

Editorial & Opinion

Assumption celebration captured in a song of love and hope

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Last evening at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Fairport, we celebrated the Feast of the Assumption and also observed the closing of the Marian Year, which was opened 18 months ago by John Paul II.

It was a festive, beautifully prepared celebration that drew not only a number of parishioners from Assumption, but persons from many parishes in the surrounding region. People of all ages came, and it was particularly pleasing to all who were present that families with young children were very much in evidence.

The Gospel proclaimed last night told the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth when they were expecting Jesus and John respectively, and included as its centerpiece the beautiful Canticle of Mary often called the Magnificat.

That powerful hymn is the portion of sacred Scripture which our committee chose to be the concluding words of the first draft of the pastoral letter "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption: A Pastoral Response to the Concerns of Women in Church and Society."

We chose it because it sings in such a timeless manner of the enormous and loving power of God and the dignity and beauty of every human person. It is a song of comfort and of hope.

Mary, the singers, and the song Mary sings are important in our day. The simple fact is that people do need

Along the Way



to be comforted. People do need hope.

We may be the richest, most powerful nation on earth, but there are thousands and thousands among us who live in abject poverty and whose chances of escaping from poverty's clutches without help are slim indeed. Mary's song reminds all ages that the poor and the lowly are precious in God's sight and that God will exalt them. It also should remind all of us that our disposition to care for the poor should always seek to imitate God's.

We recognize as well that large numbers of persons who live lives of relative affluence also need comfort. Emptiness, lack of purpose, boredom, fatigue from the chase and loneliness can lead them to dependence on chemicals, the inability to develop and maintain signifi-

cant relationships, and a general discontent and frustration about what seems to be the emptiness of life.

The reality of Mary's Assumption reminds us that no matter what our societal or personal problems may be, we are never apart from the concern of our gracious and loving God. More importantly, we are never apart from the transforming power of God's Holy Spirit.

We measure the greatness of Mary not in terms of income or power or possessions, but in terms of God's free gifts to her and her courage in receiving them. The power and strength of Mary are manifested not in her desire or capacity to escape from the problems of real life, but in her courageous capacity to love well in all of life's circumstances — even and especially in those which were painful for her.

Her holiness emerges from her fidelity in moments of doubt and confusion, from her courage in moments of suffering, from her intimacy with her son even when he seemed distant from her. She loved well because in all circumstances of her life, she honored the Word of God. She nurtured him inside her, brought him forth into the world and proclaimed him faithfully.

We share that vocation with her — to receive the Word in our hearts — to put flesh on the Word by the way we live and to speak God's Word of love each day that we live.

Peace to all.

Disputes claim about president

To the editor:

Father McBrien in his June 23 column claims that Catholics who have voted for President Reagan have "come up empty-handed on abortion." I disagree.

First of all, and perhaps most important, President Reagan has appointed three U.S. Supreme Court Justices. These justices are more likely to vote on the side of the unborn than justices that would have been appointed by either Jimmy Carter or Walter Mondale.

In addition, the Reagan administration has issued regulations prohibiting tax dollars from going to clinics that counsel or refer for abortions. It has also cut off federal funds to organizations that promote or perform abortions in other countries. The Adolescent Family Life Act is a program providing federal grants to both secular and religious organizations that promote alternatives to abortion. Policies like these and others would very likely not have been pursued if Reagan had not won the election.

Father McBrien urges Catholics "to look under the hood and kick the tires" before voting for the next president. When it comes to Michael Dukakis and the abortion issue there is nothing pro-life "under the hood." According to Dr. John Wilke, president of the National Right to Life Committee, Governor Dukakis "has vetoed every pro-life bill that has come to his desk." According to Voters for Choice and the National Abortion Rights Action League, Governor Dukakis is "a consistent and firm supporter of reproductive rights. He ful-

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ly supports federal funding of abortion services." In the March 24, 1988 issue of the *National Right to Life News*, Don Fedor, a columnist for the *Boston Herald*, was quoted as saying: "I can't think of any Democratic candidate who would be worse on your issue." Vice President Bush is totally opposite Governor Dukakis on the abortion issue. He is opposed to tax funded abortions and supports restoration of legal protection for the unborn.

