



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

A Witness for Peace delegation from Rochester left for Managua, Nicaragua, last Wednesday. Delegates are: First row, left to right, Bob D'Errico, Kim Murman, Reiton Rolland and Eric Worl. Second row, left to right, Yolanda Ramos, Ted Brothers, June Botsford, Sister Beatrice Ganley, Julie Everitt. Third row, left to right, Norman and Helen Krog, Tom Harris, Keven Meyer, Jim Rice, John Carley and Margrete Stoltman.

## Witness for Peace

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"War is nasty," he added, speaking from his personal experience — civil war in the Dominican Republic. "This is a courageous response, to have a nonviolent-based program reach out under those conditions."

"Be careful" is what most people have warned Everitt and Harris. But what Harris, a writer and photographer, most dreads are not threats on his life. Rather, he's afraid of the stories he'll hear from people who've lost family and loved ones in the conflict.

"I'm not looking forward to that," he said. "I know it's going to hurt me."

Courage is a particular requirement in light of this summer's alleged kidnapping of a Witness for Peace delegation. All of the travelers are at least aware of the incident, which has produced some degree of anxiety.

"I wouldn't be honest if I said it didn't concern me," one man admitted. But other delegates suggested it would be foolish for contra forces to endanger their U.S. support by seizing or harming Americans. At the same time, they acknowledged that members of underground guerilla movements are not always logical, reasonable or controllable.

"Nonviolent actions tend to be more stabilizing, less risky," explained Kevin Meyer, a laboratory research assistant. "And those people (the kidnapped group) were well-prepared for a worst-case situation."

He added that the first Witness for Peace delegation was offered an armed guard by the Sandinista government, but refused. Had they accepted as a matter of policy, he predicted a far different outcome for the kidnapping incident.

"I am afraid of having something like that happen," Sister Beatrice admitted. But

through her congregation's support and her own fund-raising efforts, she has gathered the hopes and prayers of many others on her journey, which makes her feel less alone.

Realistically, Sister Beatrice does not expect that the testimony she brings back will reshape U.S. policy in Nicaragua or Central America, or to even significantly affect the situation. In fact, she left Rochester feeling discouraged by the news that support from private sources in the U.S. has filled in where government funding ends in aiding the contras.

Nevertheless, she hopes that her presence will speak to the people she meets in Nicaragua and will increase her credibility with the people she encounters back home.

"What it says from us to the people of Nicaragua — that we are willing to share their powerlessness, is a real compassionate gesture ... the least we can do under the circumstances," she said.

"People (Americans) ought to be aware of what's being done in their name, even if they're powerless to change things, even if all they can do is lament it."

Her first attempt to share her experience will be in the company of the whole delegation on Thursday, Oct. 24. The public is invited to a community forum with the delegates at 7:30 p.m. in the Gates Presbyterian Church, 1049 Wegman Road. For more information, call Sister Christine Wagner, (716)546-4894.



## Along the Way

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

I am very much aware this morning that we observe next week as Vocation Awareness Week. To me, this means reflecting on the vocations to which the Lord calls us, praying for continued growth in those vocations and praying that the Lord will spark in every one of our young people a loving and active search for the vocations that will bring rich meaning to their lives.

In this spirit, I offer you some memories, reflections and hopes, which come to me as I join you in responding to the invitation of the week.

I have been a priest now for nearly twenty-three years. For the past six-and-a-half years, I have lived and served as a bishop. Given the chance to live my life over again, I would certainly try to be more loving and faithful than I have managed to be thus far, but I can tell you without reservation and joyfully that I would choose priesthood again.

When I look back at the beginning of my inclination to priesthood, I do not remember one person, event or experience as especially important.

I do remember, however, the kindness of John Hennessy, Don Ammering and other Augustinian priests who staffed our home parish. I remember as well Betty Bills and Ducky Marble, and others like them who gave up their Monday afternoons to teach us young unruly ones our catechism. I remember how, even then, in vague and unformed ways, I had some sense that the community of faith was lifegiving and that to serve that community was significant work.

It was in high school that I first gave explicit thought to becoming a priest,

but it was occasional rather than consistent thought, and I never pursued it very seriously save for some conversations during retreat time. Girls and sports and lots of other wonderful gifts like that attracted me very much, and at that stage of my life I was not much adept at drawing together the strands of my experience, much less at reading any direction there.

At that time our high school was staffed by Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of St. Joseph and diocesan priests. They were important to me; some of them still are in direct and personal ways. They cared about us and let us know it. At the moment, I remember Father Bill Turner, who upon receipt from me of three successive and dreadfully poor test papers in a first-year religion class, wrote me a note that practically set the paper on fire. He told me I could do much better, and that he was correct. You don't forget that kind of care.

If there was any one person in those years who more than others drew me to think about priesthood, it was T. Gerald Mulqueen, who was principal of the school. If we exchanged five hundred words during the four years of high school, that was a lot, but the way he carried himself among us and treated us bespoke an integrity and sense of purpose that many of us found attractive.

Although he never mentioned priesthood to me, it was he who led me more and more to focus on it as a possibility for my life's vocation. More about that next week.

Peace to all.

## Bishop Clark to give speech at Right to Life convention

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will deliver a major address at the New York State Right to Life Convention Saturday, Oct. 18, 9 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Hofidome and Convention Center, Henrietta.

The bishop's speech is entitled "The Challenge of Christianity to Abortion." In addressing the topic, Bishop Clark will discuss how essential aspects of Christianity call into question society's legal approbation of abortion. He will also elaborate on the Christian's responsibility in the face of threats to human life.

The state Right to Life committee, sponsor of the event, prepared a comprehensive program that will include a number of well-known speakers.

U.S. Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner, a fourth-year member of the House of Representatives, will be the featured speaker at the convention luncheon. Sensenbrenner is the author of the much-publicized Sensenbrenner Amendment, an amendment to the Equal Rights Amendment — right to abortion.

About 250 persons are expected to attend the convention.

## Notre Dame Homecoming

Alumni of Elmira Catholic and Notre Dame high schools are invited to homecoming, Friday, Oct. 18.

Pennsylvania State University's band will perform during halftime, and a reception is planned in the school cafeteria after the game.

## OLPH Octoberfest

Parishioners and friends are invited to Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish's annual Octoberfest Dinner Dance Saturday, Oct. 26 in St. Casimir Church hall.

Chef Roland Aube will prepare the German meal, and Mario Shabbarrasi will provide music. Tickets, at \$9, are limited, so call either (716)467-4881 or 266-2149 as soon as possible. Deadline is Oct. 19.

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