

Editorial & Opinion

Confirmation vignettes attest to God's renewing love

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Tuesday, May 3.

It was one of those special moments. The beautiful young woman, a freshman in high school, told me she was taking a man's name for her confirmation name. I asked her if she would tell me why. She told me that she had chosen the name in honor of her grandfather, whom she loved dearly, and who died recently. As my young friend told me that, tears formed in her eyes and in the eyes of her mother and dad, who were by her side.

The moment had a measure of sadness in that the sense of loss was there again, but I think that it was first and above all a moment of peaceful joy for all of us. I know it was for me because it spoke so beautifully of the bonds of faith and affection we all need to enjoy in order to live fully human lives. To be in the presence of that family also said something to me about the transmission of life, the gift of memory and of the wonderful ways in which God constantly renews the human family which God loves so dearly. Through her thoughtful and tender initiative, the young woman provided a moment of special memory for her family, and this will be a source of joy for them for many years to come.

That experience would mean a great deal to me at any time, but I am especially grateful that it occurred

Along the Way



during this Easter season, when we are invited to come close to the Risen Lord and to appreciate more deeply the richness, power and generosity of His renewing love. In God's loving plan, we can be brought to that greater awareness in a variety of ways.

During the Liturgy of the Word at the same confirmation, a young mother carried her daughter — a small toddler — out of the church and into a gathering area when the child became noisy. During the sung psalm response to the first reading, I had the privilege of being able to see the mother dance and sway to the music while she held her daughter in her arms. To me, it was a powerful image of how God, with a mother's love, cares for each of us. We are

always God's children, and God never stops loving us. God loves us even more tenderly than that young mother was loving her child at that moment.

Special times like that may not be a part of everyday living, but I wonder if we are alert enough to note and free enough to enjoy deep down the rich signs of new life all around us these days: the brightness of the early days of May; the fresh green of the earth and of the trees now budding after a long winter; the joy of children playing spring games.

Different persons will notice and be moved by different signs of life. But I suppose it's fair to say that there is no greater sign of or call to life than the love of other people. Where love is, there is God.

I have shared with you two experiences — one with the candidate for confirmation, and the other with the mother and child — that have helped me appreciate God's love and the Easter life that is always available to us. I want to invite you to take some time to reflect upon your own experience so that you can realize in some new or deeper way just how deeply God loves you, and how constant is God's availability to you.

Mother's Day may provide you with a privileged opportunity to do just that. In any case, I hope the day will be one of graced memory and peaceful renewal for you and your loved ones.

Peace to all.

Letters

Mary shows us purpose

To the editor:

Several weeks ago, Wayne Weible spoke at three area churches on the message Our Blessed Mother is giving to all of us at Medjugorje. Two of his informative and inspiring talks were recorded, and audio-cassette copies are available for loan. If anyone would like to borrow a copy feel free to call me at (716) 621-3906.

The message of Medjugorje is fundamentally the Gospel message. It is an urgent call for us to put God first in our lives and to live our faith more deeply with simplicity and humility. At Medjugorje, Mary urges us to pray more often as well as to fast and do penance. The value and importance of prayer and fasting is conveyed in these words of Our Blessed Mother: "Christians have forgotten they can prevent war and even natural calamities by prayer and fasting." In Medjugorje the Mass is the center of spiritual life. At Mary's urging many are frequenting the sacrament of penance.

Wayne Weible has experienced a great love for Jesus in the Eucharist, and it is because of the Eucharist that he is planning to join the Catholic Church. Hearing a Protestant express such love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is inspiring.

Tremendous good is occurring as a result of Mary's appearances at Medjugorje. People are reconciling themselves with God and their neighbor. They are renewing their faith, love and trust in Jesus and making efforts to conform their lives to the Gospel. The real proof of Medjugorje is the spiritual fruit it is producing. Our Holy Father has said: "Let the people go to Medjugorje if they convert, pray, confess, do penance and fast."

The message of Medjugorje is really quite simple. We have heard it before, yet in our troubled, confusing and materialistic world it is often ignored or forgotten.

