

# Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



In the last two weeks I have invited you by means of some concrete and practical questions to reflect on the variety of ministries we enjoy in the contemporary church.

People of my generation and older grew up in a church in which there was an abundance of priestly vocations and in which the apostolate of laypersons was considered to be a participation in the ministry of the priest.

Twenty years ago at Vatican Council II, the church, reflecting on the reality of her life, called us to a new awareness and appreciation of the baptismal vocation. In that great sacrament of new life we are joined to the Risen Lord and to His saving mission in the world. All of the baptized are to be leaven and light. In baptism we are called to mission and empowered to proclaim the Good News in all that we do.

It is important to remember that this central proclamation of the council was made antecedent to and independent of the shortage of priests we anticipate. It is an insight and development to which we would be called even amidst an abundance of priestly vocations.

To put these two streams together is not always the easiest thing to do. There are reasons for that: 1. the norms by which the ministries of the church are ordered and coordinated do not always keep pace with the pastoral realities of the day; 2. human persons do not easily change ways to which they have become accustomed and which mean a great deal to them; 3. we can have a tendency to stay with the tried and the true because to face the uncertain can leave us fearful.

One part of my ministry is to remind all members of our local church that we must meet this challenge with courage or we will lose ground. Another is to remind us all that the Lord is always with us and is the sure source of the courage we need.

In that spirit I offer the following suggestions for your prayer, thought and discussion:

I encourage our pastors to be willing to put before our people the needs of the parish and invite them to respond to those needs with all of the imagination, skill and love with which the Lord blesses them. Don't be afraid that there will be mistakes made or that things will spin out of your legitimate pastoral oversight.

The life of the faith community takes flesh when the gifts of our people are brought to bear on the needs of others, when persons stand in support and encouragement of one another, when individuals are helped to discover that without their good gifts and care, our community of faith is less than God wants us to be.

If you stand in the midst of your people rooted in prayer and caring for them you'll be offering irreplaceably important priestly ministry and you will call for the very best in our people.

I encourage all of our people to take a personal interest in the well-being of our parish communities. Please become acquainted with the changes your parish has experienced in recent years and those anticipated in the years ahead.

Offer the gifts of your prayer and talent as you can. Your participation will be source of strength to your sisters and brothers. And please let your pastor and other parish leaders know how your parish can further strengthen you to meet the demands of Christian living in today's cultural milieu.

## Public Hearing Provides Bishop Economic Input

Following is a report, prepared by the diocesan Department of Justice and Peace, on Bishop Matthew H. Clark's efforts to reflect diocesan opinion to the U.S. bishops for their consideration in writing the pastoral on the American economy.

Early in November 1984, Father John Mulligan, diocesan director of Urban Services, and Tony Capozzi, parish social ministry coordinator for the Department of Justice and Peace, began planning a strategy to gather input from the parishes and community regarding the U.S. bishops' pastoral on the American economy.

After much discussion, a decision was made to conduct a public hearing. Letters, along with copies of the poverty section of the pastoral draft, were sent to all urban parishes inviting them to participate and testify. The same invitation was sent to about 60 organizations and ministries working in the city. For those unfamiliar with the content of the pastoral, copies of the poverty section allowed them to read, review and analyze its message according to the perspective in which they serve the needs of the city's poor. Each group was encouraged to bring persons who could share their stories of need in answer to the bishops' call for "a preferential option for the poor."

A panel of community leaders was set up to listen to the testimony at the hearing and to compile the input into categories of need. The input was then summarized and given to Bishop Clark who submitted testimony from all over the diocese to the bishops' ad hoc committee.

The panel consisted of Mario Caceres, executive director of the Ibero-American Action League; Nydia Padilla, United Way of Greater Rochester; Michael Afflick, director of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality; Greg

Zuroski, Catholic Charities; Maxine Childress-Brown, city council; James Dobson, Office of Black Ministries; Bill Johnson, Urban League director, and Sister Ann Curtis, social justice coordinator at Mercy High School.

The public hearing was conducted Thursday, Jan. 10, at Blessed Sacrament School. Among the issues raised were poverty, the handicapped, church as witness and example, racism, hunger, housing, education, unemployment and immigration and sanctuary concerns.

Many criticized the pastoral letter as not being self-critical enough, that our church surplus wealth is a negative witness to the community. They said that the parish, diocesan and universal church must be challenged to address those things the pastoral is calling others to do. Some suggested tithing as a means to meet the needs of the poor and to look seriously at local needs.

One challenged some of the myths regarding people on public assistance noting that attendance at the soup kitchens at the beginning of the month is light while people have their welfare checks. At the end of the month, as the money runs out, the numbers increase greatly, it also was noted that people will wait for an hour in the cold to receive donated clothing.

Several spoke to the "feminization of poverty," stating that 85 to 90 percent of households living in subsidized housing across the United States are headed by females. Poverty, for women, is a lack of control over their own lives and the lives of their children. They called for the bishops to advocate for affordable, safe housing for single women and/or single-parent families, programs to help acquire skills to enter the legitimate work force and medical coverage of some kind.

