

## Editorial & Opinion

# Gratitude for gifts received, expectations for what lies ahead

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

In this first column of 1988, I want to thank you all for your wonderful kindness to me at Christmas and on the occasion of my silver jubilee as an ordained priest. The support and affection you so generously offered to me in greetings, prayers and gifts have done wonderful things in my heart, and I am deeply grateful to you.

If I searched for a year, I could not find words adequate to express how much your kindness has meant to me, not only in these recent days but in all of the years in which I have been privileged to serve as your bishop. I have a deep sense that God has chosen to call me to deeper life and greater freedom through your witness of faith, and through the rich way in which you live out that faith in your daily life.

To experience you in that way is not new to me. From the very first day I arrived here I have been touched by the way your faith has spilled over in generous service, warm hospitality and ready willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom. That was abundantly evident to me on the night I was installed as your bishop, and it has not changed since. What has changed is that between then and now I have had the privileges of coming

## Along the Way



to know you and of sharing your journey of faith.

So I thank you for all of that. Most of all I thank you for both insisting and permitting that I be a pilgrim with you rather than someone who stands over and apart from you. Your encouragement, patience, honesty, affection, laughter, courage and good-heartedness have all taught me a good deal about you, myself and most of all about our loving friend and redeemer, Jesus.

It is with such thoughts in my mind and affections

in my heart that I leave for Guelph, Ontario, this morning to ordain my friend, Paul Dungan, SJ, to the priesthood and, afterward, to make my annual retreat under his kind direction. I shall be on retreat from December 30 to January 7, and I promise you that you will be in my heart all through those days of special grace.

It is the first time I can recall that I've made a retreat that included the New Year's feast, and I look forward to that new experience. I am also mindful that I shall be on retreat on January 3, the date on which I began my 40-day retreat earlier this year.

I don't have any particular agenda for this retreat experience. Perhaps the best way I can express my hope for these coming days is to repeat the words I wrote in this column on September 11, 1986, when I first told you about my plans to make the long retreat last January, "I have always been aware that ministry changes people who engage in it; in my years among you, I have been especially aware of that in my own life. Part of my hope for this retreat is that I will come to know better the ways in which God's grace leads me so that I may be able to serve more fully and more lovingly."

Peace to all.

## Letters

### Discipline still needed by today's Church

To the editor:

The two letters in the last issue were very well put. Your paper is much better than a few years back, and I pay for it regularly.

I cannot see why there is so much change in the policy of our local church from those of the Vicar of Christ — namely the pope. For instance, he gave orders for the nuns to get back into their habits. I feel very strongly about nurses, doctors, priests and sisters or anybody for that matter dressing and acting to suit their vocation given them by God as a free and glorious gift. The religious dressed appropriately are held in such high esteem by all people. They should be proud to show their colors as we true-blue Americans are proud to fly Old Glory.

I was a CCD teacher in 1980 and felt very privileged to bring the word of God to kindergartners and first graders. This year, there were four who were willing to teach after Mass in our church. It was changed to be taught by the parents — a sad mistake and it will flop.

We all need discipline from the cradle to the grave. As a mother of eight daughters, 31 grand-children and 20 great-grandchildren, I am very concerned. More and more are leaving our great church and their meetings for parent and children are a great inconvenience and impossibility for most with family commitments — distance, weather and many other reasons too numerous to mention. And then the kids are denied the chance we had to receive First Holy Communion, confirmation, and a blessed marriage. If I can answer to it, I'll say progress in many circumstances turns to regression and instead of bringing more to our great church it is sending more hither, thither and yon. Something must be done and for Our Good Lord's sake let's do it by prayer, example and action. We are blessed to have a grade-A priest, and I hope we can keep him. Priests as well as police are curtailed to do what their heart dictates by the so-called higher up authorities. May God take care of us all.