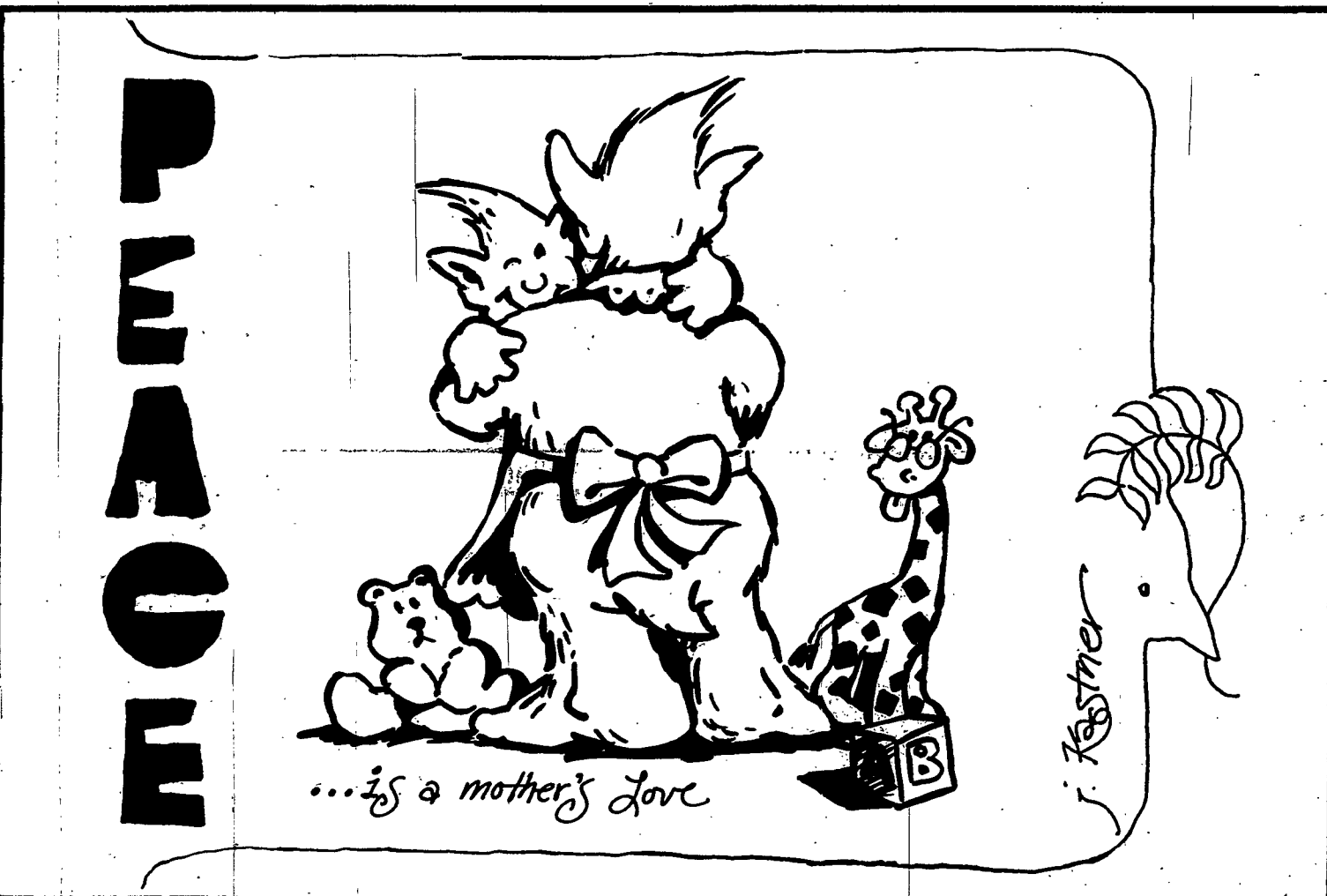
Medjugorje reminds us and impresses upon us what the real purpose of our lives are. I urge you to learn about what is happening in Medjugorje. Take its message to heart and by so doing you will draw closer to Jesus.

Raymond N. Buonemani
Holcroft Road
Rochester

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



Better to risk nuclear war than to live under communists

To the editor:

In a recent Courier-Journal article, "Pax Christi criticizes report" (April 21), Pax Christi took a bishops' committee report to task for not condemning nuclear deterrence as "sinful."

Despite the fact that nuclear deterrence has prevented the free world from being taken over by communism — so far — Pax Christi evidently believes it is better to live under a communist dictator than risk a nuclear war.

Cambodia is a tragic example of what happens when a nation is conquered by communism. More people were killed there in peacetime than were killed during the entire Indochina war.

Ironically, as the U.S. continues to disarm itself, the Soviets continue to build more weapons, both nuclear and conventional that also include chemical-warfare weapons.

Even more revealing is the fact that the

Soviets have an extensive network of underground shelters and have been working on their own SDI system for years.

Despite their talk of more openness — glasnost — the Soviets continue to send weapons to Afghanistan that kill and maim children.

They also continue to supply the Sandinistas in Nicaragua with billions of dollars worth of military hardware and economic aid.

While we must first follow Our Lady's peace

plan and pray that our Holy Father and the bishops consecrate Russia, we must also know what we are up against.

Disarming while our adversary continues to stockpile weapons is neither a sensible nor a Christian way to work for peace.

Robert Bart
Box 594
Ithaca

Praises columnist for efforts on Christ's behalf

To the editor:

In your 3-3-88 Courier Journal issue: Bravo, bravo to Father J.P. Cuddy.

He most certainly is on the "Right Side," a priest among priests and we are so fortunate to have an ambassador for Christ like him in our diocese.

Bishop Fulton Sheen, on TV in the '50s, first brought alive Jesus Christ personally in my life. He also brought to a religious but searching and questioning teen that the Catholic Church truly is the body of Christ. The good bishop simply by explaining the word "catholic" could allow one to embrace all Jesus Christ's followers in brotherhood. Most of all in his own way he got across that "within each human being" the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit awaits to have Jesus Christ enthroned there, and a person will never be content until that place is filled for what it was created for. Neither will a true ambassador for Christ rest while they know they can work to accomplish this in just

one more life.

God Bless Father Cuddy for doing that all these years and many thanks to you for faithfully carrying his column.

Jean Vetter
Salter Road
North Rose

On making the man

To the editor:

Once upon a time, it is said, Christians were known by their love for each other.

Today, according to your stern correspondent from Rush (C-J Letters, April 21: "Wear collar or quit priesthood"), that mark of recognition has been replaced, at least for the clergy, by a distinctive garb.

In this new Catholic sartorialism, clothes do make the man.

E. Leo McMannus
N.E. 16th Avenue
North Miami, FL



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