

et cetera

# Bishop endorses

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lovely development of the consciousness of the baptismal vocation and the empowerment it gives, while other places are not.

"So it's not a uniform, steady, identical development of these two things around the world. The local churches have had different experiences with each. That's why I think it's important for the experience of each local church to be profoundly respected as the larger Church moves ahead in consideration of these issues.

Although the synod's outcome is uncertain, the bishop contends that "in the long view, the synod will influence these issues and probably bring some guidance to them. In the shorter run it's always hard to predict what immediate impact the synod will have because, as I understand it, there is no official public document issued by the synod

for the governance of the whole Church. The synod offers recommendations to the Holy Father, who then in turn will offer some document or some documents for that guidance. But until that happens you're not totally sure of exactly where these things will come down.

"I think the synod delegates will offer (the pope) a very strong recommendation that the Church needs to stay very much alive on this issue of ministry, of this issue of women," he continued. "My intuition is that (the delegates) will also do that with a strong recommendation that there be much more left to the local churches to decide than is presently the case. I think they will say that — precisely because of the different experiences of the many local churches, that is, dioceses — it's not realistic for central authority to make decisions in very practical daily matters that deeply affect those local churches without reference to (the local churches') experience."

Although Bishop Clark observed that the synod's outcome may disappoint or displease some Catholics who are hoping for certain results, he said "it may be a strong encouragement to them to reassess their theological understanding; it may be a real challenge to them for a change of heart.

"I think the vast majority of Catholic people give great reverence to and strong adherence to the guidance offered by the Holy See... My hope is that all of us would move ahead together. In human affairs, universal agreement is rare, but I hope we find a way together to work things out in a satisfactory manner.

"If we don't do that, then our mission suffers. We can't spend forever disagreeing about such relatively unimportant things in the light of the transcendent importance of our mission to proclaim Christ alive and healing, reconciling."

Although some synod participants have expressed a need somehow to regulate the activities of the broad spectrum of lay Catholic organizations, Bishop Clark urges caution in applying restrictions. "To my mind, people's imagination and creativity and commitment and concern for the mission of the Church should be given as free a reign as possibly can be offered," he remarked. "Otherwise, I think, we will lose the gifts of such people, and we will never find out about the possibilities they open up for the larger community."

Such freedom must, of course, be balanced with respect for the basic unity of the whole community. As the wider community of the Church should be open to and never neglect the gifts, talents, inspiration and directions that individuals or groups might choose, Bishop Clark said, the smaller communities must likewise be conscious of the common good.

This balancing act, he said, is never an issue that's totally settled. "It's another expression of the tension, which I think is a healthy one, that might be called the tension

between the charismatic and the institutional," Bishop Clark said. "Both are very worthy and dignified words expressing very important realities, but when one takes an undue precedence over the other, things get out of tilt. Part of our common responsibility — and part of my own particular responsibility — is to find ways to keep those in healthy tension, in some constructive alignment."

Despite the concerns synod delegates have voiced with respect to lay groups, Bishop Clark said he had not experienced counterproductive tensions in the Diocese of Rochester. "I think we can fairly describe our own community of faith as a healthy progressive one," he remarked. "I think we're trying to engage in what the Church wants us to engage in, and I think we're doing that with a relatively low quotient of antagonism, disruption, friction."

Although some tensions remain to be resolved within the diocese, "I thank God every day for the relatively low amount of disruptive activity or strident voices in our diocese," Bishop Clark concluded. "I think we're blessed in that manner."

## 'St. Elsewhere' star to speak at St. John Fisher College

The St. John Fisher College Student Association's Fall Lecture Series will present actor Stephen Furst on Thursday, Oct. 29, in Kearney Auditorium, 2690 East Ave., Rochester at 8 p.m. Furst, best known as Flounder in "Animal House" and Dr. Elliot Axelrod on NBC's "St. Elsewhere" is scheduled to lecture and show video clips of his dramatic career at this free presentation.

Following his lecture, Furst is expected to answer questions and tour the campus.

Call (716) 385-8231 or 385-8104 for information.

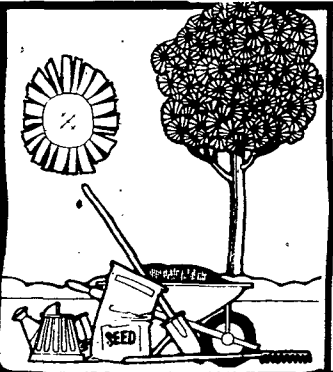
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