Contrary to the impression that Father McBrien's column may have left, the November election will be extremely crucial for the future of abortion in our country. For example, the next president will very likely make further appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court. Three Supreme Court Justices that voted in favor of abortion in 1973 are over 80 years old. In a letter to supporters, Dr. Wilke said: "With so much at stake, I cannot over-emphasize the critical need the unborn children have of your personal participation in the '88 election. Believe me, this is one election we cannot sit out!"

Raymond N. Buonemani
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Obsession with Latin ignores three key points

To the editor:

With regard to those obsessed with Latin being the only language able to unify worshippers throughout the world:

1) I just returned from Medjugorje where Mass is celebrated in CROATIAN every eve-

ning. Hundreds of people native to many languages attended these Masses, sang the hymns, and responded in tones louder and more fervent heard in even our all-English Masses. Language was obviously not the unifier — but the deep-seated awareness of the Body and Blood of Christ, and the common bond of love which Catholics because of — again, NOT Latin — but the Eucharist.

2) If we all were honest, we would remember that back in the "Latin-Mass" days we faithful followed the Mass from the *English* pages which faced the Latin ones in our Missals.

3) Jesus spoke Aramaic, not Latin.

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Correction

The source of quotations in William T. Hammill's letter to the editor (C-J August 11, 1988, "Reader finds little wheat among chaff in Father McBrien's column") was inadvertently eliminated during editing. Mr. Hammill quoted "The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church," by Hans Urs von Balthasar, pg. 97, Ignatius Press, 1986.

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

choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions of the letter writers.

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.

PEACE



Pro-life protester explains 'rescues'

To the editor:

Germany, May 1941 — SS Troops continue their roundup of Jews. Destination: Concentration Camps and Death. Across the street a small band of Christians carry signs and protest the Nazi extermination of the Jews. One man dares to speak, and as he passes this group on the way to torture and death, he screams, "Your protests mean nothing; we die today. Save us now!"

Rochester, May 1988 — Forty-two Christians entered an Abortion Clinic. Their bodies were the last barrier between the abortionist's knife and an innocent child.

Were these people wrong? Unlike the Jews, the unborn child cannot be seen, but he screams just the same, "I die today. Save me now!"

I am a Catholic who professes to follow Christ, and live His Gospel, yet a year ago I dared not break the law, even for my Lord. On May 21, I was one of those 42 Christians who broke the law to save a child and mother. What changed me?

A careful reading of Scripture will reveal that God holds all life sacred; furthermore He commands us to stop the slaughter of the innocents and save the mothers from destroying their lives.

Consider the Gospel accounts of the Incarnation of Jesus, I ask, at what point could Mary have aborted Him? There is no difference between the conception and development of Jesus, and that of each of us. Psalm 139, verses 13-14 reads: "Truly you have formed my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I give you thanks that I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Proverbs 24, verses 11-12 quite clearly states God's demands: "Rescue those who are being dragged to death, and from those tottering to execution withdraw not. If you say, 'I know not his man!' does not he who tests hearts perceive it? He who guards your life knows it, and he will repay each one according to his deeds."

St. Paul states explicitly that we must choose between God's law and man's law. If we be-

lieve abortion is murder, then we must act like it's murder, and do all in our power to stop it. There can be no more vacillating. It's either God's law or man's law. Where do you stand? Will you say before your Judge, "But I didn't know?" It won't wash. Now is the time for decision and action. Save our babies today, for tomorrow is too late. Will you join us? If you wish to contact any of the five Catholics involved in the Highland Hospital Rescue, please call (716)458-5628 days and 458-7257 evenings.

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Lauds Auburnian columnists

To the editor:

The *Courier-Journal* is indeed fortunate to have two gifted columnists, Fathers Albert Shamon and Paul Cuddy. Both preach the word of God, each one in his individual style.

Father Albert is without a doubt one of the best theological experts on the Gospels and the Scriptures. Father Paul, in my opinion, is more of a home-spun writer. His travels from rectory to rectory and places around the world are a joy to read. If you notice he always manages to weave into his columns the word of God in his own inimitable style.

The readers of the *Courier-Journal* are also lucky to have two diverse yet good religious writers to read every week. How lucky we are! I hope they never get replaced.

To the readers who do not know either of these two priests, they are both from Auburn. Priests who reach out to God's children and not talk down to them. Auburn is proud of these two priest products and I am quite sure that our diocese feels the same way I do about them — and fellow Auburnians also.

Father Albert and Father Paul, keep up the good work!

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