



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

Photographs and memories

I don't know about you, but I love photographs. Other than taking a run, watching a ball game or struggling with the Sunday crossword puzzle, I can think of few activities more relaxing than sitting down with a thick photo album.

When I visit my mother, I often take out an album and spend an hour with it. And here at Sacred Heart, especially at anniversary times, I look through pictures I have collected since I became a bishop.

I have never spent much time analyzing why I enjoy looking at photographs so much, but I suspect it is because it puts me in touch with the significant events and people in my life, and, in doing so, evokes the memories and emotions that help me to appreciate the continuity of life, my own humanity and my connection to others in the community.

For example: My mother will beat me for telling you this, but we have a photo of her, which was taken in her teens. It makes me roar with laughter every time I see it. It was taken in the back yard of her home. Mom is dressed in toe shoes and a ballet dress. What tickles me, however, is not so much the costume but her statuesque stance and the utterly serious look on her face.

When I see it, I always laugh, and when I laugh she feigns anger until she can sustain the pretense no longer, and she laughs, too.

To be fair and to complete the circle, I should tell you that if my mother were writing this column, she would tell of a photograph she always laughs at. It is of yours truly. In the photo I am not yet a teen, and I am not a ballet dancer but a ball player. This photo is also taken in the yard, and if my mother looked like the next prima ballerina of the New York City Ballet in the photo I spoke about, I look for all the world like the next Joe DiMaggio in the picture she would write about.

Why am I writing about all this today? I think it's because it helps me to be in touch with some themes important to us all during the Easter season — how we change, and yet, somehow remain the same; how we transmit life and encourage one another along the way; how freeing it is for us when we laugh and cry and remember together; how consistently the Risen Lord shows himself to us in one another.

If any of this makes sense to you, you may want to spend some time with some of your favorite photographs. Let the people in them speak to you again, and let the events that occasioned the pictures help you to appreciate better what has happened since then.

It is a good way to be in touch with life. And that's always a way to be with the Lord.

Peace to all.

The Editor's Desk

Cookie crumbs

I have to applaud the Rochester Chapter of the New York Federation of Catholic School Parents for arranging such a well-organized and interesting convention May 1-3 at the Rochester Plaza Hotel. The three sessions I attended were challenging and informative, and a few people I met in the halls were pleased enough with their workshops to say, "You should have been at the one on ..." I only wish that every convention I've attended had been as focused and useful.

I bring this up not just to praise the parents' federation, but also to note that the confines of a single newspaper article (see page 7) — and a journalist's hectic schedule — did not allow me to do justice to the material that was presented at the convention. I provided an overview, a bit of the convention's flavor, I hope. But I couldn't synthesize and disseminate all of the ideas and information offered to the delegates. In some cases — Father O'Malley's challenging speech and Leonard Fine's financial presentations — I quickly sketched an outline of what was said. But when I got to the session on services New York state provides to students of non-public schools, I'd run out of room. And I never even heard what Mary Elizabeth "Tipper" Gore had to say, although I understand it was intriguing.

My point here isn't to bemoan journalistic limitations; if I had incorporated all the presentations in my story, it would have been so long and dull that no one would have read it. But I do believe that in failing to attend the convention, many parents and school personnel missed out on presentations that would have better armed them for the battle to preserve Catholic education.

As Leonard Fine said in his presentation, if Catholic education is to survive it will require the commitment and efforts of all of us. Everyone involved must take ownership of the schools and work effectively for their preservation. It's too bad that so few local representatives had the chance to hear what Mr. Fine and the other noted speakers had to offer.

Letters

The printed word — blessing or plague?

To the Editor:

The March 19 edition of the Courier-Journal aroused me to get this letter off to you. Up until then, the subject of Father Richard McBrien's column was of little interest to me, but, after reading his column, I now know why people are asking that you remove it from the C-J. The first two paragraphs of his March 19 column ("The problem of papal visits") heaped praise on the pope, but the remainder was a continual barrage of criticism of the pope's coming visit to the United States.

Digging up a couple of past issues of the C-J, I found that the column did the same thing. Is this what our pope needs? In fact, does the Catholic Church need it?

Dorothy Prinzi (C-J Letters, March 19: "Writer questions editorial missive") mentions the "chipping away" of American Catholic allegiance to the Vicar of Christ, Pope John Paul II, in reference to what the dissenters are doing. These dissenters are capitalizing on the looseness of newspapers like the C-J, in offering equal time on controversial subjects in the Catholic Church. Is our faith controversial? Should Christ's teachings be controversial? Isn't the pope the

direct representative of Christ on earth?

Ms. Prinzi ends her letter thus: "Can there be a more noble mission for a Catholic newspaper? My answer to that is yes. The Courier-Journal should truly be the print-voice of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Rochester, with allegiance to the Vicar of Christ in Rome. The printed word can be a blessing or it can be a plague.

The secular media are popular with their owners if they make a profit. What is it that influences people to buy secular printed material? Several factors can be listed, including whether such material affects the reader directly or even remotely, as well as sensationalism. It takes an exceptional reporter to write an article without influencing the reader with his or her bias. Placing selected words within the context of a news article can bend a reader to the left, right or center.

