy a million times the 269 killed tragically on the Korean airliner. Is that not a possibility? Should we not work to take nuclear weapons out of the hands of all, including Russian pilots?

Conservatives Questioned

EDITOR:

Jesus Christ declared that "upon these two commandments depend the whole law of God, that you shall love God and your neighbor." Obedience to these two most important commandments requires that we work for peace and justice.

The Office of Social Ministry has been delegated by the bishop to carry out that most important mandate.

I suggest that those critics (Oct. 5, C-J) of the Office of Social Ministry, who are unsympathetic to action in behalf of peace and justice, should confine themselves to their own less important business and stop trying to divert the ministry from its appointed task.

These conservatives have consistently opposed every papal encyclical on social justice for working people, just as they are now trying to sabotage the bishops' pastoral on peace.

An anti-social tendency is shown by their record of opposing Social Security, social services, social democracy, social justice, the organization of workers and the income tax.

To the person who injected the abortion issue, I would remind the writer that when

abortion was illegal, an abortion mill operated openly within two blocks of Holy Family Church in Auburn and there was never a word spoken or written in public or in church against it.

Of course, only the affluent could afford to have one performed by this skilled physician. Only when abortion was legalized and affordable to the poor, did the protests start.

If they are really concerned about life instead of mere existence, I suggest that they should raise a fund to guarantee an adequate education and decent standard of living for the children they want to be brought into the world by women who cannot afford them.

Instead, we find those conservatives supporting political candidates who vote for tax cuts for the affluent and villains for nuclear armaments with money cut from entitlement programs that are needed by the poor.

Walter O'Hagan
7 Sherman St.
Auburn, N.Y.

Day of Prayer: All Invited

EDITOR:

Once again, local, regional and international attention is about to be focused on Seneca Army Depot. A broad coalition of peace activists will be demonstrating and protesting Oct. 22-23 at Sampson State Park. Thousands of people from around the country are expected to attend.

The stated purposes of this demonstration are 1. to protest the storage at Seneca Depot and the intended deployment in Europe of nuclear warheads and missiles; 2. to express solidarity with European activists who will be demonstrating and protesting in Europe the same weekend.

Remembering the experience of this past summer, from some association of support I had with the Women's Encampment for a

Future of Peace and Justice, I know that many strong and mixed feelings will be generated and expressed by many sincere people at this time.

Bishop Matthew Clark will be one of the speakers. He, as one of the authors of the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," has committed himself beyond the mere words of this historically significant document to a personal testimony and witness, as a Christian leader and teacher, on behalf of the quest for a solidified, lasting peace for all peoples on earth. This important document makes clear the essentially crucial role that all peoples of faith have in securing this peace.

I, too, along with a number of others, feel the need, as a person of faith, to witness boldly and unashamedly to the spiritual dimension in this quest for universal peace.

Consequently, on Sunday, Oct. 23, at the Perry City Friends' Meeting House (Schuyler County), a special Day of Prayer, Fasting, Reading and Reflection will be observed on behalf of personal peace and universally shared world peace. The general public is invited.

The program will extend from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will consist of hourly, ordered sessions composed of silence, music, continuous public reading of the pastoral letter in its entirety and of other denominational peace statements. The day will end with a sharing of a meal of bread and water, in solidarity with and in loving concern for the hungry and starving of the world.

We cordially invite everyone to join with us, The Meeting House is near Trumansburg, about 10 miles northwest of Ithaca at Routes 227 and 228.

John Gormley
Pastor
Perry City Friends' Meeting
53 Main St.
Trumansburg, N.Y. 14886

