



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

## Along the Way

During the week, I noticed that I was becoming agitated and distracted every time I thought about a particular pastoral question that has been before me for several weeks. In addition, I noticed that I was not choosing whether or when I would think about the issue. It just rose up in me, apart from any decision I might make.

When this happened, I realized that the question was eating away at my freedom, and I began to bring it to prayer, asking the Lord to shine the light of grace into my darkness. In addition to praying, I shared my concern with a friend. The conversation may well have been the answer to my prayer, because the questions raised by my friend planted seeds that soon opened to me the realization that my agitation found its roots not in the issue, but in my failure to face a long-standing need for reconciliation with a person on the other side of the issue.

The Lord, through the gifts of prayer and friendship, helped me to know the source of the agitation. All I lacked then was the courage to do something about it! I wanted to make it right, but how could I be sure if I would handle it well or if the other person would understand and accept what I needed to say?

I won't bore you with more details about the internal wrestling in which I was engaged, except to say that: 1) I realized I could never know the answers to either of the above questions without stepping forward in faith, and 2) I realized that there was no possibility that anything but good could come from that step, if I took it in faith.

So take it I did, and it turned out to be a constructive and deeply healing experience. The other person was gracious and understanding in powerful measure. I was met with trust, and what I had to say was received as a genuine expression of my desire and need to be reconciled. In addition to that, the other person humbly acknowledged that I had not been the sole cause of our being farther apart than either of us wanted to be.

I share that experience with you in the hope that it will encourage you to ask Our Lord to give you the light to recognize any need for reconciliation you may have, and to give you courage to take a step towards making things right. It is true that not all of my efforts or yours will be met with the same response that I received in the experience I have just related to you. God works in us in God's own good time.

But even if the other person rejects your offer, you will know a new freedom, because you will have walked out of the darkness of self-absorption and resentment into a new awareness of the pain of others and your capacity in the Lord to be an instrument of peace in their lives.

The final words here need to be words of thanks. I am quite sure that the experience of reconciliation and freedom I have just described for you is one of the continuing graces of my recent experience. And I am learning more and more how important your prayers were and continue to be in all of that. Thank you, dear friends, thank you.

Peace to all.

## The Editor's Desk

Getting across the citizens' message on state spending seemed to be the focus of several efforts during this past week. As our page-4 article explains, an organization called SENSES, Statewide Emergency Network for Social and Economic Security, has been attempting to educate New York residents about the real victims of poverty in this state, and to help those residents translate their new-found information into lobbying efforts. SENSES' Counterbudget '88 proposes spending options designed to help groups of people who continue to fall below the poverty level.

And on Monday of this week, a Public Policy Forum sponsored by the New York State Catholic Conference drew nearly 2,000 Catholics from throughout the state to Albany, where they presented lawmakers with a united appeal on certain key issues — from Medicaid-funded abortions to help for the rural poor. Through lobbying visits with individual legislators and a luncheon with state officials, these activists voiced their concern for the welfare of state residents and their interest in budgetary allocations they believe will further those aims.

Photographer Jeff Goulding and I attended the NYSCC forum, returning with a busload of Rochester delegates at 10 p.m. Monday evening. In our next issue, we will offer readers a look at the day's activities and the reflections of several area residents who participated.

I'm still pondering what I saw and heard that day, especially in light of the poverty profile SENSES has sketched for us. While I mull over those concerns, I urge you to think about the state budget which is now being prepared and about the people it will affect throughout our state.

### Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writers' signatures, full addresses and telephone numbers. They should be sent to: Opinion, Courier-Journal, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

Opinions should be brief, typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 1½ 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 writers' own styles.

Because submitted opinions exceed the space reserved for letters, we publish only original letters addressed to us. We will not use poetry, open letters, or copies of letters sent to other publications or persons. To ensure diversity, we limit each writer to one letter per month.

## Letters

### Is Catholic system 'endangered?'

To the Editor:

Over the years, I've silently questioned the apparent systematic shut-down of the Catholic educational system when other denominations are actively opening schools. Why does a formerly successful system find itself becoming an endangered species? I would like to voice the following concerns:

Do our Church leaders feel the money spent on Catholic education could be utilized more effectively elsewhere? Granted, population decline and the exodus of young families have contributed to the lack of available students. Some clergy question the effectiveness of parish schools, although they are the prime feeders for Catholic high schools. Why this question, when the other denominations opening schools have higher costs than our schools, by virtue of having to find new facilities and teachers? Could they not make use of our facilities and expertise?

Why do parents utilize the public schools in place of parochial schools? Some say it's because of the numerous services offered and the lack of tuition. The cost of a non-subsidized public school tuition would be more than \$4,000 per year, if a parent had to pay for it. Are our parishes trying to respond to the increasing number of poor and single-parent families in their area?

People who malign the parochial teaching staffs apparently don't realize that these teachers have little difficulty in obtaining jobs in the public sector at higher salaries. The forte of the parochial system was its ability to help slower students learn. This was achieved primarily through the motivation and devotion of these teachers.

