

# Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



**Monday, Aug. 13** -- I am cursing myself this morning! That's because last night I stayed up much later than I should have to watch the closing ceremonies of the Summer Olympic Games. In that, I wasn't alone in our household, nor, I am sure, were we at Sacred Heart unusual in our desire to see the Games through to the end.

During the long hours of today when I am struggling to keep my mind on my work I'll whisper to myself that the Olympics happen only once every four years but I am not sure how effective a step that will be.

I'll soon forget names, times and distances recorded and the numbers of medals garnered by the nations. But I shall long remember the sight of the athletes massed on the infield of the arena. They were gathered without distinctions made on the basis of race, creed, color or national origin. They were celebrating commonality of achievement and hope. They looked at one another as individual persons of dignity and worth.

This morning in my prayer, I was very much drawn to remember the ways in which I had been reminded this week of the bonds we have as a particular church with the local

churches throughout the world.

During this week, I spent time with:

- Father Ismael Milan Brito. Father Ismael is a priest of the Diocese of Tabasco who is spending the Summer working among us as part of our sister diocese program. Father will return to become the rector of the mission seminary in Tabasco but is enjoying your warm hospitality and the opportunity to minister to and among our Hispanic brothers and sisters.

- Sister Stephanie Christoforo. Sister is involved in pastoral ministry in the Archdiocese of Florence, Italy, and was interested in sharing ideas and experiences about that subject. It is always a lesson in the life of the church to reflect on the commonality among the local churches as well as on the circumstances which require different pastoral approaches.

- Bishop David Konstant. The bishop is one of Cardinal Hume's assistant bishops in the Archdiocese of Westminster. He and Father Tom Hector became friends when a group of our priests and a like group from Westminster shared a training program a couple of

summers ago. The bishop has responsibility for serving 53 parishes in a section of the archdiocese. It was a delight to share a lunch and to compare pastoral notes with such an amiable colleague.

- Father Sean Cullen and Father Richie Brennan are members of the Society of Saint Patrick, the Irish counterpart of our Maryknoll Society. They were here on missions appeal this week -- Sean at Sacred Heart and Richie at Saint Leo's in Hilton. Sean serves in Nigeria and Richie serves in Kenya. They added a special flavor to our Olympic evening -- especially when John Treacy, their countryman, won the silver medal for the marathon.

- Deacons Alex Bradshaw, Stan Kacprzak and Gary Tyman. These men are ministering now at Nativity in Brockport, Saint Margaret Mary in Irondequoit and Good Shepherd, Henrietta. Alex and Stan have been studying in Rome. Gary has been in Louvain.

From the Olympics to happy reunions with our students returned from overseas, this week has been a reminder of our call to be one with the church throughout the world and indeed with all of God's holy people.

Peace.

## Pope: Even Natural Birth Control May Pose Problem

**Vatican City (NC)** -- Pope John Paul II said Aug. 8 that natural methods of birth regulation are "morally correct," but using them without valid reason "constitutes a separate ethical problem."

The pope made the comment during his weekly general audience at which he also repeated the Church's teaching against abortion, sterilization and the use of artificial means of birth con-

trol. The pope, speaking to several thousand people in St. Peter's Square, emphasized that the Church clearly distinguishes between methods of birth regulation that are morally acceptable and those that are not.

"The Church excludes the latter, namely, abortion, direct sterilization, and any action which seeks, through the use of unnatural or artificial means, to make

conception impossible," the pope said, referring to the encyclical "Humanae Vitae" (Of Human Life).

But he added that the encyclical makes it clear that couples who have a justifiable reason to regulate births can take into account natural biological rhythms in order to have sexual intercourse during infertile periods.

"In this way, births are regulated without offending the moral order established

by God," he said. He said there is an essential ethical difference between natural methods of birth regulation and artificial methods, because artificial methods "impede the development of natural processes."

"The natural regulation of fertility is morally correct, and contraception is not morally correct," the pope said.

Besides the moral question of the methods used in re-

gulating birth, he added, is the question of the couple's motivation.

"Couples who turn to natural regulation of fertility could be without valid reasons," the pope said.

"This, however, constitutes a separate ethical problem, having to do with the moral sense of responsible paternity and maternity."

In his previous Wednesday audience talk, the pope had

referred to the encyclical's approval of such natural methods when involving a couple's decision "made for grave motives, to avoid for the time being, or even for an indeterminate period, a new birth."

The talk was the fifth in a series of weekly audiences dedicated to a review of the encyclical, "Humanae Vitae," issued by Pope Paul VI in 1968.

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