

Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



Oxolotan, Mexico - I want so much to share with you the experience of those days in our mission but I know I do not have the words to do that adequately.

It is easy enough to offer an itinerary of places and a chronology of events. It's difficult to convey the spirit of our mission or to convey reality of the love and respect for our mission team among the people of this village and surrounding rancherias.

How does one write about a penniless widow who sends a plate of tortillas as a sign of welcome? Or of the pride of the leader of a honey cooperative as he draws from the hive a comb dripping with golden honey? Or the sadness and confusion among the people at the news that a man had been murdered at the edge of the village? Or the hospitality of people who vacate their home so we can string our five hammocks and spend the night in their rancheria?

Sisters of Mercy Sponsor Program

From 7:30-9:30 p.m., on Thursdays, March 7, 14 and 21, at the Mercy Motherhouse, Rochester, and the Notre Dame Convent, Elmira, Sisters Jean Marie Kearse, superior general, Marie Joseph Crowley, Mary Noreen Graney, Janet Korn and Nancy Whitely, members of the Council of the Sisters of Mercy, will speak on "Understanding Religious Life Today." The mini-series is being scheduled by the Mercy congregation's Faith Sharing Program.

The presentations and discussions will center on community life, ministry and the vows of poverty, celibacy, obedience and service. Women interested in deepening their knowledge of the call to religious life and becoming better acquainted

with the lives of the Sisters of Mercy are invited to attend.

For further information or to register call, in the Rochester area, Sister Sheila Stevenson at (716)244-2175; in Elmira and Corning area, Sister Marie Catherine Cain, (607) 732-6295, or Sister Ann Carapella, (607) 734-6840; in Hornell, call Sister Pat Prinzing (607) 324-0833.

Sponsors Needed

Sponsors, both individuals and organizations, are needed to help refugees from Southeast Asia start new lives in the United States. Diocesanians wishing to assist in the effort are asked to contact the United States Catholic Conference's local refugee officer, James Delaney, (716) 546-7220.

It is the sum total of hundreds of experiences like these which manifest hospitality, care, the human struggle and the willingness to give of self which touches the spirit and makes the person touched very much aware of the presence of the Lord.

It is not only in the people of the community that I have found this. I have been much impressed - inspired - by Mark Kavanagh and Valerie Smith. These young adults continue to serve with generosity, sensitivity and great affection for the people among whom they work.

As their experience increases it is obvious that they have grown with the kind guidance and tender love of the Lord's Holy Spirit. They have always done good work - and they still do. Now they have come to that greater confidence which is born as we become more and more able to surrender our life and ministry to the Lord who is always closer to us than we are to ourselves. A sure sign of this to me is the frequent references our two friends make to the ways in which the people here teach them about Jesus.

Another cause of joy for the team and the villagers has been the arrival of Father Paul Ryan as a permanent member of the team. P.J. will be leaving for a month of study at Cuernavaca but will return to add his beautiful gifts of pastoral experience and joyful humor and optimism to our work in Oxolotan.

Already P.J. has endeared himself to the team and the community. That is a tribute not only to him but to Father Neil Miller, the first priest on our mission team. Neil laid a solid foundation of priestly ministry.

The few words don't begin to tell the story but I hope they are enough to call you to prayer for the continued growth of our relationship with the Diocese of Tabasco. The members of our mission team are an extension of the life of the local Church. They give a concrete expression to our understanding that the Church is a communion of communities.

I have kept a journal of the events of these days. Next week in this space I shall share it with you. I hope it will bring you close to our dear friends in Tabasco.

Peace to all.

St. James Mercy Notes Anniversary

Hornell - St. James Mercy Hospital will celebrate its 95th year of continuous service, beginning today (Feb. 13), the anniversary date of the hospital's founding.

An anniversary ecumenical service of thanksgiving is scheduled for 12:15 p.m. today in the conference room for members of the Board of Directors, medical staff and members of the hospital staff, volunteers and students.

