



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

Strength in suffering

One month ago today, I had the privilege of ordaining Jim Mooney to the priesthood. Jim, a native of St. Ann's Parish, Hornell, finished his courses at Catholic University a year ago and spent this past year serving as a deacon among the people at St. Andrew's, Rochester.

I remember the evening of his ordination very well for several reasons, but especially because of the obvious joy and enthusiasm with which the people present celebrated the event. It was an exhilarating evening for all of us who were fortunate enough to be there. I think that was so because Jim demonstrates a special capacity for care and compassion to a wide range of people. To young and old, to the healthy and the ailing, to people in need and colleagues in ministry, he communicates a special awareness of their humanity and a willingness to share his own. When they gathered for his ordination, they responded to his love in kind and created a beautiful moment for all of us.

We have many priests of whom similar things could be said — and the fact is, I don't often write columns commemorating the first-month anniversary of our newly ordained friends. Why, then, do I write about Jim today?

The reason is that last week Jim Mooney underwent surgery to remove malignant tumors from his body and, in the weeks ahead, will be undergoing chemotherapy. I ask you to please pray for him that God will restore him to full health and, in the meantime, give him the courage to endure the suffering he bears. Jim has responded to all of this with inspiring faith, but you know it has not been easy for him.

He has been very much a part of my own thoughts and prayers these days. I have no doubt that his suffering calls him to a profound kind of priestly ministry and that, through it, the Lord will deepen his capacity for reconciling love. I say that because Jim, despite his pain, shows a remarkable willingness to commit himself in love to all that the Lord might ask of him.

In so doing, he puts flesh on some words written recently by John Dalrymple: "Here no growth takes place without struggle and death. The caterpillar has to struggle, be defeated, before it becomes a butterfly. The adolescent has to struggle out of his or her childhood, let the child die, before adulthood is born. In the same way, spiritually, virtue is not easily won by any person, but only comes as the fruits of victory over vice. Although theologically it is a gift from God, phenomenologically, it is an achievement against odds. Chastity comes after, not without, the struggle against impurity. Fortitude is for the fearful person who overcomes fear, not for the non-existent 'fearless' person. In other words, struggle is the law of growth in human affairs."

If you experience any suffering or struggle these days, you might want to remember the example of Jim Mooney or consider the words of John Dalrymple. Both remind us that, while we would not choose it for ourselves or wish it on anyone else, it is often through suffering that we come closest to Christ and discover our own deepest selves.

Peace to all.

The Editor's Desk

At loggerheads

In covering the demise of the Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents, I have been frustrated by my inability to put my finger on the real cause for this uncomfortable situation — assuming, of course, that a central reason exists. Federation representatives point to a seemingly endless series of insults, peculiar oversights, misunderstandings, conflicts and disappointments. In their long years of service, they feel they have been used by the schools and the diocese, and have never been able to achieve their real goal — bringing about broader and more effective parental participation.

Diocesan officials and school principals point to "burnout" on the part of the handful of federation officials who have done so much work for so many years. They also note that the long tenure of these same officials has made them experts who may be inflexible in their dealings with school administrators.

These observations may be true, at least in part. Yet an outsider can quickly determine that there is more to the conflict than such facile answers indicate. To me, it seems that the parents and principals involved in the many conflicts have never agreed on the definition of parental involvement. Parents Federation members believe that parents have a right to set their own agenda — to decide how they are going to help Catholic schools and to have some say in policy determination. They believe the federation's role is to educate parents on a variety of school-related issues, in order to enable parents to pursue their agendas.

Some principals, however, look to parents for a different type of involvement. Believing that their closer vantage point gives them a better view of school needs, these principals want parental help on those projects the principals find necessary. They want the parents to come to them for direction, and may resent parents who have other plans.

Diocesan education officials acknowledge that they have not really attempted to run interference in the squabbles that inevitably occur when two groups have such different outlooks. They have initiated a meeting or two with the hope that federation members and principals could iron out their difficulties, but they have not directly intervened in individual disputes.

Perhaps that is the appropriate role for the education office to take. But I cannot believe that the forthcoming, newly reconstituted parents' federation will survive long if someone does not act as negotiator, somehow bringing the two groups to a meeting of the minds regarding the role the federation — and parents at large — will take in supporting Catholic education.

Letters

Children find relevance in special liturgies

To the Editor:

I am very upset by all the articles I am reading concerning Father Matthew Kawiak. I've been waiting to see those who know him come publicly to his defense, and have seen nothing. Therefore, I feel compelled to speak. The people who know Father Matt only by this "reputation" will be forever fooled into believing that he is a real rabble-rouser.

My family belongs to St. John the Evangelist Church in Greece, and we are truly saddened that Father Matt will be leaving us. My children, who never looked forward to going to Mass, now want to go because Father Matt might be speaking. Father directs his homily to the children around the altar, but at the same time

delivers a message to the whole congregation.

I'm deeply touched each time I see my seven-year-old running up to the altar with an eagerness to hear about God. The love that is exchanged between Father Matt and his young audience radiates throughout the church. My son asked if we could follow Father Matt to St. Boniface Church; he's really concerned that we won't even get one more children's homily.

Father Matthew Kawiak is an educator, as my husband and I are. He knows how to captivate his audience and make what he is saying relevant to them. I find it outrageous that the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship has noth-

ing better to address. Are they so far removed from the parish family that they cannot understand that we, today, need to find relevance in things that were blindly accepted many years ago?

