



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

## Along the Way

I mentioned to you a few weeks ago that among the fruits of my long retreat at Guelph is a deeper sense of the humanity of Jesus and His love for me. At the time, I couldn't explain all of what that meant, and I still can't.

What I can do, however, is make some comments about one helpful spin-off from that new sense of Jesus: a renewed appreciation of friendship. To put it in a nutshell, I am much more inclined to share my inner life with friends than I was before the retreat. I have always found such sharing to be a life-giving experience. When I speak of such things with others who love me, I normally come to greater clarity about what's going on inside me and am always strengthened by the great reservoirs of understanding and encouragement I find in those close to me.

When this kind of interchange occurs, I come to realize in a fresh way a number of things I need always to keep before me. Among these realities are: 1) that I am a human being, with all the limitations attached to humanity; 2) that I can become what the Lord wants me to be only when I enjoy communion of life with other people and 3) that moments of interior darkness or loneliness can become times of conversion and renewal, when I open them to the care of others.

The trick is to remember all of that in the hard moments. At such times, I am inclined to think that no one would understand or that 50-year-old bishops shouldn't feel that way or that the best way to go is to tough it out alone. All of that is nonsense, of course. If I surrender to any one of those apprehensions, I place myself in an unrealistic position. I am not made to live in isolation — nor are you! From the first moment of life until the last, we need care to survive. From the first moment of life until the last, we need to offer care if we are to grow.

There is no stronger encouragement in this than the example offered to us by Jesus. He was like us in all things except sin, and so understands better than we can imagine the breadth and depth of our human experience. I won't mention a whole range of gospel examples of that. Let me simply remind you of the deep friendship Jesus experienced with Mary, Lazarus and Martha. They stood by Him in His need; He was with them in theirs. It was all truly human and, therefore, very holy.

In keeping with this theme, let me make a suggestion about Holy Week. It is simply this: in the days remaining between now and then, try to be especially mindful of friendship in your life. Think of people who seem always to be there and ready to support you, no matter what. Be mindful of any need you may experience to renew a friendship that seems to be growing weak. Consider the variety of ways you are called to express your love for others. And don't be afraid to acknowledge your own failures or those of others.

I suggest that kind of reflection and prayer with the hope that you might walk through Holy Week with a fresh awareness of Jesus as your friend, of what that friendship means to your heart and what the gift of that friendship calls you to be for others. I'll be somewhere along that road with you, remembering you in my prayers.  
Peace to all.

## The Editor's Desk

I feel sorry for the pope, and I feel even sorer for the Chilean people, who could not even enjoy Pope John Paul II's six-day visit to their country. The violent political turmoil that has ravaged their land for the last 15 years could not pause for even such a short period; in fact, it appeared to escalate.

In the melee that ensued, factions were too busy blaming each other to hear the pope's message — that violent revolt cannot be used to stop violent repression.

It seems that most of the Chilean factions spend a lot of time justifying their bloody acts by saying that they're defending ideological principles that are neither well-defined nor consistent. Chilean President Gen. Augusto Pinochet explained his regime's actions with the Machiavellian rhetoric of defending "the authentic values of the Christian West" against international Marxist subversion. Somehow, I can't comprehend a value structure that aligns mass murders with the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

On the other hand, the communists portray themselves as the liberators of the oppressed — an image that has served them well in many other troubled nations. Surely the cruelty, injustice and violence that takes place under the Pinochet regime offers to these shrewd manipulators an unique opportunity to proselytize and exploit young people who are angry, confused and frustrated.

Despite or perhaps because of this ever-widening political gulf, the pope focused most of his speeches in Chile on condemning these two positions, emphasizing the need for reconciliation and dialogue. "In the name of the Gospel, I beg you to take a decisive stand against the temptation to use violence, which is always unworthy of man, and, on the other hand, to let your own actions be inspired by love, confidence in one another and hope," the Holy Father told a gathering of political leaders on April 3.

"Receive this message as an expression of my concern as pastor of the whole Church and of the love I feel for the Chilean people," he continued. "Do not skimp on any means within your reach to make this message become a reality in the social life of Chile. You must convince yourselves that brotherhood among men and working together to construct a just society are not Utopian concepts, but the direct result of everyone working together on behalf of the common welfare.

"Peace, ladies and gentlemen, is a fruit of justice. It is, therefore, a common task to which each person must give his unequivocal support in order to make what (Vatican Council II) calls 'the living awareness of human dignity' an active part of Chilean reality."

The pope spoke eloquently, yet the din of bottles breaking and rocks crashing drowned out his message. It's depressing to think that a predominantly Catholic nation has become so deaf to Christ's message of peace.

## Letters

### Parish staff commends bishop's leadership

#### To the Editor:

When several of us read Joseph Murray's letter (C-J letters, March 19: "Concerned Catholics speak out"), we felt a deep need to respond. However, because we are repulsed by Murray's self-styled "Christianity," we cannot reply in kind. We choose, instead, to express our vision of Church and Church leadership. Furthermore, we affirm our local leader, Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

What is Church to us? We begin by saying that we accept the teachings of the Second Vatican Council that the Church is a mystery, because it is the human way of being the "already and not yet" of God's Kingdom in our world. Therefore, anything we say will always fall short of the total reality of our Church.

Having said that, we here at Good Shepherd commit ourselves to our vision of Church, that of a community of Christian disciples struggling on a daily basis to live out the love of Jesus Christ. This way of looking at our Church strikes deep chords in us because: 1) it says we need to listen and respond to a personal call from Christ, an ongoing call to conversion; 2) it recognizes that we are all sinners and in continual need of God's grace; 3) it represents a modest concept of Church that speaks of our journey to-

gether in faith; 4) it calls us to "put on Christ," expecting conflict and depending on God as well as support from one another; 5) it is inclusive, not exclusive, recognizing that each of us has gifts to be used for the good of all; and 6) it call us together to worship our God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — and then go out to love and serve Him and each other. When we do this well, we can truly be a sign of Christ's love and compassion in our world.

