

Cathedral Student Wins Bishop Clark Oratoricals

Hugh Fitzpatrick, an eighth grader at Sacred Heart School, bested 34 diocesan competitors to win the 1984 Bishop Matthew H. Clark Oratoricals Saturday, Dec. 1, at Bishop Kearney High School.

He is the first city school representative to win in the five years under the present format.

To prepare their speeches, all competitors were given the theme of "peacemaking" in

advance. Then the participants were broken down into small groups and assigned to classrooms where they would give their speech to a gathering of judges.

Scores from this preliminary round were then entered into a computer for totaling. The top six were selected as finalists and, as such, had to make their presentations to the crowd in the auditorium, including Bishop Clark.

Other finalists were Eileen

O'Connor, St. Jerome's, East Rochester; Byron Schneider, St. John the Evangelist, Spencerport; Chris Cobb, Holy Trinity, Webster; Michael Diodato, St. Thomas More; and Paul Ciavarrì, Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Fitzpatrick wins a \$1,000 scholarship to the Catholic high school of his choice -- Aquinas. He is the son of Thomas and Janet Fitzpatrick of Magee Avenue.

The Winning Speech

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

By Hugh Fitzpatrick

Several public figures of recent times seem to be described in Christ's words from the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God."

People like Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, and Bishop Tutu -- all have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet all have followed another statement by Christ in the New Testament: "I have come to bring not peace, but a sword."

In other words, all have brought the cutting edge of a new consciousness to the world. Though recognized as peacemakers, they have all been disturbers of the peace, as well.

But what sort of "peace" have they disturbed?

The peace that comes from moral laziness... The willingness to look the other way when faced with injustice and suffering. This is the peace that they have cut through and even shattered.

Unfortunately, the acts of these figures did not win them friends in high places. What do you think the president of South Africa said to the press when told the happy news of Bishop Tutu's Nobel Peace Prize? He said, "No comment."

It's worth remembering that Martin Luther King -- the man we honor as the father of the civil rights movement -- was seen in his day as an agitator; a troublemaker. In a way, he was both. He did make trouble for those who were perfectly willing to sit passively by, letting an unjust system persist.

King inspired thousands of blacks and whites to fight for civil rights. By his example, and these words taken from an old Negro spiritual: "Before I'll be a slave / I'll be buried in my grave / And go home to my Lord and be free."

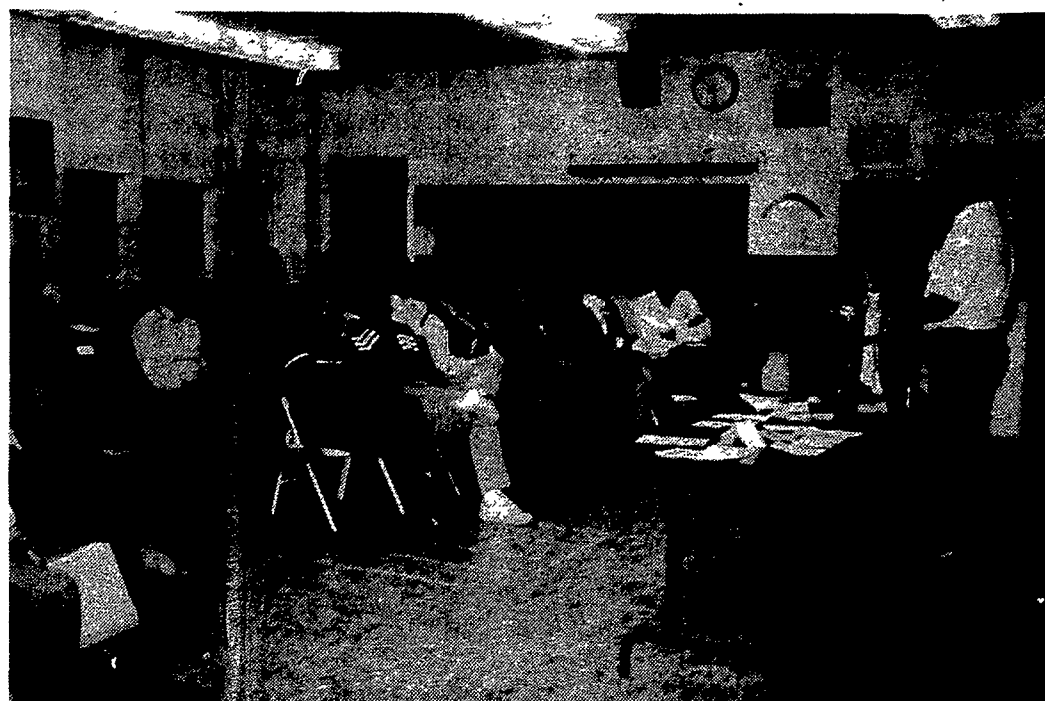
Among those he inspired was an 18-year-old college sophomore who heard Dr. King's words and traveled thousands of miles to Alabama to join a protest march of 50 miles from Selma to Montgomery. That 18-year-old saw bigotry and hatred first hand. Denied the right to vote, the black citizens of Selma had no paved roads, no street lights, not even a sewer system.

While marching, that 18-year-old saw two civil rights workers, like himself, severely beaten. Another civil rights worker, Viola Liuzzo, was shot dead on a highway.

That 18-year-old whose peace was forever disturbed was my father. Even though I never met Dr. King, I do know that his memory is alive in our family. Because, in the 20 years since Selma, my father has remembered to speak up for the underdog. I am learning to do the same.

