

## Editorial & Opinion

# A busy itinerary includes bishops' meeting, study day

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

This will be the last *Along the Way* until the edition of the *Courier-Journal* published August 4. Normally I would do a column for the June 30 edition, but I am leaving in the morning for Louisville, Ky., and on Wednesday for Collegeville, Minn. I will not return until after deadline time next Tuesday.

Tomorrow in Louisville, I'll be helping to lead a study day on the first draft of "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption," our pastoral letter in response to the concerns of women in the Church and society. Our friends in Louisville invited Sister Mariella Frye and me to assist with an afternoon program for parish staffs and diocesan personnel, and with a like program in the evening for a more general audience.

I look forward to going there. The invitation has already provided a stimulus to read some of the responses to the first draft of the pastoral letter already appearing in a wide variety of periodicals. Now I anticipate tomorrow's conversation with people who will bring their own insights and criticism to our first efforts. In addition to participating in tomorrow's program, I am looking forward to seeing some old friends and some new ones. Among the older friends are Tom Kelly, native of Rochester and

## Along the Way



Archbishop of Louisville, and Mary Heidkamp and Jim Lund, both of whom worked for the Diocese of Rochester. Among the new friends are Mary's and Jim's beautiful children, Maura and Matthew.

On Wednesday, I'll continue on to St. John's in Collegeville, Minn., for the semiannual meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Thursday will be devoted to committee meetings; general business sessions will be held on Friday, Saturday and Monday; Sunday will be a day of prayer for all of us.

I anticipate that our full agenda will also be quite a lively and interesting one. Among the issues we'll be working on are nuclear deterrence, the draft of "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption," and "The

Many Faces of AIDS," and the process that led to its publication by the NCCB's Administrative Board. If you followed media coverage of the controversy surrounding the publication of "The Many Faces of AIDS," you no doubt anticipate that the conversation to be held about it will be quite a spirited one.

Another aspect of the session that I look forward to very much is the first meeting of a committee on Ministry to Bishops on which Archbishop John May, president of our conference, has invited me to serve. We have been asked to develop some ideas relative to the ministry of bishops, including such themes as: ordination for new bishops, sabbatical programs and retirement. It will be good to hear the ideas of my colleagues about these issues and to share my own ideas and experiences with them.

I have mentioned to you before what a pleasure it is to spend time on the campus of St. John's University and to be the guests of the Benedictine community there. It is a peaceful, quiet and holy place. To be there is relaxing.

So this will be it for a few weeks. I shall be thinking about you and praying for you while I am away this week and all through the summer. Thank you so much for your encouragement and great kindness all through the year.

Peace to all.

## Letters

### Church not all mystic, dynamic

To the editor:

I would not presume to argue theology with a theologian, but Father McBrien's language is the same as mine: finite. Which is why I believe he errs in logic when he says, "The language of theology, therefore, is far removed from the language of rules and laws" (C-J June 9, *Essays in Theology*: "Theology: poetry or prose"). The language of theology is the language of orders into which God brought creation out of chaos.

He states, "But since no one has ever seen God (John 1:18), everything we say or write about God will always fall short of the mark." Everything we say or write about God will always fall short of the mark simply because we are finite and God is infinite. Even had Father McBrien seen God face to face, he could not express His infinite truth and beauty in the finite terms and means God gave him, not because he hadn't seen Him.

Finally, in his contrast of prose and poetry, he states, and I believe again erroneously, "I'm insisting only that they are different, and that each is essential to the Church." They are not only essential to the Church, they ARE the Church. Theology and pastoral practice can and must marry, at times, just as with prose and poetry. Has Father McBrien never heard of a prose-poem? That is what, in reality, the Church is. It is neither merely a mystical ideal nor a dynamic organism, but a wedding of both.

