

Editorial

Learning to look beyond the boundaries of parochialism

Our schools have long been designated by the term "parochial" rather than religious, Catholic or private. Parochial is an interesting moniker when one stops to think about it.

Though the term originates with the parish base of the schools, it has also taken on other meanings in the secular world. It implies a regional nature, a neighborhood family, something we all want our parish schools to be.

But — especially in political science — the term has come to describe an extreme regionalism, a desire for programs and policies that benefit one's own neighborhood, city or state, regardless of the consequences to the larger society.

To a degree, that meaning of parochial also fits our parish schools. As some schools face the prospect of closing, many people express regret or pity. But often, their real concern is focused on the future of their own parochial schools. "It's too bad about St. What'sit's," they say, "but they'd better not

touch my children's school." It's a natural human tendency, but it's none too admirable.

This year alone, we have seen two Catholic schools close — Corning North and St. Augustine's — in addition to the consolidation in Elmira. Many parishes can no longer face rising costs and declining enrollment alone. Nor can the diocese afford ever-higher

subsidies. Even if some schools seem safe for the time being, the problem is not parochial; it affects the entire Catholic school system.

If Catholic schools are to remain true to their ideals — and maintain the strength of numbers in lobbying government — they must work together for the survival of all. That's what the diocesan Division of Education is striving for through long-range

planning. Although their aims are accepted in general, division representatives often encounter fierce parochial loyalties when those aims are translated into recommendations for individual schools.

The division alone cannot ensure security for Catholic schools. Proponents of Catholic education must be willing to work for the benefit of the whole system — even if that means sacrifices on the parochial front.

Rededicating ourselves to a promise of liberty for all

Tucked into a corner of Monday's Democrat and Chronicle — just above the lottery results — was an article headlined "Enough Liberty is enough." The minute story described the results of a recent opinion poll conducted by the Daily News of New York City.

The poll showed that 58 percent of New York City residents believe too many immigrants are being allowed to enter the United States. That opinion was held by 60 percent

of the native-born New Yorkers polled and — amazingly — by 51 percent of those who had been born abroad.

That's a pretty sorry commentary — especially coming from a city that has been the very center of the American melting pot and the home of a statue welcoming the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free." The United States is the land of freedom and opportunity, but let's keep those advantages to ourselves, they seem to say.

That 51 percent — those who immigrated here themselves — faced the same attitude when they arrived. It's the attitude that confronted waves of Irish, Italian, and Polish immigrants, and today "greet" Hispanics and Southeast Asians.

This weekend we celebrate the anniversary of our independence and the rededication of our best-known ambassador of opportunity. Perhaps it is also time to rededicate ourselves to the national ideals we proclaim.

And opinions

Writer questions choice of Vatican II quotations used in Curran forum

To the Editor:

In April of this year, I attended the Friends of Father Curran meeting held at St. Mary's in Auburn. At that meeting, I listened to a well-prepared presentation on Father Curran's position, a chronology of events leading to the present situation, and excerpts from the Second Vatican Council documents used to support and defend Father Curran's stance as well as promote equality between a local bishop and the pope. I recorded this meeting in order to accurately capture what was said by the speakers. Upon reviewing the tapes of the presentation and comparing the cited texts from the Second Vatican Council with the complete texts of the documents, I was startled to find that the sections cited supported the point of view of the speaker, but did not accurately reflect the true meaning of the document.

For example, early in his talk, Father Joseph Hart cited parts of the opening paragraph from Chapter II of *Christus Dominus*. He read, "A diocese ... constitutes a particular church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative." He then explained that this was a "revolutionary" statement that, when applied locally, means that "the Church of Rochester is indeed the entire Body of Christ; one doesn't need to add all the churches together in order to get

that Body of Christ." Therefore, Father Hart concluded that "the universal Church is a communion of communions, a church of churches. Indeed, the local bishop is not a delegate of the bishop of Rome." The very next statement in Chapter II of *Christus Dominus*, however, clearly refutes this conclusion. It reads, "Individual bishops to whom the care of particular dioceses is committed, care for their flocks under the authority of the Supreme Pontiff ..." So the thrust of this chapter in the document was not to establish an equality between the local bishop and the pope, as was concluded by the speaker, but rather to reaffirm the proper hierarchical order of authority of the Church.

Later in his talk, Father Hart quoted from *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter III, section 25. He read: "On matters of faith and morals, bishops speak in the name of Christ and the Christian faithful are to accept their teaching and to adhere to it with a religious assent of the soul." What was omitted was a reference to the authority of the pope. The complete statement reads: "Bishops who teach in communion with the Roman Pontiff are to be revered by all as witnesses of divine and Catholic truth; the faithful, for their part, are obliged to submit to their bishops' decision, made in the name of Christ, in matters of faith and morals, and to adhere to it with a ready and respectful allegiance of

the mind. This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex cathedra* ..." Father Hart's exclusion of the apposite "who teach in communion with the Roman Pontiff" seriously distorts the intent and meaning of the text. The complete statement reaffirms the "authentic teaching authority" of the pope and all bishops teaching in unity with him.

The authority of the Roman pontiff is repeatedly affirmed in the Second Vatican Council documents. *Dei Verbum*, Chapter II, section 10, reads, "So in maintaining, practicing and professing the faith that has been handed on, there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful. But the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ."

