



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

On Christian service

In view of the publicity given to some recent comments I made about the role of women in the Church, I thought it might be of interest and of help to offer a couple of additional reflections on that theme.

The first relates to my conviction that all ministries in the Church not requiring ordination should be open to all qualified people, regardless of sex. Within that context, I mentioned the specific examples of young girls serving at the liturgy. But my intent was to include all activities described as ministry or Christian service, whether they are carried out within liturgical celebrations or in daily living.

It is my conviction that, when women are barred from making such contributions simply because they are women, they suffer, and so does the entire community. Women experience pain from the exclusion. We are all impoverished because we lose the benefit of their God-given gifts. And the teaching office of the Church suffers a loss of credibility when we want to speak of justice and human rights to the community at large.

A second reflection refers to why I call for the inclusion of women in all ministry and Christian service not requiring ordination. I tried to make it clear at the time that I was offering a concrete pastoral judgment about the life and growth of our local Church, and in no way acting in defiance of or with disrespect for the general norms of the Church.

My point was that such norms as these are made to foster the order and harmony of the community. They are meant to free people to live a full Christian life and are meant ultimately to help us give expression to our faith, to celebrate it and proclaim it. When they do not produce those effects, they need to be reviewed very carefully. When they produce contrary effects, we need to move beyond them.

The judgment I make at this time is that norms restricting women from ministries that do not require ordination are not accomplishing their purpose. These norms do not help us to express, celebrate and proclaim our faith. Rather, for a growing number of women and men, not only in our local Church but all over the nation, they are a cause for anger and alienation. My reading of that reaction is that it comes not from people thirsting for power or prestige, but from people growing in awareness of their God-given dignity and anxious to be responsible, contributing members of our community of faith.

It is in light of these judgments that I encouraged our priests to include women on an equal footing with men in ministries not requiring ordination. To do otherwise in our culture at this time is, in my estimation, to offend against laws much deeper and broader than the norms in question.

I realize full well that some who read this will disagree with some or all parts of it. I am also aware that some will be offended. Whatever your reaction — positive or negative or just plain uninterested — let me ask you to follow up your reading by considering a common, concrete example and a question based on it.

The example: Standing before you are an 11-year-old boy and an 11-year-old girl. They both want to serve at the altar.

The question: Can you explain to the boy the reason behind the norms that allow him to do so, and to the girl the reasons that exclude her — and leave them both feeling happy to be a part of our community of faith?

Peace to all.

The Editor's Desk

A hope for unity

I wonder what it must have been like to live and work within the Archdiocese of Seattle this past year or so. For the diocesan newspaper, the controversy must have provided seemingly endless fodder for news stories and op-ed pieces. People frequently speak of "factionalism" with respect to this newspaper's editorial page, but I doubt it can compare with the conflicts that have erupted in Seattle in recent months. And I doubt staffers of *The Progress* feel the value of their "news exclusives" compensate for the stress such controversy inevitably engenders.

For the staff of the archdiocesan chancery — especially those employed in the areas placed under the authority of Auxiliary Bishop Donald Wuerl — this year must have been one of unavoidably divided loyalties. If these employees in particular felt an allegiance to Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, how could they accept Bishop Wuerl? If they found it easy to accept their new "boss," how did they deal with the attitudes of others who probably considered Bishop Wuerl an interloper?

Archbishop Hunthausen is widely known and admired for his compassion; this is noted even by those who criticize his administration. So it must have been particularly ironic for his friends and supporters to realize that — however necessary the division of authority may have been — it clearly did not display a wealth of compassion.

Now, however, that painful period may be drawing to a close. With the appointment of Coadjutor Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy, perhaps members of the Catholic community of Seattle can breathe a sigh of relief and look to the future. Rather than an outsider with "special faculties," they now have as coadjutor a man who says he accepted the job partly because he is someone with whom Archbishop Hunthausen feels he can work and partly because of his "basic Irish drive" to help others.

Shortly after the new appointment was announced, Archbishop Hunthausen urged the members of his archdiocese to try to move forward with the new situation, saying, "If we continue looking back, it would be extremely divisive in the wider Church." Perhaps with Archbishop Murphy's help, the road ahead will become smoother.

Letters

Supreme pontiff isn't 'just another bishop'

To the Editor:

In reading "Essays in Theology" (C-J, March 19: "The problem of papal visits"), I noted that Father McBrien seems to have forgotten that the Roman pontiff is the Bishop of Rome, head of the College of Bishops, the Vicar of Christ and pastor of the universal Church on earth. Therefore, by virtue of his office, he enjoys supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church, which he can always freely exercise (Canon 331).

I was amazed that Father McBrien stated that papal trips tend to reinforce a different pastoral image, that of a universal bishop. Furthermore, (he stated that) when the pope arrives in a particular country, the local hierarchy steps aside, as it were, and receives him as if he were the head of their own conference of bishops.

Father McBrien should be reminded that the Roman Catholic Church is led by the Supreme Pontiff in all matters. In fact,

Canon 333 states, "The Roman Pontiff, by virtue of his office, not only has power in the universal Church but also possesses a primacy of ordinary power over all particular churches and groupings of churches by which the proper, ordinary and immediate power which bishops possess in the particular churches entrusted to their care is both strengthened and safeguarded." And, in Subd. 2: "The Roman Pontiff, in fulfilling the office of the supreme pastor of the Church, is always united in communion with the other bishops and with the universal Church; however, he has the right according to the needs of the Church, to determine in the manner, either personal or collegial, of exercising this function." The pope is not "just another bishop" — he is Supreme Pontiff.

