

Editorials

Crossroads

From the cloudy see city on the shores of Lake Ontario to the sunny hills of the Southern Tier; from Troutburg diagonally to Apalachia; from Rexville with its new church to Fair Haven in the northeast corner; from the bubbling urban centers to the comparatively tranquil dairylands; from big industrial complexes to sprawling farms; from the majesty of the Great Lakes to the precious serenity of Catharine's Creek and the beauty of the Finger Lakes; from the Chemung to the Genesee; from wine country to cheese country and apple country -- the 12 counties of our diocese comprise a vast community, not only in its variations of natural beauty but also in its complexities of populace.

Of course, tying the whole thing together are the inhabitants, the human beings who work and play, hope and pray, live and die and have babies, and suffer and celebrate and thus breathe life into the area known as our diocese.

During Lent, Bishop Matthew H. Clark will be touching bases not only geographically but spiritually and emotionally with all corners of the diocese as part of Crossroads II, a repeat of last Lent's program of journeys throughout the 12 counties. The bishop and the diocesan Liturgy Office tie in his visitations with apropos spiritual programs and themes. The whole 1984 Crossroads venture has three main themes -- the Holy Year, evangelization and the U.S. bishops' pastoral on war and peace.

The Liturgy Office has sent to every parish an explanatory brochure with suggested readings and

methods of observing the season -- from Ash Wednesday on March 4 to Pentecost Sunday on June 10. The brochure also includes the bishop's personal itinerary for Lent and all in all provides an excellent start and framework for a diocesanwide Lenten observance.

All that remains for a rich and effective celebration is the common participation of everyone, from the width and breadth of the diocese. From that, an oversoul of community will be created for the benefit of all.

Hopeful Stance

USA Today, the Gannett Company's national daily newspaper, has made a big splash in its lifetime of something over one year. Like all human endeavors, it has made mistakes but it also has achieved an amazing visibility across the nation in a very short time.

A good deal of the success of USA Today probably belongs to Allen H. Neuharth, Gannett's chairman of the board and chief executive officer. With that in mind, the gist of a speech Neuharth recently delivered to the national Women's Democratic Club is of interest.

Neuharth decried the "journalism of despair" and said that it is high time that newspapers employ the "journalism of hope." In fact, he indicated that the success of USA Today emanated from this belief put into practice.

He said that newspapers should be upbeat, not constantly seek out stories of despair and of gloom and fear. He quoted a columnist who said that if something wasn't troublesome, he couldn't be bothered with writing about it. The Gannett chairman said that it is precisely that attitude that has killed off so many big city newspapers.

Of course, it would take a much deeper and wider study of USA Today to see if it indeed does purvey the "journalism of hope." And if it does, time will tell if that is what Americans are looking for in their newspapers.

But in the meantime, it is somewhat refreshing that one of the leading journalists in the country has taken such a position. For to be sure, the "journalism of hope" is somewhat synonymous with the "Good News."

David

Writers the nation over tried futilely last week to put together words to equal the courage and inspiration provided by David, "the boy in the bubble." Perhaps more than anything else, he reminded an increasingly cynical world of the value, depth and spirit innate in a single life. Not until he was 12 years old was he able to be kissed by his own mother, a lesson in valiance herself. Regardless, despite his life in a bubble, he found the way to reach out and touch the world -- a better place because he did.

and Opinions

Celibacy Doesn't Help

EDITOR:

A Dec. 14, 1983 letter by Helen Dunning in the Courier-Journal concerned celibacy. I would like to respond as a single foster parent and a Roman Catholic priest.

I have never been able to live "comfortably" on the money I receive. If I had only the compensation paid by the parish, I would have been in the poorhouse or bankrupt long ago. I have worked two jobs most of my priesthood (the second always priestly) and my parish has not suffered the loss of a pastor nor my son, a father. I find time for both my parishes and have increased service to them, and Sunday attendance has increased. My lack of time with my son is not because I don't make time for him but his schedule of school sports practices and duties as president of his class doesn't leave much time for me. Yet we do talk each day for at least an hour, outside of mealtime. I think he would agree that he receives as much love and attention as his peers. Also, I spend more time in my office keeping up on things spiritual and administrative since he often needs the car for various pursuits that engage the normal teenager. It would

help, however, if I had a partner in life, as most fathers do. The life of any single parent is not an easy one.

Helen mentioned that if God intended priests to be married they would have been from the beginning. Well, St. Peter, the head of the apostles and first pope, was -- at least Christ cured his mother-in-law. Also, if the tradition of many early centuries had continued, I could not be a country pastor, since only married priests in the Roman Catholic Church were allowed outside the see city. The Church felt that it was too hard and lonely a job for a celibate to work alone in the country. Also, the other 16 rites of the Catholic Church which never adopted celibacy would dispute her arguments.

If I am celibate today because the Church needs cheap, socially safe, inoffensive help, God forgive me and the Church.

