

Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



In these days leading up to Respect Life Sunday, I have a strong awareness of the call we have as a Catholic Christian community to reverence and serve life from its beginning to its end.

That call comes to use from the heart of Christ who loved and embraced all life even when that life was judged by His contemporaries to be spoiled, useless, unattractive, dirty, morally offensive, inconvenient or much too demanding on others.

He found and loved the good in all people -- even when He could not support their conduct -- and called them from darkness to light, from illness to health, from sin to virtue, from death to life.

Jesus was strong in His condemnation of evil behavior but never more so often than when He confronted those who placed heavy burdens on others but who never raised a finger to help them carry the load.

As we gather on Sunday as a faith community to reflect on our call to reverence and serve all life it is important for us to remember and honor two critical dimensions of that call: its inclusion of all life, born and unborn, and the compassion

with which this vocation is to be lived out. Our care must extend to all life and it must be shown in a way which identifies us not as persons who stand apart and condemn but who are willing to share the burden of those who suffer in the struggle or who are faced with hard choices.

We must remain strong in our defense of innocent unborn lives and never tire in our work of education and advocacy to stop the horror of their destruction. We must insist that to have rights over one's own body does not translate into mastery over the life of another. We must struggle against the injustice done to women by men who are responsible for the conception of new life but who callously ignore the sacred responsibility attaching to fatherhood.

All of this demands courage and perseverance because the forces arrayed against us are strong and determined.

It is one thing to carry on this kind of work; it is another and ever more necessary contribution to be aware of and support those who extend the compassion of the Lord to those personally touched by the struggle.

As examples of what I mean I think of:

- public servants-with the courage to fight for the poor who suffer so much at a time when we spend astronomical amounts of money on weapons which endanger all life.
- parents who stand by their children who conceive new life and who encourage them to cherish that life -- even when that draws on their reserves of faith and courage.
- Birthright Inc. which stands ready to counsel and assist persons who experience unwanted or unplanned pregnancies.
- Melitta House which provides housing and loving care to unwed expectant mothers.
- The Puzzle Project which helps persons who have experienced abortions to put the pieces together and start anew.

We owe these people our gratitude and all of the support we can give them. They are strong reminders in our age of messed up priorities that if we lose our reverence for unborn life we have lost a good measure of our humanity.

Next week I want to write of our need to serve life from its early years until death.

Thank you for your kindness in reading this.
Peace.

Diocese Establishing Evangelization Task Force

The diocese is establishing an evangelization task force, which is ultimately expected to propose an integrated evangelization plan with an emphasis on parish renewal.

Setting up the task force is a continuation of a long-

standing diocesan effort in evangelization.

According to Sister Hilaire Gaelens RSM, diocesan director of Special Pastoral Ministries, the current program springs from the address by Bishop Matthew

H. Clark, in June 1983, at the Harvest-a-Hundred-fold evangelization conference.

"Since Bishop Clark's statement... regarding the need for each of us to enhance our role as an evangelist, individuals and parishes have continued to explore ways to enhance the hospitality of our parish communities and identify the alienated who feel outside our communities," Sister Hilaire said.

It is expected that the task force will:

- Address the three-year

evangelization goals voiced by Bishop Clark at Harvest-a-Hundred-fold:

- Review data of "Parish Renewal Experiences," a survey completed by parishes this past summer.
- Research existent renewal programs.
- Recommend three or four most viable programs for consideration in the diocese.
- Prepare presentations on those findings; and
- Propose an integrated evangelization plan with emphasis on parish renewal.

The task force will be comprised of not more than 12 members who represent the varied geography and demographics of the diocese. The majority should be parish-centered lay persons and pastoral staff members, Sister Hilaire said.

Members should have been personally involved in a variety of parish renewals; they should come with an openness to the possibilities of various existing programs; be willing to freely express their feelings and willing to listen

to those of others, she said. They must be workers, willing to do researching, contracting, reading between meetings to maximize the time spent together as a group. In addition, she said, they must be willing to work within a consensus model, and people of prayerful discernment.

Sister Hilaire invited diocesan wishing to suggest names for the task force to contact her at the Office of Special Pastoral Ministries, (716) 328-3210 before Oct. 10.



Looking to Future

Recently received novice, Sister Mary Jo Flynn, right, shares a few moments with Janet Carr, recently received as an associate in the Sisters of St. Joseph formation program. Sister Mary Jo entered the novitiate August 14. Miss Carr was received Sept. 4.

Schools Marathon This Saturday

Schools across the diocese and state will be participating in the fifth annual Marathon for Catholic Schools, Saturday, Oct. 6. The event is sponsored by the Federation of Catholic School Parents.

In the greater Rochester area an estimated 3,000 persons will raise money for their schools during a 6-mile walk, run or jog,

beginning and ending at Highland Bowl.

Similar activities will take place in Auburn, Geneva, Waterloo, and has already taken place in Newark.

The first four marathons raised more than \$300,000 for participating schools in the diocese, as well as several thousand for scholarships to Catholic high schools presented to the top

three winners of the annual Bishop's Oratoricals. The funding for the scholarships comes from Bishop Matthew H. Clark's participation in the marathon.