He has tried to show me that you can't have peace when wrong is staring you right in the face; and I am learning that I must have peace within my own heart before I can share it with others.

There is a better meaning of peace. The one Christ referred to, the one Dr. King fought for. The peace that comes from true justice and equality.



Ithaca Weekend Success

Immaculate Conception parish in Ithaca recently conducted its first "Renewal and Reconciliation" weekend with the theme "I am the vine and you are the branches." A team of 25 conducted the weekend with 50 others involved as participants. Father Bernard L. Carges, pastor, said it was "a nice experience for everyone involved -- a spirit-filled two days which gave the participants an opportunity to share their life of faith with each other ... this opportunity was centered on personal development and growth ... our next step will be to encourage others to experience renewal and reconciliation but also to have this parish capitalize on the enthusiasm and spirit and joy of this occasion."

Charities Facing Taxing Situation

By Liz Armstrong

Washington (NC) -- Buried among the complex details comprising the U.S. Treasury Department's tax reform plan are proposals which could bring unsettling financial news to charities and donors alike.

"It's not bad news; it's horrible news. Horrendous," said Bob Smucker, vice president for government relations at Independent Sector, a coalition of non-profit public interest and charitable groups. He estimated the plan, if implemented, could precipitate a 20-25 percent reduction in charitable contributions nationwide, or a loss of some \$13 billion.

Causing particular concern to charitable groups are suggestions to:

-- Only allow a tax deduction for charitable contributions for that portion of the taxpayer's donations exceeding 2 percent of the taxpayer's adjusted gross income, and

-- Drop permanently the charitable deduction now allowed, at least on a temporary basis, to taxpayers who do not itemize.

Although it is hard to define exactly what the proposed changes would mean to individual tax returns, the 2-percent proposal would apparently work like this:

A taxpayer with an adjusted gross income of \$25,000 who usually gives \$1,200 a year to charity could no longer deduct the whole \$1,200. Under the new plan, the taxpayer could only use \$700 for deduction purposes -- the difference between \$500, which is 2 percent of that taxpayer's income, and the \$1,200 donated to charity.

Similarly, a taxpayer with \$50,000 adjusted gross income would have to donate more than \$1,000 to charity before he or she could claim a deduction.

The tax plan, unveiled by Treasury Secretary Donald Regan and received with lukewarm response by the White House, some congressional leaders, and public

interest groups, is aimed at simplifying and reforming the often-confusing American tax system. It would decrease the more than a dozen categories of tax rates now used to three rate categories: 15 percent, 25 percent and 35 percent.

As foreseen by the plan, average Americans' taxes would drop by 8.5 percent. While the corporate world would see its rate drop as well, from 46 percent to 33 percent, corporate loopholes and shelters would be cut back or dropped altogether, meaning the corporate sector overall would pay more in taxes than under the current scheme.

The poor might fare better. With the revised system, families below the official poverty level would generally pay no taxes. For example, a family of four in 1986 with an income of about \$11,500 would not pay taxes until its income rose by \$300 to \$11,800. The existing system might tax such a family, even if its income were below or comparable to official poverty levels, although some poor already are excused from paying taxes.

Another proposed change with possible ramifications for the poor -- outside of the changes in charitable contribution deductions -- would be an end to deductions for taxpayers' payments of local and state taxes. As some analysts suggested, this could adversely affect city and state services by forcing states and localities to lower taxes to help taxpayers cope with the burden imposed by loss of the deduction.

Smucker, whose Independent Sector represents such non-profit public interest and charitable organizations as the U.S. Catholic Conference, National Conference of Catholic Charities, American Red Cross and National Wildlife Federation, said the proposed tax changes come at a time when the voluntary sector is already being called upon to do more for the disadvantaged because of federal budget cutbacks.

Abortion Clinic Bombings Denounced by Pro-Lifers

Washington (NC) -- Following the bombings Nov. 19 of an abortion clinic and a family planning center in the suburbs of Washington, leaders on both sides of the abortion debate expressed outrage and concern over the attacks.

Rosann Wisman, executive director for Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, said she was "outraged" and added, "The issue here is not abortion, it is the willful destruction of property and the endangerment of individual lives."

Reba Ferris, executive director of the Maryland Right to Life Committee, said the bombings were "of great concern" to the pro-life group and said anyone connected with the violence "cannot consider themselves part of the pro-life movement."

The early morning bombings occurred within minutes of each other at the Metropolitan Medical and Women's Clinic in Wheaton, Md., and, a mile away, at the Randolph Medical Building in Rockville, Md., which houses a Planned Parenthood family planning center. The Wheaton clinic was

"completely gutted," said clinic administrator Penny Smith, while windows were blown out by the explosion at the Rockville center.

The bombing at the Wheaton clinic came two days after 46 protesters were arrested for blocking the door at the facility where abortions are performed.

Harry Hand, coordinator of the Pro-Life Non-Violent Action Project, one of the groups at the protest Nov. 17, said he was "totally opposed" to the violence.

"We don't use violent tactics," he told National Catholic News Service Nov. 20. "After the bombing yesterday, it shows the need for non-violent protest."

No group had claimed responsibility for the bombings and an investigation was under way, according to an official from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Nov. 20.

At another news conference the same day, Mrs. Ferris defended the Maryland Right to Life Committee as "a peaceful, educational movement."

"We support only peaceful, non-violent means to stop the violence of abortion," she said.

The bombings marked the 25th attack on abortion-related facilities around the country in 1984, up from four the previous year, according to the National Abortion Federation.

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