Civil or secular news pertaining to conduct within constitutional areas has a place in the secular media. The right of Father Curran under the constitution to retain his teaching contract might appear to be in order, but the curriculum is approved and controlled by the Church. If teachers in the secular

school system oppose the plans of the education department, those teachers can be suspended from teaching the course in question.

We need to see more about the life of the parishes in our diocese. If only 10 percent of the parishes submit material to the Courier-Journal, there seems to be a problem. It's human nature for people or groups of people to look forward to articles and pictures pertaining to them. Yes, it is called ego — and what's wrong with that? One hundred fifty parishes must have something going on. Why don't they send articles in?

Is it time to include a simple questionnaire in some future issue, to find out how many read each issue, who gets the paper and what they like or dislike about the format? The C-J should address itself to every member of the diocese, and continually review its progress. Each parish has a pastor and a parish council. Has either been approached for ideas, advice or courses of action? Every word in the C-J should be in the best interest of the diocese and the people of the Catholic Church.

Michael Tarkulich
Curtis Road
Hilton

Murray letter is 'a study in misinformation'

To the Editor:

Mr. Joseph Murray's letter (C-J Letters, March 19: "Concerned Catholics speak out") is a study in misinformation. I, too, am a very "concerned Roman Catholic," but my concerns differ from Mr. Murray's and those of the group he represents.

I am concerned that people commit unsubstantiated pronouncements to print before checking them out. (Where in the world did he dream up that statement about religious constitutions being contrary to canon law and not approved by the Holy See? Has the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes *withdrawn* its approval of our constitutions and informed only Mr. Murray of this? In what way is Sister Sandra Schneiders a "public dissenter?" The use of facile labels without documentation is neither just nor valid.)

I am concerned that a small group of self-appointed watchdogs of the

faith (whose faith?) can tear at the fabric of our Church and try to refashion it into an orthodoxy of their own making. What's next? Book burnings? Censorship of the Catholic press or Church-sponsored lectures? A new Inquisition conducted by the Concerned Roman Catholics of Rochester?

I am concerned that seeds of doubt and mistrust are sown regarding the leadership of our diocese, instead of searching for ways of reconciling divergent views so that we can work together to proclaim the gospel in our time. Bishop Clark's faith, love of the Church, courage, fine intelligence and concern for our people have made him an extraordinary spiritual leader in our diocese, a source of hope and edification to us, and a strong attraction to many outside our faith. He ministers, as Jesus did, with open heart, with constant invitation to conversion, with unshakable integrity and firmness. Mr. Murray's zeal in trying

to discredit him is only sad, and bears the hallmark of a personal crusade rather than any rational or logical argument.

I am concerned that we must spend our energies on vague accusations and cruel finger-pointing, when there is so much work to be done in the Church. Parish life and worship, evangelization, education on all levels, chaplaincy ministries, the hundreds of needy people who come to Church-related agencies, outreach centers, meal programs and shelters — all need our time, our love and all the energy we have. Perhaps Mr. Murray can find in one of these activities a more constructive outlet for his concern. Let's get on with our apostolic mission, even if we're all not yet perfect.

Margaret Brennan, SSJ
St. Martin's Place
Ontario Street
Rochester

An active worship community spurs St. Mary's renovations

To the Editor:

Several letters mourning the renovation of St. Mary's Church downtown have been published recently in the Courier-Journal. Although these letters have been from non-parishioners, a reply could be helpful.

St. Mary's is an active worship community. After many meetings of the whole St. Mary's community, it was determined that renovation to assist our worship was of higher priority

than restoration as a tourist attraction and haven for those who yearn for the church style of their youth.

Members of our Worship Space Committee have spent approximately 200 hours studying the needs of not only the present worship community but, hopefully, of future generations as well. A strong commitment to holding costs to a minimum consistent with our needs has been a focal point of this study. We have kept a

concern for the less fortunate in mind and have made provisions to address their needs.

St. Mary's community has always welcomed all worshippers. Those who have expressed concern are especially invited to worship with us after completion of our renovation.

Paul Stack, Chairman
St. Mary's Parish Council
St. Mary's Place
Rochester

'Symbolic priestesses' — something new in the diocese?

To the Editor:

As I unfolded the April 23rd issue of the "Courier-Journal," I quickly caught the center picture of a small

group of people giving a "Heil Hitler" salute to a few priestesses. I wondered, "Something new happening in our diocese?" Upon reading the caption, I

realized it was another peace "jesture" in the ongoing Seneca Army Depot saga.

How a picture of such distraction could make front-page news is beyond my comprehension. Anti-nuclear gatherings are certainly newsworthy for the C-J. However, when accompanied with symbolic priestesses, it borders on the sacrilegious.

For those sincere in peace, forget your follies and humbly pray the rosary. God guarantees to deliver.

Stephen J. Fisher
Honeoye Falls #6 Road
Honeoye Falls

Church's unloving critics and uncritical lovers inspire fear and loathing in diocesan climate

To the Editor:

From this distance, it would seem that the Rochester (diocesan) climate, at least as it is reflected by the Courier-Journal, might benefit from some recent sage advice by an Irish bishop.

Speaking last month at a conference of the laity in Dublin, Bishop

Brendan Comiskey of Ferns observed that the Church "has most to fear from its unloving critics and its uncritical lovers. What the Church needs is loving critics?"

E. Leo McMannus
N.E. 16th Avenue
North Miami, Florida