At 2 p.m., administrators and department heads will conduct a birthday party in the Main Lobby. Other parties will take place in Lincoln Annex, DeSales Hall

and the Aquinas Center and birthday cake will be served the evening staff.

The first baby born in the hospital during the anniversary celebration will receive a gift.

In the Sub Lobby there will be an exhibit of memorabilia of "Good Old Days," featuring books, instruments and other items as well as a display of "The Past and the Future," in keeping with the theme "A Proud Past -- A Promising Future."

Lenten Disciplines

With the guidelines given in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the following are the regulations for fast and abstinence during Lent.

1. All Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence as is Ash Wednesday.
2. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting.
3. All persons who are 14 years of age or older are bound by the law of abstinence.
4. All persons who are between the ages of 18 and 59, inclusive, are bound by the law of fasting.
5. Catholics are to be encouraged to perform acts of penance regularly, especially during the season of Lent.

ALBANY WINS!

Judge Backs Bishop Hubbard in Quest Against State, Planned Parenthood

Albany, N.Y. (NC) - Two New York Planned Parenthood clinics may not provide abortions, a judge ruled Feb. 1, agreeing with the Diocese of Albany that the state health department failed to prove a need for the clinics.

Justice Harold J. Hughes of State Supreme Court in Albany said the state health department had acted "capriciously" by using improper procedures to determine whether to allow abortions at clinics in Albany and Hudson, N.Y. He invalidated the clinics' abortion licenses and ordered the health department to reconsider the applications using different procedures.

The clinics, which already offered other medical services, received licenses to perform abortions Jan. 11. The Albany Diocese, led by Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, sued, arguing that the health department had exceeded its authority by not offering a chance for public input on the decision. The diocese won a temporary injunction blocking any abortions.

Hughes also ruled Feb. 1, however, that the diocese itself, as a "corporate entity," could not be a party to the suit because it could not show that it would be directly affected by the performance of abortions at the clinic.

But he recognized the right of individuals, including Mercy Sister Maureen Joyce, diocesan director of community maternity services, to sue and for the most part rejected attempts by the state and Planned Parenthood to limit who can bring suit to block an abortion clinic.

Alfred F. Moran, executive director of Planned Parenthood of New York City, said the judge had "played directly into the hands of the bishop of Albany." He said the bishop's object "is to limit access and obstruct access to abortions. Judges on the

state level as well as the federal level have an obligation to intervene to see that those obstacles are not put between women and their constitutional rights."

Hughes said the case "does not involve the legality or morality of abortions. All that is before this court is whether the department of health properly handled Planned Parenthood's application and whether petitioners may challenge the approval of that application."

Father Michael A. Farano, chancellor of the Albany Diocese, said "as far as we're concerned, it's a victory. We have maintained consistently that our position in this matter has been substantive. We are pleased that the court has sustained this."

When he originated the suit Bishop Hubbard had said he would do "everything legally possible" to stop abortion.

The judge's decision called into question "the 50 percent rule" the New York health department had used to determine whether to grant licenses to abortion clinics. Under that rule, the department usually granted an abortion clinic license if more than 50 percent of abortions performed in the area are performed in hospitals.

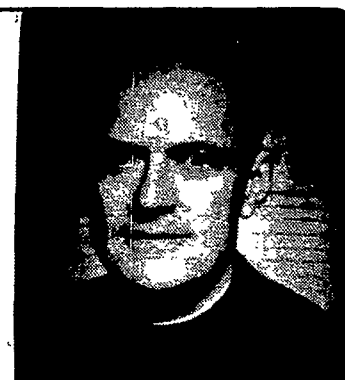
The premise in such cases is that there is a need for cheaper, more accessible abortions.

In the area of the Albany and Hudson clinics the health department said that only 12 percent of abortions were performed outside hospitals.

Hughes called the rule "arbitrary" and said it was "an unwritten, undated department policy of which those affected have not been given notice."

According to a state spokesman, health department officials planned to meet with the attorney general Feb. 5 to decide whether to appeal the ruling or to reconsider the application using a different set of criteria.

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