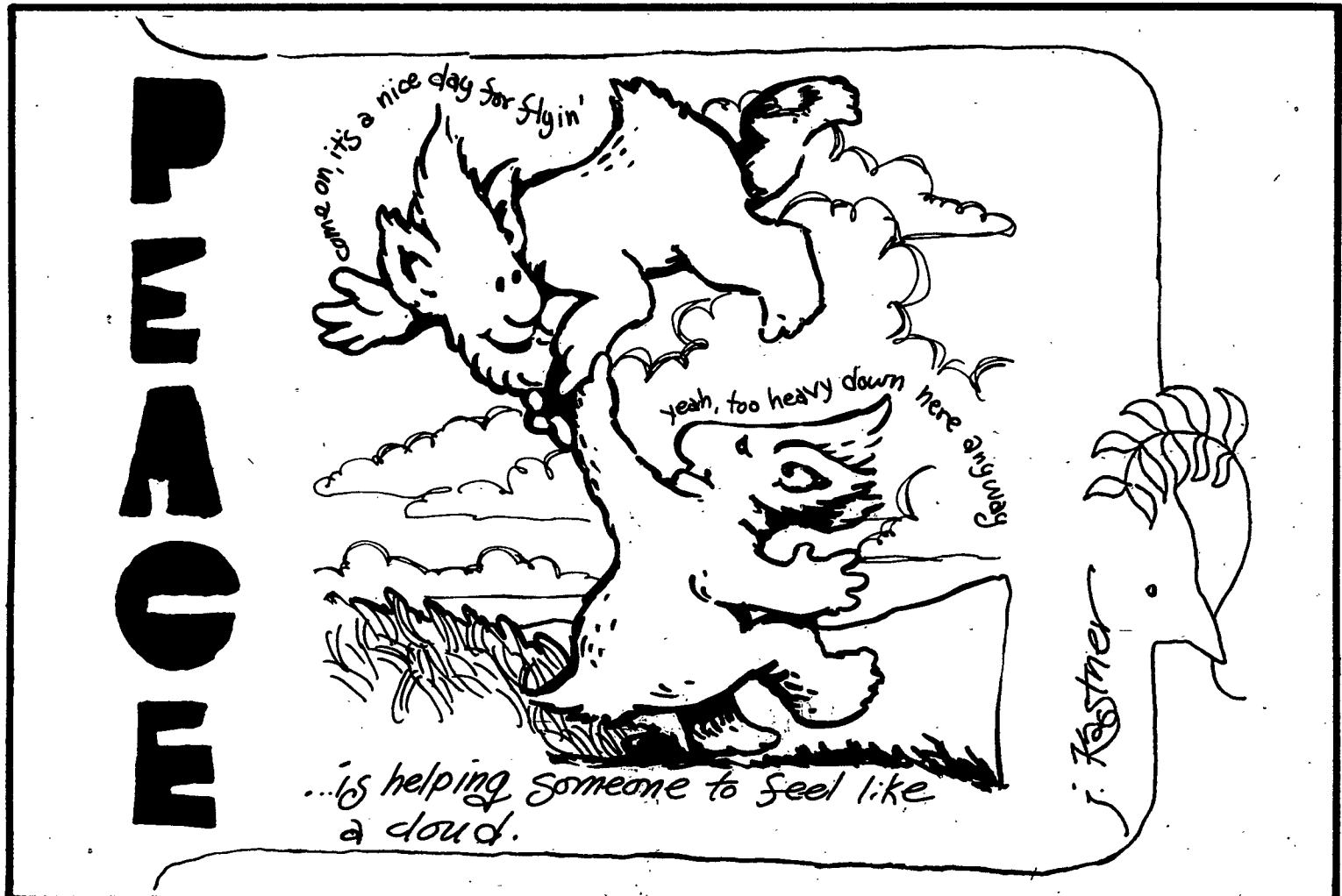
The laws of meter and verse give life to prose — giving it an order that makes it poetic, not just prosaic. But without some knowledge of iambic pentameter, I'd have never received the prose on my high school diploma. Theology demands the obedience without which we can never acquire true understanding. I'll say it again with Robert Frost: "Good fences good neighbors make."

Kathy Crane  
Martinot Avenue  
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



### Spiritual conversions at Medjugorje could not be product of the devil

To the editor:

In response to Michael A. More's letter (C-J June 2: "People not aware of whole story on Medjugorje"), please consider the facts if not the supernatural occurrences that are taking place on the holy ground of Medjugorje. The case in favor of the authenticity of these apparitions is "vast ... so I will pick three."

First the conversion of the entire village has taken place. The people are not longer swearing — a vice common before the visions. People are praying and attending Mass for at least three hours a day.

Secondly, the visionaries' lives have radically changed. Even fidgety young Jakov prays and attends Mass for hours a day — a practice most unusual for one so young. They possess a spirituality beyond their years. Their lives are not their own any longer. Pilgrims paw at them almost constantly. They attend interviews that

are long and tiring, answering the same questions over and over again. Yet they never seem to get weary, and they emanate a peace beyond this world through it all.

Finally, the conversions of the multitudes who travel there from every corner of the world is a daily reality. There are long lines for confessions. There are crowds daily for Mass and rosary. Peace and love permeate the atmosphere in Medjugorje.

Let's not get into the supernatural occurrences, real though they are, for two reasons:

1) Opposers of the apparitions can argue that this is a "means that Satan also can utilize."

2) Most importantly, the message of pray-

er, fasting and penance for peace has always been the main focus coming from Medjugorje.

By the way, how does this message subvert that of Fatima?

Finally, consider what Jesus has to say: "By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:16). Would confessions, prayer and fasting, peace that the world cannot give — in short, conversions — be coming from the devil?

Come on, Mr. More, let's not be seduced by evil influences!

Lena Shipley  
East Avenue  
Waterloo

### Disappointed with coverage of Corpus Christi's anniversary

To the editor:

I was very disappointed in the coverage of the 100th anniversary of Corpus Christi Church and School.

Actually, there was no coverage of the celebration. The only coverage was about the bingo issue.

I have been a parishioner of Corpus Christi Church for 28 years and an employee of Corpus Christi School for 11 years.

Both of the Gannett newspapers and the *Courier-Journal* focused on the bingo issue.

Theresa Augsbury  
Garson Avenue  
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: I can't speak for the Gannett papers' editorial decisions, although

it is standard practice to focus on the most newsworthy aspect of an event. For the *Courier-Journal's* part, I should explain that we have only 16 pages a week in which to cover the 161 parishes of the diocese. When a given parish is repeatedly in our pages because it is making news — e.g. the bingo question — it is difficult for a small paper to simultaneously justify more coverage for feature-type events like the anniversary celebration. In the past, in fact, readers have questioned why Corpus Christi is covered as much as it already is.

Nevertheless, I can sympathize with Mrs. Augsbury's feelings. Perhaps in August, around the time of the actual anniversary, we can publish an historical look at Corpus Christi Parish.