

Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



Please let me renew the invitation made by our Holy Year Committee to make Thursday, Dec. 15 a day devoted especially to prayer for peace.

This invitation is one way we have to join our consideration of our pastoral letter on peace, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response" with our Holy Year observance which in December calls us to center in the beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons and daughters of God."

Our hope is that in the Diocese of Rochester on that day we will all be especially conscious of our need for the peace of Christ deep in our hearts if we are ever to be the agents and bearers of His peace and reconciliation He wants us to be.

As I mentioned earlier I am going to take that day in a house of prayer to be in union with Our Lord and all of you as we pray for a world which knows a peace based in justice for every person. That seems especially urgent now in light of the increasingly intense situation in Lebanon.

The Sisters of Mercy at the Holy Cross Prayer Center have very graciously agreed to let me spend the day with them.

It will be a quiet day and a simple one. I hope to join the sisters for morning prayer and for the celebration of the Eucharist later in the day.

In between times there are a few things I plan to do. One is to re-read the section of our pastoral letter which speaks of conversion and prayer as essential to the work of peace. A second is to pray the rosary for peace. The third is to pray for you and for me that God might touch us during this holy season and lead us to seek reconciliation with anyone with whom we do not rest as fully in peace as we should.

I realize that the circumstances of your life may not allow you to set aside a whole day in the same way. But I hope that you will find a way to be a part of this day of grace which will be greater than any one of us and a blessing to us all.

Can you find a way some how to make Dec. 15 a special day of prayer? Could you manage to go to Mass that day? Is there

a chance for prayer in the car during commuting time? Could the family pray the rosary together before dinner? What about the possibility rising earlier than usual for some extra prayer in the quiet of the morning? Might you attend one of the prayer services being held in your area?

Let me conclude by making two specific requests of you: Would you kindly spend some time -- perhaps at table -- with your family, community or group of friends to think of a way possible and realistic for you to participate in this day of prayer.

Would you take a moment to jot down and mail to me any idea you think might be helpful to others for a similar day in the future? I would like to share some of the ideas in a future column. Send them to me at 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N. Y. 14624.

Thank you and Peace.

Ministry to Disabled Group Develops Agenda

By next June, a diligent group of disabled Catholics expects to have proposals to present diocesan Catholic Charities to incorporate the handicapped more fully into the life of the Church.

The group, headed by Maureen Havens has been meeting since September, establishing itself and taking a long, hard look at the needs of the disabled Church members and the ability (and willingness) of the non-disabled Church to meet those needs.

Mrs. Havens said last week that her group wants to break with a common pattern of "outsiders" devising programs for handicapped persons.

"We are looking for active, disabled Catholics," to participate in the group's meetings, she said. "Too often, things are done for us, rather than by us. This is our chance to contribute."

The situation for the disabled has been of increasing concern in the diocese for the past several years. It reached a head, Mrs. Havens said, not long ago when a major local advocate for the disabled wrote the bishop that there was in the diocese "a total ignorance about what was needed. The ignorance was insurmountable."

Offering education, then, became a priority for the fledgling group.

In a conversation with the Courier-Journal Mrs. Havens and two other members of her group, Mrs. Lucy Dechaine and Pat Amato, also disabled, related several stories of the unwitting insensitivity of their fellow Church members to their problems.

Mrs. Havens, whose neuro-muscular disease often confines her to a motorized wheelchair, was assured by a pastor that his church was accessible. Having traveled a good distance to reach the church, she discovered that the boasted accessibility of the building was nothing more than two two-by-fours laid over a sharp flight of steps.

"Even though there were several people there," she said, "I was frightened to death. This is a heavy chair and I am strapped into this thing, and I had to go up the ramp

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— Mrs. Maureen Havens

backwards. What if I should have slipped? How could those people have helped me?"

Among the group's tasks are studying all churches in the diocese for their accessibility; educating the general public on the concerns of the disabled; taking a census of the disabled; investigating transportation difficulties handicapped persons face; and generating specific proposals for Charities funding by July 1984.

The group hopes the diocese will observe "Access Sunday" next Summer. "We've never done that as a diocese," Mrs. Havens said; though individual parishes have participated in the event. Access Sunday, an educational program stressing the Gospel and the application of the Christian ethic in incorporating the disabled into the community, has been used in recent years principally by Protestant congregations.