After hearing all of the testimony, the panel summarized the testimony. Following are recommendations submitted to Bishop Clark.

1. That the church address itself more specifically on how its institutional lifestyle can better reflect the radical justice to which it is calling others.

2. That the letter emphasize even more strongly the dignity of those on the lowest economic levels calling each diocese and parish to positive action in education, housing and employment.

3. That the letter call individual members of the church to personal conversion and responsibility by endorsing a strong action plan to dispel the myths which enable church members to justify poverty.

4. That the letter contain an action plan for local and diocesan churches to enter a partnership with business and government to combat institutional racism in all its forms.

5. That the letter encourage self-help initiatives for the poor through participatory decision-making, training, skill development and political empowerment.

6. That the letter expand and specify the section on education of the poor utilizing its vast educational experience and resources.

7. That the letter expand its treatment of the handicapped and also the feminization of poverty.

The hearing obtained testimony almost exclusively from church people and those invited in work on ministry with the poor. While not poor themselves, they are at least sensitive to the plights and needs of the urban poor. Their criticism and their suggestions regarding the first draft of the pastoral tended to be very practical rather than theoretical, giving a constructive counterthrust to the draft.

### If you want peace, work for justice.

That's what the North East Block Club Alliance is doing in Rochester. Aided by Campaign for Human Development, the alliance hired a community organizer. Two new block clubs of residents were organized and leadership training was completed to help residents address conditions of deteriorated housing, crime and the need for continued city services. Volunteers will conduct voter registration this spring to enable residents to participate in upcoming elections.



CHD is sponsored by the American Catholic bishops. CHD helps poor Americans help themselves through projects that work. America needs workers for justice. Your donations are the tools that can transform lives. Won't you lend a hand?

Work for justice. Support the Campaign for Human Development. Give generously. 1985 Collection Sunday is April 21.

**CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

### Mercy Sisters Plan Benefit

The Sisters of Mercy will sponsor their annual home-cooked roast beef supper, spring sale and Sisters Folk Group entertainment, 4-8 p.m., Saturday, April 20 at the congregational motherhouse and Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road.

Proceeds will benefit the two congregation-owned high schools, Mercy, and Notre Dame High School in Elmira.

Homemade bread, a country booth and handcrafted articles are sale features. The entertainment is scheduled for 7:15 p.m. in the motherhouse chapel.

Supper tickets are available at the door, or in advance by calling (716) 482-5442. Prices are \$5, adults; \$4, senior citizens; \$2, children under 10.

A family Eucharistic liturgy will be celebrated 5 p.m. in the motherhouse chapel for those who wish to attend.

### DEATHS

#### Joseph E. Starks, Businessman, St. John Evangelist Parishioner

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated March 20 for Joseph E. Starks who died March 17, 1985 at the age of 71. Mr. Starks died at home following hospice care for cancer.

The retired treasurer of J. H. Rae Oil Co. was raised in the 19th Ward and spent most of his married years a parishioner of St. John the Evangelist Church on Humboldt Street.

The funeral rites were celebrated by his son, Father Richard Starks of Combermere, Ont., and his brothers, Father Donald Starks and Father Mansfield Starks.

Well known in the downtown business community, Mr. Starks career included 40 years with Rae Oil, and briefer periods with Quinby Air Conditioning, Fasino Power Brake, Judge Motors, Heinrich Chevrolet, DeCarolis Truck Rental, Rochester Credit and Financial Management Group and

Genesee Highway Users Council.

He had been a goalie for St. Michael's College School hockey team in Toronto, and taught his three sons to play hockey.

He is survived by his wife, Rosemary Griffin Starks, formerly of Toronto; three

#### N.Y.C. Trip Planned

A "weekend" in New York City is being planned by the Nazareth College Continuing Education Office for May 3 to 6.

Musicals, sightseeing and shopping all will be included in the four-day, three-night visit. Marion Folsom Jr., associate professor of English at Nazareth, and Ellen de Buono, guide, will accompany the tour.

The group will leave Nazareth at 7:30 a.m., Friday, May 3, on a deluxe motorcoach. On the New York City itinerary will be Victor Herbert's "Naughty

sons, Father Richard, David of Albany, and Gregory of Rochester; four daughters, Martha Anne Moore of New York City; Virginia of Rochester, Dolores Rugg of Buffalo, and Bernadette Petroski of Watertown; three brothers and two sisters; seven grandchildren and several nieces and a nephew.

Marietta" and the Tony Award-winning musical "42nd Street." A backstage tour of Radio City Music Hall, a visit to the World Trade Center's observation deck and a mini-tour of other points of interest are planned.

The group will arrive back in Rochester at 8 p.m., Monday, May 6.

Reservation and payment deadline is March 29. Further information is available from the Nazareth Continuing Education Office, 586-2525, ext. 400.