When the Holy Father comes to a country, he comes as the Vicar of Christ as well as head of the Vatican City State, with full diplomatic powers that any head of state

receives when visiting a foreign country. Father McBrien would have his readers think that the pope comes as the Bishop of Rome; this is totally untrue.

Maybe the real point that was being made by Father McBrien was that he and others do not like what the Vicar of Christ is telling the American part of the Catholic Church. I and many other Roman Catholics feel that the Holy Father is doing just what is needed. When he travels to a country such as the United States, he is able to talk directly with the faithful Roman Catholics about matters of importance. I would only ask that Father McBrien please leave the Holy Father alone; he does know what he is doing and he does act as the successor to Peter with the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

James E. Knope Jr.
Stowell Drive
Rochester

Maintains criticism of the pope is pharisaical

To the Editor:

In her letter (C-J, April 30) Dorothy Rice laments that the Pharisees return to haunt us. One characteristic of the Pharisees was to allow only their erroneous points of view of Jesus and His teaching to be presented. At His trial, Jesus was allowed no defense, no questioning of His accusers. By running the one-sided, traditional/conservative bashing of the Father McBrien column without simultaneously running an orthodox columnist — say, of the stature of Father William G. Most — the *Courier-Journal* itself seems to be a conjurer of this pharisaical haunt.

True, the C-J does allow some

amateur critique of the McBrien column in its opinion section, with the ubiquitous and neutralizing editor comments usually attached. Ms. Rice — who asks, "Who are we to question theologians?" — should be allowed to read a critique by a non-modernist theologian. I have no doubt that Jesus promise that "You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free" is operative even in lay people.

If it is pharisaical to criticize the bishop, how much more so should it be to criticize the pope and *Humanae Vitae*? It is a scandal for Rochester Catholics that Fathers Curran and Koenig's censures did not come from the bishop to whom they vowed obedience, but from

Rome. The inaction of the ordinary (bishop) of Rochester cannot but be reflected on negatively when compared with the pastoral and courageous action of Cardinal Ratzinger or even of the Assemblies of God in the Jim Bakker scandal. Pharisaism should be avoided, but not zeal for the Father's house.

Louis J. Pasqua
Exchange Street
Geneva

Spreading the good word about Mother Angelica

To the Editor:

Ever since it was announced several months ago in our Sunday bulletin that the Catholic TV station EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) finally was being broadcast on our local channels, I have been waiting for this to be published and advertised in the regular TV listings. I called GRC (Greater Rochester Cablevision, which carries the network in the Rochester area) and also TV Guide in Radnor, Pa. Their replies were vague, such as it takes a couple of months after a change or update has been made for it to make the programming schedule.

Many months have passed since then, as well as opportunities for so many to share in and enjoy such wonderful programs, which are featured on EWTN. Last night, in particular, Mother Angelica had Father Wade as a guest. He was superb, as he spoke about the priesthood and of Our Lady, who is mother to us all, especially God's holy priests.

I wish I had taken notes at the time to give you more information. I was just so moved by the whole evening's programs that I had wished more people knew about it.

As far as I know, it's on Sundays from 8 to 11 p.m. Please let your

readers know and ask them to write or call GRC and TV Guide to get EWTN into the TV listings.

Dolores Schnacky
Old Pine Lane
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: I don't know when EWTN will be included in TV Guide and similar listings, but we have taken some steps of our own. We called EWTN and had them put the *Courier-Journal* on their mailing list for programming schedules, and we have begun to receive these mailings. Henceforth, we will incorporate as much of the information as possible in our Calendar.

Reader finds 'active ministry of the printed word' refreshing

To the Editor:

In a recent editorial that has stayed with me all this time, you remarked that your letters to the editor are never as positive as you would like to see, but are more often written by "hardliners" and this presents a picture of "noisy factiousness."

Why do I read and subscribe to the *Courier-Journal*? Why do I feel the importance of this vehicle of communication?

In this week's issue, the story about the college students helping to

restore dignity and to recreate the human spirit in the poverty areas of Pennsylvania (C-J April 23: "Mission links young people with the needs of a community") filled me with HOPE!

I became uplifted and refreshed to see that Christ does live among us and that the little we do for others is greater in victory than any other battle ever fought.

Teresa Parsons' writing is an active ministry of the printed word, and we are fortunate that she feels as

deeply as she does!

Domenick White
Youngs Avenue
Gates

EDITOR'S NOTE: Although we highly appreciate Mr. White's kind letter, I should clarify one point, so as not to leave readers confused about the reference to editorial comments I didn't actually make. The specific remarks quoted by Mr. White came not from an editorial of mine, but from various letters to the editor. On several occasions, however, I have expressed very similar sentiments.

Save cancelled stamps for Kentucky community

To the Editor:

May I ask your readers if they would save cancelled stamps for me? The proceeds from the sale of these stamps are used for our sick and retired sisters.

Thank you.

Sister Claire Adrian
Sassbury Infirmary
St. Catharine, Ky. 40061

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.