

Editorial

Crossroads

As Bishop Matthew H. Clark prepares to embark on his annual Crossroads Lenten journey throughout the length and breadth of the diocese, it is well to note the symbolism involved as well as the reality.

It was not too far back into the past that bishops were heard but indirectly and seen but rarely, except at confirmations or in their cathedrals. Now, especially with the energetic ordinary gracing this diocese, given modern modes of transportation, there is hardly any reason, short of infirmity, for any diocesan to fail to see, hear and probably meet Bishop Clark.

But that is still addressing the reality of the journey. And as inviting as that is, the symbolism is even more intriguing. As the bishop wends his way from one corner of our diocese to the other, and back again, his peregrinations reflect the movement of the Church itself. Since Vatican II, we have become a pilgrim Church, not yet arrived, not yet fulfilled but itself on a journey -- laterally to the far reaches of Earth as well as into the depths of the meaning of life, death and eternity. As the Church does not see itself as smugly self-righteous, neither should its members.

Bishop Clark's travels are also an emulation of the proportionately longer and more frequent voyages of Pope John Paul II, who himself adopted the lessons of his eponym, Paul VI. His ports of call while chosen for a variety of pragmatic reasons also in combination represent the catholicity of the Roman Church -- much as the places Bishop Clark visits form a single community called the diocese.

And in truth the symbolism engendered by this mobility both in space and spirit is of more import than the actual content of the speeches and homilies engendered. It could well be more important that an Inca from the mountains of Peru see that the vicar of Christ actually exists than that he hears his message of concern regarding poverty or his cautions against violence.

The Church indeed is no longer stationary in the Vatican. It is reaching out as wide as the world is wide. The bishop is no longer confined to his cathedral flock. As Bishop Sheen put it, it is possible for the ordinary to reach his arms out and embrace all in his flock. Perhaps some day, the hierarchy of the Church will be expanded to provide "mini-popes" to serve the vast expanses of the Church far from Rome. By the year 2000 most of the Roman Catholics of the world will be in Latin America; would it be implausible to consider new thinking to match such situations?

But what is the point for individual Catholics in all the mobility involved with the pilgrim Church? As Christians, we, each one of us, are charged with the duty of spreading the Good News of the Resurrection. Obviously, we cannot move about geographically as we may wish. But we can support in word and prayer the work of all those able to spread the message -- be it pope, bishop or religious or lay missionary.

And in particular during Crossroads III, we can make an extra effort to be on hand when Bishop Clark arrives in our locality.



"WE'LL HAVE TO CROSS-CHECK CAREFULLY, OF COURSE, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT, THERE'S A DEFINITE REFERENCE HERE TO A SAINT BINGO."

and Opinions

Dr. King Praised

EDITOR:

History teaches us that rectifying many injustices within the framework of society has proven to be an awesome challenge. It's most appropriate, therefore, that a national holiday has been designated to commemorate the birth date of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Now that the spirit of this man's life will be perpetuated, we can only hope America will direct its conscience toward the less fortunate members of our society.

Thanks to Dr. King, the active pursuit of justice and decency is not an impossible dream. Instead of paying lip service from the sidelines, King recognized that social progress can only be achieved through peaceful and non-violent means. If the bold step is taken, then these worthy ideals should endure as workable reality.

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The Faithful Are 'Miracles'

EDITOR:

In these days of the "sexual revolution," "freedom" of conscience, and "the right to dissent," I truly believe that there is no greater miracle of God's grace than that of a religious who is completely faithful to his or her vows (particularly those of chastity in thought, word and

deed, and obedience) and to the Holy Father and the Magisterium. And those who are not only loyal, but who have the courage to teach those Christian precepts, "let the chips fall where they may," are an even greater miracle!

Our Lord, in a private revelation to a Spanish nun, said that souls who remain pure surpass incomparably the glory given to God by the angels themselves, because angels do not have to struggle and conquer in order to remain pure.

He also told her that obedience is a sure sign of God's favor.

In these dark days, when most Christian concepts seem to have been abandoned, even by many in the Church, these faithful souls are souls of heroic virtue, true spiritual giants! If it weren't for them, God's justice could hardly be restrained. We all owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude. They are saving our hides for us!

Mrs. A.T. O'Connor
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Literature Needed

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 send me self-addressed envelopes, I will give them the addresses of missionary priests and nuns who need Catholic literature.

Mary Conway
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Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

Presence Of Evil

Last Sunday, the Gospel had to do with the expulsion of evil spirits by Jesus. The homily service, "Good News," had a model homily based on the reality of evil spirits, which was thereafter put down by the editor of the homily service on the basis that evils spirits are not recognized as real by our sophisticated world. It seemed to me interesting that contradictory points of view be presented in the same service.

It almost goes without

saying that there are people today who believe firmly in the existence of evil spirits and many who regard them as figments of ancient imaginations which could not explain phenomena in any other way.

Personally, I don't know what to think about them. From seemingly well documented accounts of diabolic possession comes powerful evidence of their existence. Even so, that evidence is by no means overwhelming.

Does the question really matter? If we define evil spirits as life forces or drives in the direction of evil, I believe there is no doubt as to their existence.

If they are indeed disembodied persons of the spirit realm, we still are faced with the same reality.

There are the powerful life forces which ruthlessly seek to destroy the unity and the solidarity of the human race and the brotherly love which is its true lifeblood. The force which was in the Scribes and Pharisees in our Lord's time, the horrible force which inhabited Adolf Hitler in his genocidal enterprise, the ruthless exploitation of the native peoples of North and South America in the process of colonization, all spring from a malevolent life force which certainly can be described as "evil spirit."

Within each of us are powerful forces of evil which call us to say with St. Paul, "The good that I would I do not, the evil that I would not, that I do." It is the conglomeration of forces which evoke from us

so many times the insipid statement, "I couldn't help it."

What is such an evil force as these instincts exaggerated and run amok in our person? We call them the seven sources of sin, but their power for evil leaves us sometimes helpless in their grasp. What is it that alcoholics, compulsive gamblers, and other compulsives must do before they can be freed from this power. They must admit their utter helplessness in the face of it.

If we admit the presence of evil forces within us and our society -- destructive pride, rampant lust, killing anger etc., we need to admit the healing saving power of Jesus Christ in the face of these. But now as then, these same forces cry out, "Leave us alone, Jesus of Nazareth, we know who you are."

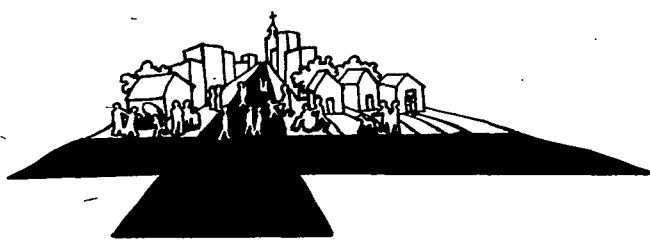
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The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writer's signature, full address and telephone number. They should be sent to Opinion, Courier-Journal, 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

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.



CROSSROADS III