In addition to the major events, many schools hold mini-marathons on their school grounds to give primary grade children the opportunity to be part of the event on a smaller

route.

Schools keep 75 percent of that they raise to spend on enrichment equipment and programs for their schools. The rest is sent to the Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents to cover expenses of the marathon, as well as to support federation programs both locally and throughout the state.

The Family Rosary for Peace — 1984

By Father Robert F. McNamara

Rochester's "Family Rosary for Peace" was first broadcast on June 24, 1950. When the advisers of its founder, Msgr. Joseph A. Cirrincione, told him to go ahead and sign the contract for radio time at commercial rates, they were making a great act of faith that Our Lady of Fatima would take care of the finances.

She has not failed them.

This month, Family Rosary is making its annual low-key appeal for support as the program moves into its 35th year. Still the director, although now pastor emeritus of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Msgr. Cirrincione has just published an oversize paperback book of 112 pages relating to Rochester's radio campaign for peace. Bearing the title, "The Story of Fatima," this book will not be for sale, but will be distributed as a gift to those who donate to the 1984 appeal.

"The Story of Fatima" not only recounts the events of Our Lady's apparitions at that place, but gives some information about the origins of the Family Rosary for Peace.

The bulk of the book consists of reprints of 43 half-hour radio talks delivered by Father Cirrincione in 1948. Here, on the basis of documentary evidence of the Blessed Virgin's appearances, he narrates in a simple style the marvels of those days. The narrative is accompanied by devotional reflections based on a wide use of the scriptures. Some devotees of Our Lady of Fatima have focused on the mysterious and still unpublished "third secret." These radio talks avoid distracting conjectures about that subject, since their aim is to communicate Our Lady's chief message: repentance, rosary, reparation.

In his new prologue, the author tells us a little about how he happened to move into the field of rosary broadcasting.

Back in 1947, Father Joseph Cirrincione was still rejoicing with his fellow Americans over the end of World

War II, but nevertheless frightened at the prospects of a World War III that would surely be an atomic disaster. What could be done to prevent such a colossal tragedy?

That year he came upon a little book called "Our Lady of Fatima," written in 1943 by Patrick Finbar Ryan, the Dominican archbishop of Trinidad. Up to then, Father Joseph had never heard of the Fatima apparitions of 1917, and few other Americans had either. Here, he thought, is Mary's answer to atomic fear: prayer and repentance offered through the Blessed Virgin for worldwide peace.

The pastor of St. Francis Church first started to preach the message of Fatima on a parochial basis -- with sermons, a novena, and the consecration of his parish families to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. But the members of the two Catholic Action groups at St. Francis, told him that they thought he should seek a wider audience through radio. A local station gave him free time for 43 Sundays. It was then that he delivered the talks on Fatima reproduced in his newly published paperback.

After the conclusion of the 43 planned recordings, the question arose, "What next?" It was then that Father Cirrincione's advisors, who included the late Bishop James E. Kearney, urged him to sign a contract for a daily rosary half-hour on commercial AM radio. The format would be simple: a rosary recited by lay Catholics, and a reading or meditation. Subsequently, Msgr. Cirrincione constructed his own little "studio" for the broadcast on parish property.

His interest in the tale of Fatima had prompted Father Cirrincione to visit the shrine in the mountains of Portugal as early as May 1948. It was the first of his 13 pilgrimages there. When he got to Fatima in 1948 he was able to make several acquaintances who brought him very close to the great events of 1917. He met Ti Marto and Olimpia Marto, the parents of the two younger children who had seen Mary

-- Francisco (who died in 1919) and Jacinta (who died in 1920). Eventually he also met the oldest of the favored trio, Lucy Dos Santos, who is still living today, a cloistered Carmelite nun. (When Msgr. Cirrincione returned to Fatima in 1967 on the occasion of the visit there of Pope Paul VI, he visited with Sister Lucy and was photographed with her.) All these contacts have helped him speak even more enthusiastically and appreciatively of Fatima's signs and wonders. The account of his 1967 pilgrimage, printed as an epilogue in "The Story of Fatima," is particularly vivid and touching.

Today the Family Rosary for Peace is broadcast over seven radio stations and one cable outlet in western New York. I asked its founder whether he knew of any program like it elsewhere in America. No, he answered. So far as he knows, the only other rosary programs in the country have been shorter in air time and briefer in life.

"Have you any idea of the size of your audience?"

"The stations we use," he replied, "are small stations, unable to subscribe to any audience surveying service. Sometimes I wonder if we are not just a voice crying out in the wilderness." Not that that role would discourage him. After all, as he points out in his prologue to The Story of Fatima, the date when Family Rosary began was the feast of the birthday of St. John the Baptist, the original "voice in the desert." St. John's voice certainly reached no small audience.

No matter how many people may participate in this radio rosary, the very fact that it has not been without sponsors for almost 35 years seems to be a good sign of its popularity and value. Our Lady sent us a message through the three little shepherds of Fatima: "Say the rosary every day to bring peace to the world." She can only have been pleased with Rochester's long-term daily radio apostolate, and have used it appropriately in her war for peace.

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