We look at Church leadership, just as we look at Church, in a way similar to the early Christian communities. We believe that the Holy Spirit gives each of us gifts to be used for the good of all. Some among us are gifted with leadership, which is then recognized by the rest of us. Those gifted with leadership are able to guide us in being faithful to the Gospel, are able to serve as examples of Christian compassion, to be healers and reconcilers, to challenge us to move beyond the world's values to Christ's values, and to help us recognize other gifts in one another.

Leaders have a healthy respect for all humans, knowing that Christ came to call the broken and the brokenhearted — all of us — to follow Him. They invite us all to become more like Christ, knowing that there is room in our Church for

the liberals and conservatives among us and everyone in between. They look upon the inevitable conflicts that arise among us as opportunities for growth, instead of reasons for divisiveness.

We at Good Shepherd recognize such leadership qualities in Bishop Clark and are grateful that he is leader of the Diocese of Rochester. He is open to the movement of the Holy Spirit — a person of prayer, a person of compassion who seeks to heal rifts among us, a person who desires to bring us into the future with an eye on Jesus Christ at all times. Because we know that, often, it is only discontented and negative people who express their views, we take this opportunity to state our positive viewpoint. We urge all who agree with us to do the same.

We are forwarding a copy of this letter to: Archbishop Pio Laghi, Apostolic Pro-Nuncio of the United States, 3339 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington D.C. 20008. We ask all who agree with us to write to him in a similar vein.

The Staff of  
Good Shepherd Church  
East Henrietta Road  
Henrietta

Editors Note: This letter was signed by nine members of Good Shepherd's staff.

### Mercy sisters call for healing and reconciliation

#### To the Editor:

We would like to respond to Joseph J. Murray's letter to the editor (C-J Letters, March 19: "Concerned Catholics speak out"). Specifically, we would like to address two points raised by Mr. Murray.

First, we are deeply concerned about Mr. Murray's description of an appeal to the "Holy See for a diocesan ordinary who bears witness to the truth and will lead us to sanctity, and for the relocation of Bishop Clark." We find it ironic that this letter to the editor is placed side by side with Bishop Clark's "Along the Way" column. The content of the column speaks loudly of Bishop Clark's spirituality and of his pastoral concern for the people of this diocese and beyond. Bishop

Clark is far more than a man of words; he is a spiritual leader of action and of integrity and one who daily "bears witness to the truth." We hold him in the highest regard and find the call for his relocation deplorable.

Second, we would like to believe that all women religious are *not* models of self-gratification. The call for renewal given to women religious by *Perfectae Caritatis* did not intend the abnegation of authority that would result in an unbridled human freedom. Rather, its challenge was that "the fundamental norm of religious life is a following of Christ as proposed by the gospel, such is to be regarded by all communities as their supreme law" (*Perfectae Caritatis* 2.a).

Our own constitutions have been

formulated with a profound respect and concern for canonical requirements. From the beginning, the writing of the constitutions by the Sisters of Mercy has been done in consultation with canon lawyers and in a spirit of dialogue with CRIS (Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes).

Mr. Murray's letter is a source of deep sorrow for us. Our Church and God's people are so in need of healing and reconciliation. We need words that are compassionate and life-giving, rather than words that are divisive and seem to preclude dialogue.

Sister Jean Marie Kearse  
Sister Janet Korn  
Sister Ann Miller  
Sister Kathleen Milliken  
Sister Nancy Whitley

### Writer offers meditation on Christ's ministry and suffering

#### To the Editor:

Recently, I read in a Catholic publication a comment by a reader who said that Jesus didn't suffer many of the disorders or tragedies that some of us experience during our lifetimes. Some of us may have

pondered this thought from time to time. But it seems to me that our Lord's suffering was deeper and broader than we might think at first glance.

To begin with, He was misunderstood by those closest to Him, at least as early as age 12, and this continued into His ministry. His neighbors practically drove Him out of town. When into His ministry, He was mobbed regularly and had to escape just to rest or to pray. He grieved for the sick and maimed and wept at the loss of loved ones who had died. His friends tried to use Him for favors, and His enemies never tired of trying to trick Him into blaspheming or breaking the many Hebrew laws.

Then came Gethsemane. How we pity ourselves if a friend forgets us! His friends fell asleep while He

suffered. One of His friends even betrayed Him. The one He called "the rock" denied Him. Then there was the fear. He was familiar with the popular punishments of His time. He knew and He suffered.

Then there was the arrest and the degradation. Crowds called out, "Crucify Him." He saw familiar faces in the crowd and experienced the physical tortures of the last hours of His life. His suffering was exquisite, because His sensitivities were so very acute. We can only meditate on His suffering and make reparation for it, in order to understand it more completely.

Barbara Dorr  
Edgemont Road  
Rochester

### McBrien column scores an affirmative vote

#### To the Editor:

Thank you for including Father Richard P. McBrien's excellent column in our diocesan newspaper.

Since all of us are committed to the following of Him who said that the truth would make us free, it is most important that we listen to each other attentively and lovingly. If you were to drop Father McBrien's column because some people find him uninviting, you would make this exchange impossible.

I find his column well-written, interesting and a welcome reprieve. Wouldn't it be encouraging if, through his column, our own diocesan community grew in mutual respect?

Dorothy J. Barbehenn  
Bonnie Brae Avenue  
Rochester

## 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 address 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.

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