With that in mind, I close, devoted to the Church, the faith and its people, but not celibacy.

Gerald T. O'Connor (Pastor, janitor, housekeeper, cook, secretary of St. Stanislaus, Bradford, St. Joseph's, Campbell; part-time assistant in two other parishes and various sundry other things, among them, father.

We Need Neutron Bomb

EDITOR:

In his letter, "Neutron Bomb Objection," Mark Scibilia-Carver betrayed an ignorance of what that weapon was intended to do and why it is needed.

The neutron bomb, or more precisely the Enhanced Radiation Warhead (ERW), was born of the most realistic considerations.

NATO forces with only 7,000 tanks and numerically inferior ground troops could hardly hope to repel an attack from the Warsaw Pact nations with over 20,000 tanks and superior manpower without using the smallest of nuclear weapons.

However, even the smallest nuclear weapon would kill all human life within a wide area.

The neutron bomb would limit its destruction to the battlefield, which is why the Soviets frantically protested its deployment.

As we all know, their protests were successful when President Jimmy Carter stopped the weapon from being deployed.

President Reagan, on the other hand, is more realistic and knows that such a weapon is needed to deter an invasion of West Germany by the Soviets and their satellite nations.

A nation that would destroy a civilian airliner, use chemical weapons in Afghanistan, Laos and Cambodia, as well as repression in Poland, could hardly be trusted not to act aggressively when not challenged.

The statement by Mr. Carver that U.S. policy has failed to win people's hearts and minds in many countries of the world should be rephrased to state that Soviet policy has failed to win the hearts and minds of people throughout the world.

Also, I am not a little angry with the statement of Mr. Carver that the U.S. has more concern for material goods and profit than for human life.

After World War II, the

U.S. through the Marshall Plan, helped suffering humanity in many devastated areas of the world.

The Peace Corp. was another agency that helped many poor areas in the world.

Today, all that good work is threatened by a power that seeks world conquest.

It is our moral duty to challenge that power, an atheistic power, from imposing its will on all the world's people.

We frustrate and impede that challenge when, like Mr. Carver, we try to eliminate weapons that would preserve our freedom and the freedom of others.

Robert Bart PO Box 594 Ithaca, N.Y. 14851

Apalachin Experience

EDITOR:

The Right to Life march in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 23 brought about a milestone for our parish of St. Margaret Mary in Apalachin. Fifty parishioners along with our pastor, Father David Simon, traveled to Washington for the march, marking the first time that we had a full busload of parishioners do so. In the past, three, perhaps four, would join with parishioners from St. Patrick's in Owego. The full credit for this turnout belongs to Father Dave, whose enthusiastic support and encouragement rallied his people to stand up and be counted for what they believe in.

I'm also grateful to Ed and Joan Hanousek and Bob and Jackie Rangel who helped to coordinate the trip, and to all who sacrificed to join me.

I would like to express why I think the Right to Life issue is the most important one facing our Church and country today. Eleven years ago, our Supreme Court created an unbelievable American holocaust! Since then, more than 15 million American babies have been murdered. This means that



"I LIKE THE WORK HE'S DOING WITH PEOPLE WHO TALK DURING MOVIES."

one baby is killed every 21 seconds! Now a mother's womb is the most dangerous and unprotected place to be. All Catholics and righteous-thinking Americans must work to correct this error as soon as possible, by making our feelings known. We can do this through action and prayer.

Politicians and pro-choice advocates have succeeded in temporarily deceiving a whole nation! Freedom of choice was never intended to mean that anyone has the right to decide whether another human being should live or die.

They may say that they do not impose their moral values on anyone else, but in fact they do impose their values -- when they decide who will live and who will die. This is without a doubt the absolute imposing of an individual's values on another.

We must act! Peace will be impossible until this killing is stopped. Please ask your family, your friends and especially the leaders of all Catholic churches to join in this Right to Life movement. We will strive for a time when the significance of this problem is recognized by all.

With the proper stimulus

of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, working though all the priests of our diocese, we can send a full busload of life-loving parishioners to Washington, D.C. from each and every parish in the diocese next year. The enthusiastic dedication that has sprung up at St. Margaret Mary's, Apalachin, can be shared by our whole diocese and spread throughout New York State until we encompass the nation.

Joe Watson 8 Van Riper Road Apalachin, N.Y. 13732

Literature For Missions

EDITOR:

Readers may like to mail their used Catholic pamphlets and magazines direct to the foreign missions.

If those who wish to do so will please send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns who need Catholic literature.

Mary Conway 14 Castle St. Cork, Ireland

Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union S., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, no longer than 1 1/2 pages.

We routinely condense letters, edit offensive words and libelous statements, and reserve the right to reject letters. Generally speaking, however, only limited grammatical corrections will be made and the letters will reflect the writer's own style.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent elsewhere. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.