

## Editorial & Opinion

# Convocation '88: Proclaiming the word of God

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Monday, April 10

This afternoon the priests of our diocese will gather for our annual meeting, Convocation, '88, at the Marriott Inn, Henrietta. The convocation's theme is "The Priest is Proclaimer of the Word of God," and will last until lunch time on Wednesday.

I am excited about the prospect of the convocation. It is always a pleasure to gather with our priests, but it is a special joy when the whole presbyterate assembles to reflect on the beauty of the priestly vocation and to sharpen their ministerial skills.

Walter Burghardt, SJ; John Burke, OP; and William Graham are our principal speakers, and we will enjoy workshops conducted by John Lawyer; Muriel Curran, SSND; and Patricia Schoelles, SSJ. The hope of the planning committee, led by Father Kevin Murphy, is that all of us who attend will not only be stimulated and helped to improve our preaching, but also will come to understand how powerful is the gift of God's word as that gift is offered in such ministries as spiritual direction and pastoral counseling.

This will be the ninth year in a row that we have gathered as a presbyterate to reflect on our common ministry. Like so many things, these meetings have

## Along the Way



evolved as the years have gone by. You may recall that we initiated a substantial change in the format last year when, for the first time, we asked all of the priests to come to one session of extended length. In earlier years we had gathered in two shorter, back-to-back sessions.

In addition to the change in format, we have in these two years enjoyed the leadership of our Ministry to Priests team, which has generously and ably taken responsibility for developing and organizing the convocation. In consultation with our presbyteral council they decide on theme and format, and take care of the considerable organizational detail such a project entails.

My own participation in these days — besides enjoying the offering of those who come to enrich us — will

involve: 1) introducing the convocation and Father Burghardt, our keynote speaker, 2) presiding and preaching at our eucharistic liturgy on Tuesday evening and 3) presiding at the closing prayer service on Wednesday. At that last event, all of us present will renew our commitment to God's word and to your service.

As I think about the responsibilities I have during the convocation, I have a sense of joy about being with the priests of our diocese. They are, as you know, a wonderful group of men who day in and day out try to serve their sisters and brothers with good heartedness and generosity. And they do that in an age of transition in the Church that makes priestly ministry more demanding than it has been for several generations. Please remember all of that when you note our kinks and flaws and sins, and let such moments be occasions for you to remember that you give good bread to us when you offer your forgiveness, understanding and encouragement.

As I mention encouragement, it reminds me to thank you for the encouragement you have given me in such generous measure since I shared with you my hopes for a period of sabbatical leave. I am deeply grateful to you and look forward to telling you more about it as plans develop.

Peace to all.

## Incorrect to equate actions of cardinal, theologian

### Letters

#### Pleased by visit to St. Boniface

To the editor:

On Tuesday, Feb. 2, I visited St. Boniface School on the special occasion of grandparent's day. What a delightful experience! One could readily see that the sisters and faculty under the able direction of Sister Blanche had planned for our arrival. We were welcomed royally as we toured the classrooms and at 1 p.m., attended a fine luncheon and program.

More than that, though, I found a happy and healthy spirit at the school. Friendly teachers, moms and dads and visitors welcomed one and all. The students put on their best smiles to welcome us, too. I guess maybe I had forgotten what a wonderful experience Catholic education can be at the primary level, as it has been more than a few years since our children had graduated from Our Lady of Lourdes in Elmira.

I was especially pleased when Sister took time out in remedial reading class to stretch and sing a lively verse "Giving Praise to Our Divine Lord." It pleased me too to observe the Sacred Heart adorned in the hallway and Our Lady evident in every classroom, even pre-K.

At a time when we hear we must be open to change, I gave thanks to find a truly Catholic atmosphere at St. Boniface and to see some things have lasted as I remembered them in grade school. I'm especially pleased Lindsay and Patrick invited me and that the weather cooperated so I could attend. Chatting with a few other grandparents, the feeling was mutual.

The Sisters and faculty and also Ms. Murphy who also provided entertainment during lunch are to be commended for a splendid afternoon.

We are pleased our grandchildren are able to attend this fine school.

Keep up this good work one and all.

Rita D. Wayne  
Gunnip Avenue  
Elmira

To the editor:

Father O'Brien in a recent column equated Cardinal O'Connor's conduct with that of Father Curran.

His incorrect equation of the conduct of those two Church figures in an official diocesan newspaper, in effect, legitimizes Father Curran's dissent and confrontation; discredits Cardinal O'Connor and furthers the holocaust of the unborn.

Cardinal O'Connor disagrees with the interim policy statement of the Administrative Board made for the National Catholic Conference of Bishops between meetings. He believes that teaching the use of condoms to

avoid AIDS for Catholics is a bad policy, which will confuse Catholics on the Church's contraceptive prohibition.

