



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

Diversity and forgiveness

As I look back at the past week during this quiet moment early on Tuesday morning, I realize that I spent most of it with our Sisters of Mercy at the Graced History Assembly.

At this moment, I have several themes running through me about that experience. None of them is as clear as I hope they all will be after some further reflection. Nor have I made all of the connections that I'd like to make between that experience and ongoing, daily life.

But, given all of that, I would still like to share a taste of the experience with you by naming two of the streams of thought and prayer it evoked, and by offering some brief comments and questions about each:

1) **Unity in diversity** — We honor God's creation deeply when we rejoice in the beauty, gifts, achievement and all of the potential of our sisters and brothers. When we follow that grace, we move away from a spirit of competition, a proneness to violence and manipulation, and the influence of jealousy. I admired so much the ways in which the sisters recognized the diversity among themselves. My way of describing the experience is that they judge the gifts of each to be strength for all, and the weakness of each to be the concern of all.

In an age so powerfully touched by isolation, competition and de-personalization, I found the sisters to be a strong reminder of what we are meant to be for one another.

What is your own experience of such things? Do you experience a series of unhealthy competitions with anyone? Where does this competitiveness come from and where does it lead you? How do you react to persons and ideas quite different from your own?

2) **Freedom in forgiveness** — When I am not as free as I would like to be, my pattern of reaction to hurt experienced at the hands of another person has been to withdraw physically and/or emotionally from the scene. Rather than react in visible anger, I am inclined to take the anger inside.

When couples, families, congregations and communities exist, people inevitably wound one another. That happens not because the individuals delight in causing pain. It is simply because God's work in us is not finished yet and until it is, we still have the capacity to cause hurt in others. And, of course, the reverse is true. We can suffer injury and pain at the hands of others.

Our sisters reminded me of God's power to bring healing to us in a simple but demanding, celebration of reconciliation. At one point in the ritual, they signaled by a simple word or a gentle touch their desire to forgive and be forgiven by one another. I had the privilege in participating in that moment. I experienced with our sisters the difficulty of asking and even of receiving forgiveness. More importantly, I knew in a fresh way the new freedom born of each.

Are you conscious of any hurt you have caused or experienced which is a burden in you? What keeps you from unburdening yourself? How in either case do you open yourself to the healing power of Christ? How can your sisters and brothers help you do that? What keeps you from asking for their help.

I thank our Sisters of Mercy for their extraordinary gifts and wish... Peace to all.

C-J Letters Policy

The Courier-Journal wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome all signed, original letters about current issues affecting Church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the Church. We will choose letters for publication based on likely reader

interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions of the letter writers.

We reserve the right to edit all letters. Mail them to: Letters to the Editor, Courier-Journal, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.



"I SUPPOSE THERE ARE STILL A FEW PEOPLE WHO AREN'T TOO KEEN ON THE POPE'S VISIT."

C-J Letters

Column typifies misinformation tactics

To the Editor:

Father McBrien's column entitled "Toning Down Vatican II," which appeared in the *Courier-Journal* of July 16, clearly demonstrated a tactic of misinformation used by many modernist theologians in their effort to propagate their own agenda, i.e., "democratizing" and "Protestantizing" the Catholic faith. Father McBrien criticized the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for their criticism of Father Boff and his inappropriate interpretation of a passage from the Vatican II document *De Ecclesia*, "The Church." The passage, section number 8, concerns the relationship of the Catholic Church to other Christian churches.

As reported in the *Courier-Journal* of April 3, 1985, the congregation criticized Father Boff for his statements in his book *Church: Charism and Power*. The congregation, in a letter dated March 5, 1985, and as early as May 5, 1984, criticized Boff for making "unsustainable" statements on "the structure of the Church, the concept of dogma, and the exercise of sacred power." The congregation, in response to Boff's book, said: "to interpret the reality of the sacraments, the hierarchy, the reality of the word and of all the life of the Church in terms of production and consumption, of monopoly expropriation, of conflict with the ruling bloc, rupture and occasion for an asymmetric method of production, is equal to a subversion of religious reality which far from contributing to the solution of real problems, leads instead to the destruction of the authentic meaning of the sacraments and of the words of the Bible."

Father Boff, a leading exponent of "liberation theology," which advocates Marxist concepts of class struggle and the use of violence to overthrow the

aristocracy, says: "If there is one true Church, it is the whole body of Christ: Catholic, Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox alike." He says "that the whole Church is larger than the Catholic Church alone," meaning that the Catholic Church is not the true Church instituted by Jesus, but one among many churches, and he professes that Jesus did not intend to institute a particular church, much less one with a hierarchy.

Cardinal Ratzinger, speaking for the congregation, said that this new interpretation, which is contrary to Vatican II and previous Church councils, "turns upside down the meaning of the council text on the Church's subsistence." Father McBrien demonstrates this point by first quoting from the document: "The Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church..." Note that "subsists" means "continues to be, exist." The prefix "sub" on the Latin root "sistere" means "under," indicating dependency. The Church as a society is dependent upon and exists in the Catholic Church. McBrien then changes the entire meaning by saying in his column that "the Catholic Church 'subsists in' the wider ecumenical Church of Christ."