People searching for state aid for parochial schools have not encountered the intense hatred generated by

these church-member public-teaching executives. Christian charity was not the forte of a hearing I attended, I left with the feeling that these public school people felt the money came out of their own pockets.

The Catholic Church should re-evaluate its position on the parochial system, which should either be closed entirely or become more active in recruiting students. Programs should be instituted to pay for the cost of the system's operation. Such programs might include volunteer or retired teachers to tutor students for a fee. The high schools should start a four-week skills course to correct student deficiencies prior to college, and use facilities to teach migrant children in the summer, so that they can have help in breaking the poverty cycle in which they are enmeshed. One could envision cooperation with Southern parishes to track the children. And fi-

nally, our high school seniors should be allowed to develop merchandising programs to help the Catholic schools.

In conclusion, it's my opinion that Catholic leaders have planned the demise of the educational system to promote other programs. Their position should be re-evaluated. They are abrogating the responsibility of the Church and parents to provide a proper education for their children.

When dictatorships overthrow governments, they first take over the education of the young to perpetuate their position. These dictators are taking the strong points of the Catholic system and using it to destroy not only religion, but the country that provides for our freedom.

Robert L. Landschoot  
Sharon Street  
Geneva

### Topic of Catholic school salaries considered 'sad sign of the times'

To the Editor:

In reply to an article titled "Catholic school salaries force teachers to juggle conflicting values" (C-J, Feb. 12), I would like to comment on a section of the story pertaining to Deanne Delehanty. In seeking employment at a public school, "she had encouraged every Catholic school teacher she knows to follow in her footsteps." What if they all listened to her? Where would she send her three sons, who attend a Catholic school here in the city? To be more specific, it is St. Ambrose Catholic School, which is staffed by the most professional, caring, dedicated teachers, who could easily be compared to any of their public school contemporaries.

My husband and I have sent three sons through the Catholic school system of the Rochester diocese, and feel that we have all benefited. The boys were not as fortunate as I was — to be taught by dedicated nuns in every grade — but our sons have been touched by the dedication of many qualified lay teachers, who gave 150 percent.

The article was thought-provoking and the subject of a sad sign of the times, but Ms. Delehanty's remarks concerning "leaving a Catholic school to be treated more professionally" didn't seem appropriate.

Helen O'Connor Viola  
Kiniry Drive  
Rochester

### Observes contrast between article, pro-life ad

To the Editor:

As I read "Reluctant radical rejects abortion as betrayal of women" in your January 22 issue, I could not help but contrast it with the anti-abortion ad on the same page. Thanks to people like Sydney Callahan, I have gone from being strongly pro-choice five years ago to being definitely pro-life today. She is absolutely right in claiming that women will not attain full personhood through allowing our unborn children to be killed. Rather,

women will gain reproductive freedom when we have a mature understanding of human sexuality and control over whether or not we will become pregnant in the first place.

Unfortunately, I think many pro-life people still view "women's unique, life-giving female reproductive power as passive, debilitating, animal-like," to quote a statement by Callahan from the article. The ad placed by the Rochester Area Right to Life

Committee goes beyond even this: women are not even mentioned. Instead THE WOMB is presented as an object entirely divorced from any human being.

I truly hope that Callahan's position can become a source of reconciliation and consensus among Christians who now have strong and sincere disagreements over this heart-breaking issue.

Sheryl B. Zabel  
Lyndon Road  
Fairport

### Diocesan commission chairwoman commends C-J reporting

To the Editor:

Thanks to the Courier-Journal and to Teresa Parsons for the astute report on Sydney Callahan and the talk she gave as a panelist on the Creation of Life forum, which took place during the University of Rochester's Creation Conference, Jan. 11-18 (C-J, Jan. 22: "Reluctant radical rejects abortion as betrayal of women").

We were fortunate to have this exceptional woman speak to a large audience of young people whose futures will be influenced by the moral, religious and intellectual precepts and example they are offered today. It was responsible journalism for the Courier-Journal to send its news editor to cover Callahan's talk. I commend our diocesan newspaper for this in-

telligent and articulate piece of reporting.

Judith O'Brien, Chairwoman  
Diocesan Commission on  
Women in the Church  
Mt. Hope Avenue  
Rochester

### Top o' the mornin' to you, too, sir!

To the Editor:

Irish priests were once a glory of the Church. Now, many are dissidents leading the attack on the traditional Church.

Such priests as O'Brien, McBrien, Sweeney, Curran, Maguire, Donahue and Mulligan are hurling javelins at Holy Mother Church to get her to

change to their own ideas of what the Church should be. They want the strong, moral Church to relapse into a socializing mess pandering to weakness. Bad cess to them.

John F. Starkweather  
Middle Road  
Rush



I KNOW YOU HAVE A LOT ON YOUR MIND, NOW, BUT THE KITTY LITTER REALLY NEEDS CHANGING.