As for Father Kawiak's book, I haven't had the need to turn to it as of yet. I'm pleased that Bantam Books, Inc., will be printing it for when I do feel it necessary to get that advice. Sexuality is a very important topic to teenagers today, whether the adult world wishes to accept that or not. Parents have to have sources that will help them deal with this. They can't leave it totally up to the schools.

Barbara A. Augustine
Northwood Drive
Rochester

'Coverage' missed — of ceremony or issues behind it?

To the Editor:

I was dismayed to have missed coverage by the C-J of the graduation exercises at St. Bernard's Institute on May 1. On that Friday evening, the degree of Master of Arts in Theology and Master of Divinity were conferred on quite a few members of our diocese, as they were commissioned to continue their active ministry in the life of the Church.

The ceremony was simple and the reception following was not elaborate, yet the event was indeed noteworthy. Alongside the many ordained men (priests and deacons) who received degrees were several lay women (who most probably would be ordained if permitted). For some of them, especially the M. Div. candidates, this de-

gree was won at a dear price, as they balanced family service and career with their studies for over a decade! This is indicative of the extent of their dedication to their church family and their diligence in pursuit of their call to ministry.

In the year of the synod on the laity, in a diocese which has repeatedly focused on affirming women, I think the C-J ought to herald this exemplary living out of the lay apostolate and applaud with me these men and women, our future Church, who continue to enrich us all with their commitment. "Many are called, but few are chosen."

Joanne T. Facci
Copper Kettle Rd.
Webster

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reporting on the women who earned M.Div. degrees does not necessarily require "coverage" of the commencement itself. We have been planning to do an article on these dedicated women, but did not and do not feel obliged to tie this article to the event. Although such ceremonies are quite important events to those involved, they do not lend themselves to interesting articles. We believe, however, that an interview-based feature on the women will provide this element of interest, and — vacation schedules permitting — we hope to present such an article in the near future.

Quotes Vatican II decree on proper sphere of lay activity

To the Editor:

In his "A Word for Sunday" column (C-J, May 14), Father Albert Shamon observes: "The proper sphere of action for the laity is the temporal." Concerning the apostles of old and the clergy of modern times, he also remarks, "Ministering to the people of God is their sphere of activity, not the world."

As far as the sphere of activity of the laity is concerned, I offer, for comparison, the following quotes from the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity: "Christ's redemptive work, while of itself directed toward the salvation of men, involves also the renewal of the

whole temporal order. Hence the mission of the Church is not only to bring to men the message and grace of Christ, but also to penetrate and perfect the temporal sphere with the spirit of the gospel. In fulfilling this mission of the Church, the laity, therefore, exercise their apostolate both in the Church and in the world, in both the spiritual and the temporal orders" (article 5).

"The laity carry out their manifold apostolate both in the Church and in the world. . . . As sharers in the role of Christ the Priest, the Prophet, and the King, the laity have an active part to play in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary

within church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness" (articles 9, 10).

The Second Vatican Council did define the apostolic activity of the laity as that of "penetrating and perfecting the temporal sphere of things through the spirit of the gospel." But before saying these words, the Council first stated that the laity's apostolic activity is that of "bringing the gospel and holiness to men" (article 2). Bringing holiness to men means sanctifying people.

Michael Manickham
Ithaca

Those who would instill fundamental values must respect life

To the Editor:

I read in the June 5 edition of the Times-Union that Governor Cuomo urges schools to instill morals and teach fundamental values.

Now I have had 12 years of a Catholic education — eight years of grade

school and four years at St. John Fisher College. One thing I learned from this education was that if one is to teach and instill fundamental values, one has to respect life, whether inside or outside the womb.

But now I'm confused and wonder

if our bishop can help me. How can we teach fundamental values and not be opposed to abortion? How can we invite political leaders to speak at our schools when we know they are pro-choice? And finally, are the morals and fundamental values I was taught, and that I try to instill in my children and CCD classes, meaningless today?

C. J. Prevost
Dunmow Crescent
Fairport

Dreams of equality in eyes of Church

To the Editor:

How can I teach a child that apartheid is wrong when the Church preaches thus but, in turn, discriminates? Why is a married man deemed worthy of the Sacred Order of Deacon and a nun, a professed religious, not worthy because of one fact — she is female?

Newly ordained Deacon Jim Fitch is quoted in the June 4 issue of the C-J as saying, "You've got to have a dream." I, too, have a dream — that one day we will truly all be equals in the eyes of the Church as well as God.

Marion L. Brown
Irving Road
Rochester

Only holy statues left intact by Texas twister

To the Editor:

Our modernist bishop and priests, who would rid our churches of statues and other externals, must be chagrined over the recent happening in Saragosa, Texas.

When a tornado leveled that West Texas town May 22, left standing,

intact, were statues of Jesus and St. Joseph.

Is heaven sending us a message? I wonder.

Stella Cecere
North Main Street
Geneva

Guidelines

The Courier-Journal welcomes your opinions. Letters must bear the writers' signatures, full addresses and telephone numbers. They must be brief, typed (double-spaced, please) and no longer than 1½ pages.

Letters should be mailed to: Opinion, Courier-Journal, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

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.