Mrs. Dechaine observed that "generally, accommodations for the handicapped make it easier for everyone."

Both she and Mrs. Havens remarked that it is customary to

find able-bodied persons using such accommodations.

Eventually, Mrs. Havens said, "we're looking for Utopia, where there's no more 'we' and 'they,' when we see ourselves not as being served but as serving."

Mrs. Dechaine seconded the idea, stressing that it was perhaps the most important aspect of the group's work. "We face one major problem," she said. "It is assumed that we are on the receiving end and not givers." The very composition and work of the committee belies such an assumption, she said.

The next meeting of the group will take place in Rochester, Dec. 10. Disabled persons wishing to attend and to volunteer service on subcommittees are asked to call Carl Conde of Catholic Charities, 546-4896.

Ms. Amato encouraged such participation, linking it to the current celebration of Advent. "It's a journey from darkness into light... learning patience, because we are 'waiting' with each other... That's all a part of the Redemption."

DPC Agenda

Diocesan Pastoral Council
Saturday, Dec. 10, 1983
St. Francis DeSales Parish, Geneva

9 a.m. — Opening Prayer

9-10 — Bishop Clark, Reflections from Rome -- The Bishop's journey since we were last together

10-10:15 — Coffee Break

10:15-11:15 — Father Peter Bayer, Overview of the Resources of the Diocese -- presentation and questions

11:15-12:15 p.m. — Gaynell Wethers Recommendations

12:30-1:30 — Liturgy and Lunch (brown bag)

1:30-1:50 — Evangelization Questionnaire -- Father Paul Tomasso and Sister Hilaire Gaelens

1:50-2 — Report on investigations related to seed money for a scholarship for Lay Ministry Education -- Ronald Keller

2-2:40 — Bishop Clark's Open Forum

2:40-2:55 — Reports: Verbal highlights -- please bring written reports for the record

2:55 — Evaluation and Closing Prayer

Charismatic Mass Scheduled

A Charismatic Mass will be celebrated at 12:35 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 11 at Good Shepherd Church, 3288 East Henrietta Road. Father Charles Mulligan will be the celebrant.

Following the Mass, refreshment will be served by the Good Shepherd Prayer Group. The public is invited.

Officers Listed For St. Mary's Alumnae Club

Officers for the St. Mary's College Rochester Alumnae Club are Telana Stokes, president; Maureen Casey, vice president, and Mary Catherine Wahl Sullivan, treasurer.

The club is planning an Investment and Financial sponsored by the brokerage firm of Merrill Lynch at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 7, at a site to be determined.

Pro-Life Demonstrators Prepare for Washington

Diocesan pro-lifers are preparing for the annual demonstration in Washington D.C. the third week in January.

According to Anita Q. Maruggi of the diocesan Human Life Commission, the traditional observance of the Jan. 22 anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision will be held Monday, Jan. 23 for greater political impact.

Bus trips to Washington have been organized in several quarters of the diocese, she said.

She cited plans for a prayer service 8:30 p.m., Jan 22 at Guardian Angels Church, followed by a showing of the movie "Matter of Choice," capped by the departure, at 10 p.m., of the buses for Washington.

Following a day of demonstration in Washington, the buses will return to Guardian Angels between 11 p.m. and midnight, Jan. 23

Reservations are required and are made by calling Dee Dries, 334-7562. The cost is \$25 per person.

Contributions will be accepted to cover the transportation costs of those who cannot afford the fee.

Two buses will leave from Waterloo after a 10 p.m. Mass at St. Mary's Church.

One bus will be a "retreat" bus for those who wish to make a pilgrimage of the journey.

Reservations for either are made by calling Kathy Peters, (315)539-8006. The cost is \$25 per person. Contributions will be accepted.

Monroe Savings Bank Launches Drive to Aid Parish Food Cupboard

Monroe Savings Bank will use its branches this holiday season as drop-off centers for a canned goods drive.

The donations to the drive will go to the Corpus Christi Neighborhood Health and Outreach Center.

Displays will be set up in each Monroe Savings Branch where people may leave their donations. The bank will then distribute the food to the center, which in turn will make Christmas baskets and will replenish its food cupboard.

Those interested in donating to the cause are asked to call Pamela Pepe at Monroe Savings Bank for a list of the bank's drop-off points.