When one reads the full document, the fallacy of McBrien's argument becomes clear, and so, too, (do) his tactics to support positions contrary to that taken by the Vatican II council. Section 8 of "The Church" in summary says Christ instituted one Church. By virtue of belief in and acceptance of Jesus and the one sacrament of baptism, all join that one Church, becoming in a mystical way the body of Christ. We know in the course of time (that) this "universal" Church became factionalized and divided. To identify the original Church from the defecting communities, the

term "universal" or "catholic" was retained, while defecting Christian communities took for themselves new nomenclature. "The Church" says these other Christian denominations by virtue of the one sacrament of baptism remain Catholic, while to the extent (that) they reject Catholic teaching and authority, they do not fully participate in all of the gifts and charisms endowed by Jesus upon His Church. Reading from section 8: "But the society structured with hierarchical organs and the mystical body of Christ are not to be considered as two realities... rather they form one complex reality which combines a divine and human element... This is the one Church of Christ which in the creed we profess as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Savior, after his resurrection gave to Peter to shepherd... This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in this communion, although many elements of sanctification and of truth may be found outside of its visible structure, which as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity."

Rather than toning down Vatican II, Cardinal Ratzinger is clearly defending its teaching against attacks by those who wish to decrease, if not destroy, the hierarchical and magisterial nature of the Church, and from attacks on infallible teaching, the pope and the Catholic faithful, who are often demeaned as being "pharisaical and judgmental" when faced with distortions and misrepresentations of Catholic teaching at the hands of Father McBrien and his ilk.

Louis Joy
Harvest Drive
Rochester

Pro-lifers urged to support Bork appointment

To the Editor:

The entire pro-abortion movement has pledged to wage an all-out campaign to block Senate confirmation of Judge Robert Bork, President Reagan's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court. Pro-abortion groups are fearful that Bork will cast the deciding vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the notorious 1973 decision that essentially legalized abortion on demand. Groups such as the National Abortion Rights League, Planned Parenthood and the National Organization of Women are putting immense pressure on the senators, especially those who are running for president — Biden, Gore and Simon.

Many of these senators are already using obstructionist tactics to keep Bork off the Supreme Court. Sen. Joseph Biden, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, with no apparent justification has decided to delay hearings until Sept. 15. Other senators such as Robert Packwood and Paul Simon have threatened to filibuster to prevent the nomination from ever coming up for a vote. It takes 60 votes out of 100 senators to shut off a filibuster.

In my view, these delaying tactics are politically motivated and not in the best interests of the country. Further-

more, they are a slap in the face to the vast majority of citizens, who voted for Reagan with the expectation that he would restructure the high court to more closely reflect the will of the people.

I was particularly disturbed when the announcement of Bork's nomination was immediately followed by a verbal meltdown from Sen. Edward Kennedy and others who have tried to characterize (Bork) as an extremist who should be rejected on solely ideological grounds. I find it odd that Sen. Kennedy's position is so sharply different from the one he took in 1981 when pro-life groups were questioning the nomination of Sandra Day O'Connor. At that time, Kennedy informed the Judiciary Committee that it was "offensive that a potential justice of the Supreme court must pass some presumed test of judicial philosophy."

Judge Bork is extremely well-qualified and should be evaluated on these qualifications alone. He has received the highest possible rating from the American Bar Association: "... exceptionally well-qualified" and he has served with distinction on the U.S. Court of Appeals after unanimous confirmation from the Senate in 1982. He can hardly be considered an ex-

remist when none of his over 100 opinions on the Court of Appeals has been overturned by the Supreme Court. He is a firm believer that the Supreme Court should resist the temptation to create rights that are not mentioned in the Constitution. He believes, as many of us do, that the justices should interpret the Constitution as it is, and should leave the making of laws to our elected representatives.

Many senators, including our own Sen. Daniel Moynihan, are undecided on the Bork nomination, and the voting will be very close. Those of us who feel strongly about reversing the abortion juggernaut that has snuffed out 1.5 million lives a year have a golden opportunity to take the offensive. We can start by bombarding our senators — especially those mentioned in this letter — with letters telling them of our support for Judge Bork's confirmation. Address letters to the Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. If you have always wanted to help our unborn but didn't know how to do it, here's your chance to make a difference.

Ronald J. Tocci
West Church Street
Fairport

Family Camp program beneficial, merits diocesan attention

To the Editor:

My family and I have just experienced one of the most beautiful occasions of love and acceptance in the 14 years that we have lived together as a family. This experience was enabled by a program sponsored by the Diocese of Rochester. It is called Christian Family Renewal or Family Camp. We shared the week with 12 families, an enthusiastic staff, spiritual director Father Charlie Manning and a volunteer staff consisting of approximately 25 teenagers and young adults. The teens volunteered their time and energy

to work in the kitchen, teach the children's sessions, plan liturgies, babysit and kidsit, and give lots of love and attention to our children.

We have attended family camp for five years and, in that time, we have learned how to better communicate with the other members of our family as well as to come closer to God. It is here that we have learned to live as true "Christian community" with Jesus Christ as our head.

My comment is: Why has family camp been kept such a secret? Why is

it other families have never heard of this program which enriches the family, the very core of the Church? Our diocese needs to advertise this program to let families know there is a place for them.

It is hard to raise a family with all of today's pressures. Family camp helps us to take time out of everyday living to focus on God and the family. It is an excellent way to strengthen and unite families of all ages.

Susan C. Versluys
Spencerport