



### Painful lesson

The Wayne County fire in which Betty Holloway's three children died has convinced community leaders to address standard housing conditions. See page 3.



### Sectional seedings

McQuaid's Knights and Mercy's Monarchs were named the top seeds in this year's sectional soccer tournaments that began this week. See pages 12 and 13.

# COURIER-JOURNAL

Catholic Diocese of Rochester

50 Cents

Thursday, October 29, 1987

20 Pages

## Bishop endorses synod consensus on women's role

By Karen M. Franz

At the end of the Thanks Giving Appeal's kickoff press conference Wednesday morning, Oct. 21, a reporter presented Bishop Matthew H. Clark with a passage taken from a short item in that morning's *Demoerat and Chronicle*. The article concerned Archbishop John L. May's October 20 statement that delegates to the Rome synod of bishops had come to a "strong consensus that all non-ordained ministries be opened to all Catholics, in keeping with local circumstances and pastoral judgment."

When the reporter asked whether the bishop agreed with Archbishop May's statement, Bishop Clark responded with gusto. "Wholeheartedly!" he said, drawing knowing laughter from the diocesan staff in attendance. "Did he really say that? Oh, that makes me feel good."

Archbishop May's comments echoed — almost word for word — Bishop Clark's request this summer that pastors throughout the diocese open all non-ordained ministries to women.

The archbishop, president of the U.S. bishops' conference, said many of the small study groups in which synod delegates are now meeting have specifically asked that "children of both sexes be allowed to serve at the altar."

Women should be considered for more Church positions, the St. Louis prelate asserted. "Why in this day and age do we maintain these divisions" between the sexes? "Theologically it is indefensible."

In an interview early this week, Bishop Clark expanded on his initial reaction to the archbishop's statement. "I was delighted to read (an NC News Service article on the statement) for a couple of reasons," he said. "One, I just think it's the way large numbers of strong signs say we ought to be going, so I was delighted to see that."

"I was delighted to see it as well because it sort of confirmed a pastoral judgment I had made about our own local church," the bishop commented. "In view of the disruption and misunderstanding and hurt that acting otherwise is causing us, I felt I had an obligation to call our people to honor this kind of direction because I felt a higher law was operative."

"(The article) refers to a 'strong consensus' supporting that. I'm delighted by that because I think it's moving us away from quite unnecessary laws which hurt people in our community and that's just not right. There's no reason for it," he remarked.

Although news of the synod's general proceedings has been sporadic and sketchy, Bishop Clark said he is pleased by the information he has received so far. "I think the questions I have read about are questions that are very real here and ones I know many bishops had hoped would be discussed," he said. "I'm not well up on the depth of the discussion or the tone of it, but I am pleased that the whole area of women in the Church is being strongly discussed, and I'm also very happy that the larger question — perhaps the foundational question — of how the Church carries on her ministry is being discussed."

The question of the Church's ministry "is a difficult issue because it involves lots of different theological streams," Bishop Clark said, citing in particular "a further reflection by the Church on the dignity and power of the baptismal vocation and what that means by way of the service and worship to which the baptized are called."

"A second stream that's being reflected on very strongly, it seems to me, is the vocation of the ordained and what that means as it



Bonnie Trafelet/Courier-Journal

IN SEARCH OF THE GREAT PUMPKIN — Families get in the Halloween spirit with a wagon ride to the pumpkin patch at Scottsville's Honey Locust Farms.

somehow identifies the ordained as a symbol of the presence of Christ's pastoral care in the community," he continued.

These questions, the bishop said, have "brought us to the time when we are struggling to find ways to relate the baptismal vocation to the ordained vocation in a manner that does full justice to each and diminishes neither of them. So I think that this is a very healthy, progressive kind of movement in the Church at the moment; it's an excellent thing and a delight to read about."

In other matters, synod delegates have discussed a need for the Church to clarify the appropriate balance between a growing emphasis on lay people's role in the Church as opposed to their role as witnesses in the world. Bishop Clark endorsed such discussions, noting that they revolved around two very important points. One, he said, concerned "how the ministry of the Church is carried out in terms of its pastoral service,

its sacramental and liturgical celebrations and its governance ... One issue is how the baptized person participates in those dimensions of the Church's life fully."

The bishop observed that it is easy to succumb to a temptation to forget that "the Church is really at the service of building up the kingdom of God and that that is done by baptized believers who in the fabric of daily life in all circumstances and places somehow witness the presence of Christ."

Thus, he said, discussion of this distinction is "doing us a very great service, so that we don't become so turned inward or so focused on the institution that we forget the larger purpose of the institution, or that we forget that the kingdom is something larger than the institution of the Church."

Although this tension is an important concern, the bishop observed that "people are all too ready to talk about the 'clericalization of the laity' and the 'secularization of the clergy.'" Preferring to avoid such

jargon, he discussed the situation in terms of a "tension that through the ages plays itself out in different ways of being self-absorbed or outward directed. I'd rather put it in those terms than divide the body of the Church among itself."

"I think (the situation) is more a question of our common consciousness — whether that's turned inward. It must be, sometimes, in very healthy, introspective ways, but it should only be for the purpose then of turning us outward in service and mission."

This question is of particular importance in the United States, because of its relevance to the current shortage of vocations to the priesthood. Yet, as Bishop Clark noted, these concerns are experienced in different ways in different locales. "We are experiencing a shortage of candidates for the ordained ministries in our country, but in other countries that's certainly not true," he said. "We're enjoying a burgeoning, strong,

Continued on Page 18