Father Curran, on the other hand, publicly disagrees with fundamental Church teachings and the Magisterium, despite Vatican requests to conform his positions. He espouses early abortions on demand, and later abortions for unspecified "grave" reasons are morally acceptable for Catholics; and states that Catholics have no moral imperative to end legalized abortion on demand.

Father Curran creates confusion and disobedience by his disagreement with Church teachings. Further, his dissenting "views" lend

public support to pro-abortion advocates who often use his positions in support of legalized abortion, and to neutralize the Church's efforts to end this legalized killing of 1.7 million unborn babies a year.

In the one instance a bishop seeks to avoid confusion between the Church's teachings and an interim policy statement of a bishop's group. In the other instance, a theologian stubbornly places his position in defiance of basic Church teachings, the natural law and the inalienable God-given right to life. Certainly, a most serious distinction.

Scott C. Smith, President  
St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild

## Friends, Landmark Society undermine property rights

To the editor:

Your March 24 issue carried the story about the diocesan effort to demolish Holy Redeemer Church. As most people know, the Friends of Holy Redeemer and the Landmark Society have since been successful in the first phase of their effort to substitute their idea in place of the idea of the owner, as to what should be done with the building.

By bringing about government intervention with the property owner's legitimate rights — among which are the rights to alter, sell or dis-

pose of one's property — the "Friends" are far from their professed position of "dealing in good faith." Whenever one party imposes its will be using an instrument of coercion — whether that instrument is a pistol or whether it's the state — that party can hardly be considered as "dealing in good faith."

And both the "Friends" and the Landmark Society have a sadly misguided approach to preservationism. In their focus on preserving bricks and mortar from the past, they are ignoring what is arguably more important,

namely freedom.

If we as property owners cannot build, remodel or raze buildings we own — without the permission of the state — then the concept of ownership is hollow indeed. Is not a system like that more precisely characterized as fascism, i.e., nominal ownership by individuals or groups, but control by the state? Is this the kind of society we want?

David D. Hoesly  
Maple Drive  
Webster

## Urges contributors to exercise discretion in making United Way pledges

To the editor:

As the annual United Way Drive gets under way, I would like to urge the Rochester Catholic community to use wisdom in their giving. While most of these funds go to organizations worthy of our support, quite a substantial amount goes to those that are not. St. Joseph's Villa, Birthright, Catholic Family Center are among those deserving of our support. But do people realize that Planned Parenthood of Rochester and the Genesee Valley, Inc., receives a very large dole of these funds if a preference is not specifically indicated?

Planned Parenthood, in case we are not aware, is the single largest referral agency for abortion in our community. Each year hundreds of Rochester teenagers, many without parental consent or knowledge, are

processed through this agency to local abortuaries.

Also there seems to be springing up grocery store lottery-type give-aways. For the price of one small dollar you have the chance to win thousands. Hidden is the fact that millions of dollars is being raised to be donated to United Way's general fund — from there into the hands of Planned Parenthood and others without our option to designate. I don't believe our "buck" or one red cent should go towards kill-

ing babies.

"Be gentle as doves, wise as serpents." Also we are admonished by Our Lord to be good stewards of the gifts he has given to us — specifically our income. The fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," certainly applies here too. Exercise your United Way option!

Judith Donoghue  
Eugene Street  
Rochester

## Questions reasoning of writer's 'pro-choice' argument; suggests that author remember deaths of unborn children

To the editor:

Martha Kelch's letter of March 3 (Letters: "Altar boy's example shows error of 'wrongful life' suit") contains reasoning that I don't understand and feel I must address.

First, she states that she is pro-choice because she doesn't believe in "enforced morality." Well, if that is so, does she believe that the prohibition of rape, murder, assault and other violent crimes through law are wrong? I believe that all those fit under "enforced morality" nutshell.

She states she is so pro-life that she rescues spiders amidst her sisters' shrieks. Yet, she states that those who attempt to rescue unborn human babies from the horror of a torturous death at the hands of an abortionist "issue threats and judgments (which) is taking a gi-

ant step outside human jurisdiction." She states that "we mustn't assume the right to make another's moral decisions." When that "immoral" decision is to have a totally innocent child ripped apart, yes, it is every person's right to intercede. Shall we all ignore the 2,969 abortion deaths in Monroe County each year? While we educate, we must reinforce that education with resistance of immoral laws and efforts to have such laws reversed.

So, Ms. Kelch the next time you take the time to rescue a spider, remember the 4,400 children who are killed daily because there was no one there to rescue them.

Mary Ellen Frisch  
Gillett Road  
Spencerport

### C-J Letters Policy

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Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of ex-pressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the Church. We will

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



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