Rita Brown  
Route 2  
Rexville

### Jesus would want concerts in churches, reader asserts

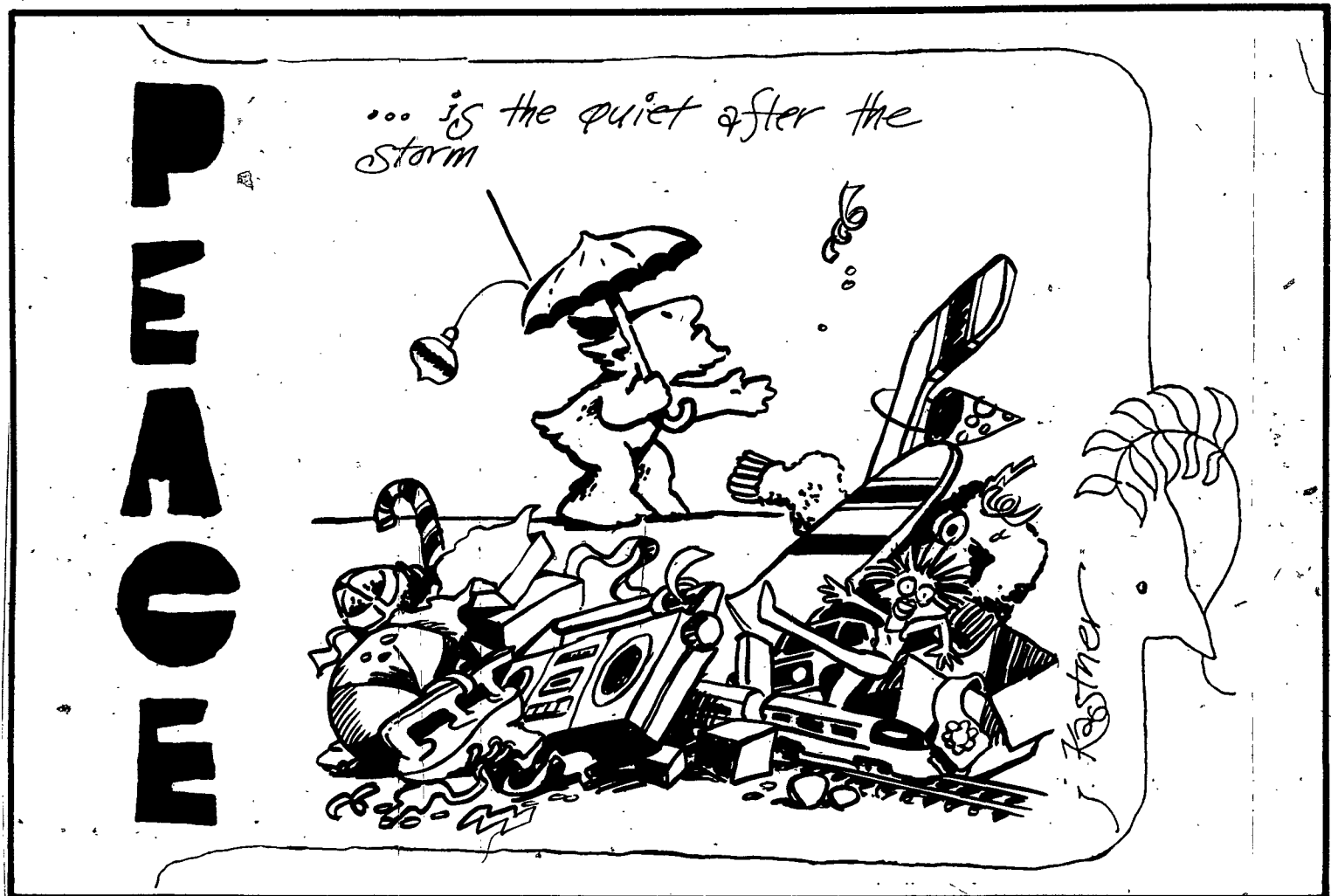
To the editor:

Hoo, boy! The censors are at it again. There is nothing profane about concerts in church.

Jesus wouldn't object. He'd say, "Come to my altar. For heaven's sake, don't banish me." My Father gave you these talents and you have developed them. Come, show me how well you have done. Call everyone in to watch and listen with me!"

Oh, where is our wisdom?

Grace B. Carnes  
Eagle Ridge Circle  
Rochester



## Councilwoman challenges views expressed in article

To the editor:

Having read your article "Protestors demand municipal shelter for homeless" by Lee Strong (C-J 12-3-87), I would like to address several of your concerns. First, let me state that I agree with your general premise, that the lack of low-moderate income housing, including housing for the homeless, is a significant problem. I disagree, however, with your assessment that city policies are responsible for the housing problem.

Housing has traditionally been funded by the federal government in the form of public housing and Section 8 or other rental assistance housing programs. The continued decrease in federal funds — down 75 percent since 1980 — for low income housing has impacted heavily at the local level. Although well over \$55 million has been expended through city housing programs in the last 13 years to rehabilitate low and moderate housing units, the city cannot possibly make up for the lack of federal funding. According to independent housing experts, it would cost \$76 million per year — or one-third of the city's entire budget — to provide a \$300 per month subsidy to all those qualified to rent low-income housing.

In light of these facts, let me describe for you the city's ongoing commitment to low-moderate income housing:

- + Over 11,000 structures have been improved through city rehabilitation programs (during) 1975-86. It is vital to note that all these programs are targeted to benefit low-moderate households.

- + The innovative Home Expo program

has provided 75 units of moderate income housing for new homeowners in a variety of city neighborhoods.

- + Six neighborhood organizations have received technical assistance and support on a regular basis from city staff for their applications to New York state's Affordable Housing Corporation for funding. In addition, the city has provided a subsidy of \$5,000 per structure for the houses these groups have built or are in the process of building to be sold to low-moderate income people.

- + Housing projects that have received support, both technical assistance and funding include the Mt. Carmel Project, 12 units, \$42,000; St. Peter and Paul, 12 units, \$105,000; Susan B. Anthony Cooperative, 36 units, \$200,000; and the Cynthia Fitzpatrick Cooperative, 15 units, \$200,000. Low income housing is available to a family of four with an income of \$17,350 or less.

- + Because the city council is interested in assuring that opportunities are provided to individuals who want to own their own homes, we approved funding for a survey of Rochester's homeless and a housing market study; both will assist the council in identifying problems and setting priorities.

- + The Revolving Loan Fund of Neighborhood Housing Services has been subsidized with 350,000 city dollars and city staff, and councilmembers have assisted in private sector development work for the organization.

- + The Housing Council of Rochester receives approximately \$155,000 per year to

provide direct assistance to low and moderate income households with housing problems. The city council recently approved an additional \$7,500 for the operation of a hotline to provide counseling and outreach services to these individuals.

In addition to the above, the city has initiated many other programs to assist low-moderate income families. Further, the city has initiated programs to assist landlords to improve rental housing and to keep rental costs as low as possible. The city council's and city's commitment to provide low-moderate income housing opportunities and homeless housing is clearly demonstrated above. We will continue working toward the resolution of these problems. What we have discovered in doing this is that cooperative effort is essential in finding the answers to community problems.

Joan M. Hensler  
Councilmember at large  
City of Rochester

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In deference to Ms. Hensler, we are publishing her letter in its entirety, although it exceeds our policy on length.

We should clarify some of the comments the councilwoman makes in her first paragraph. The "concerns," "premise" and "assessment" to which she refers are not those of the Courier-Journal, but those of the individuals quoted in the article. As they sometimes say in television, "The opinions expressed ... are not necessarily those of the management."