I do not know why the references in the Second Vatican Council documents that reaffirmed the authentic teaching authority of the Holy Father were omitted from the Friends of Father Curran forum. If it occurred innocently and without intent to deceive or mislead, I believe it is Bishop

Clark's responsibility to enlighten those in error. If it was not a result of naivete, however, then there exists in our diocese a darkness and corruption that is horrifying.

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Do the Episcopalians know something Catholics don't?

To the Editor:

I read with interest your article of June 12 on Bishop Clark's ordaining eight permanent deacons. It is confusing to me that a church founded on the principles of justice and love for all mankind would ordain a married man, yet discriminate against a celibate religious merely on the basis of sex.

I noted that a wife of one deacon will be ordained an Episcopalian deacon later this month. Do the Episcopalians know something we Catholics don't know?

"There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all 'one' in Christ Jesus."

Marion L. Brown
Irving Road
Rochester

Victor Bartolotta Jr.

A Closer Look

Chernobyl and Ginna



Any discussion on nuclear issues seems to short circuit my brain. I start to spit out stuff like that of my computer: "Incorrect information: Abort? Try again?" Last night, however, some things started to compute; some things rational minds call incomprehensible became comprehensible.

The occasion was a dual presentation at the Jewish Community Center given by Michael Affleck, director of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, and Jean Douthwright, radiation biologist at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Both Affleck and Douthwright analyzed the Chernobyl disaster in the context of other nuclear tragedies and attempted to show how Chernobyl is only a part of continued problems with nuclear technology — including proliferation and testing of nuclear weapons, storage of nuclear wastes, and safety at nuclear power plants. As they spoke, my mind slowly began to link the disaster of what did occur at Chernobyl to what could occur at Ginna.

As most of us know, the Chernobyl disaster at first appeared more serious than what it is thought to be now. The American press appeared to over-react to the news by publishing reports that thousands of Soviet citizens had been killed or exposed to high levels of radiation. Now, as the news of Chernobyl quietly slips into the background, reports indicate that only a handful of deaths

have occurred.

According to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and the Information Institute for Public Health in Toronto, however, thousands of people will die each year as a result of radiation exposure from the Chernobyl accident. Those scientific facts closely resemble early reports on the disaster.

Placing the Chernobyl incident in context, Affleck said he believes that Chernobyl merely represents the most recent of many nuclear episodes involving human casualties. He believes Chernobyl is like another historical battle in a third-and-final world war that began in 1945 with the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. In that first nuclear act, 328,000 casualties were reported. Counted among the casualties are the victims who died immediately after the explosion and others who suffered from cancer or deformities related to radioactive fallout.

The above-mentioned U.N. committee offers a conservative total of 40 million casualties as a result of the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki; nuclear testing by the United States, Great Britain and France; the 1957 nuclear accidents in England and the U.S.S.R.; radiation exposure of workers in the nuclear industry; and the accidents at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl.

Of course, here is where my mind — in an effort to defend itself against the unbelieva-

ble — again begins to compute again. "Incorrect information: Abort? Try again?"

Let's go back to Chernobyl; that's a little more comprehensible than trying to grasp the reality of 40 million casualties. What have we learned from the accident? Well, we learned about the continued possibility for nuclear accidents. We learned that people like ourselves can be trapped — innocent victims — caught up and eventually drowned in a maze of technical jargon about the nuclear industry. Perhaps we learned about the difficulty of responding adequately to a technology which looms beyond our ability to comprehend it.

We also learned from Chernobyl, as Affleck pointed out in his talk, that we are one people — that the world is a small place. It is possible to understand how people even as far away as Poland might be able to feel the effects of radiation from the Chernobyl accident. But now New Yorkers are brought into the global game because some radiation, though slight, may have fallen over New York state.

Unfortunately, minor radiation exposure from Chernobyl is not the only problem New Yorkers and specifically Rochesterians may have to think about. According to Douthwright, the local papers reported that the Chernobyl plant, only a mere four years old, is similar in design to the Ginna nuclear power plant.

Here is the crux of the issue. I'll use myself as an example. While it is true that I am not an atomic expert, I am a rational, thinking human being. While I do not know the technical intricacies of atomic power, I can easily remember Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and even the release of radiation at Ginna in 1982.

I remember that the Ginna incident in 1982 struck fear into a good many local residents. At the time, I had a three-month-old child, and I feared for her. I also remember, thanking God that I didn't live in Sodas or places east of the Ginna plant, just as I remember thanking God that I wasn't living in Chernobyl when that event occurred.

While authorities try to assure us that Ginna is safe, I know and many readers know that another Chernobyl is a possibility in our area. If a Chernobyl-like accident occurs at Ginna, it will make little difference if we live east of the plant or downwind. The entire area will be contaminated. Then our names will be added to the list of atomic victims.

With this kind of information in hand, it seems appropriate to ask what we can do. Ending the arms race and closing down every nuclear power plant, while this is still possible, is our larger work for the future. In the meanwhile, Monroe County residents are challenged to do something locally and to do something now to bring Ginna to a permanent, cold shutdown.

Are we willing to admit to life without the Ginna Nuclear Power Plant — willing to make sacrifices? For example, would we be willing to live without electricity for a few hours each day if that's what it would take to close down the plant? Would we be willing to provide support for family people who work in the nuclear industry and who want to change their line of work?

Sacrifice and courage are the essential prerequisites for a changed and safer world. Trusting in God to help us, let us consider taking the hard but necessary steps for a safer world, steps that call us to challenge state and local officials to shut down Ginna, to erase even the possibility of another Chernobyl.