

## Editorial & Opinion

# Recalling times of transition amid God's constant love

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Sunday evening.

I have just come upstairs to my room after a very pleasant supper here at the rectory with two dear friends. We put a substantial dent in the rather large bowl of chili left for our weekend enjoyment by Mary, who is kind enough to cook for our household four nights a week. We put together a salad, chopped some onion to add to the chili, and prepared some garlic toast. Such things always taste good to me, but the delight was heightened by the friendship over which the food was shared and, just a touch, by the sound of the rain falling outside.

It may be the contentment of the meal that brings me to such peace this evening. But I am sure it also is the opportunity I have at this unusually quiet hour to remember the events of the past week and to let their significance sink in a bit more.

Among the events that come to me now is the chance I had to spend time with Angelo Caligiuri and Jerry Sullivan, two priests from Buffalo whom I first met here at St. Bernard's and in Rome 30 years ago. I also remember sneaking over to Canisius College to meet my niece Jane on the day of her arrival there. (One day I swear I will write a column in which I'll try to describe how she managed to squeeze four tons of material into a space designed to hold no more than 34 pounds. How she did it, I'll never know. But do it she did!)

I suppose I could list several other events, some

## Along the Way



ministerial and some more personal, that occurred this week. But I stay with the supper with friends, the reunion with the two priests and Jane's first day at college, too. The memory of these events elicits in my spirit a most consoling and encouraging realization that life means change and growth. And I know that it is important for me to remember that.

That theme was expressed in a column I wrote several weeks ago when I shared with you a conversation I had with my spiritual director. I mentioned that his encouragement then was to find time daily to do nothing other than to be aware of God's quiet, gracious and merciful love. I have tried to be faithful to that good counsel since then, and have found growing in my heart what I think of as an increasing awareness that God does not wind us up and set us off to fend for ourselves on jour-

neys of faith. Rather, God stays with us and nourishes us in the power of the Holy Spirit, molding and shaping us through our own freedom and in the events of daily living all through life.

I suppose that sense of God with us came to me strongly at supper tonight because the friends with whom I shared the meal are people whom I find life giving — to me and to others.

In Jerry and Angie I find a continual maturing and expansiveness which I believe are the fruits of their friendship with God and their capacity to find the God-given goodness in the people among whom and with whom they exercise their ministry.

Jane reminds me in a focused way that just as she is at a moment of special transition in life as she leaves home for the first time, so each of us every day is called to leave the secure to walk with and into the unknown. Normally, the call will be more subtle than it is for Jane just now, but hardly less real. When I was 30 I thought that life at 50 would be much less exciting and challenging than it was then. I know now that I was wrong. I do confess to you that there are some moments, even some days, when I wish I had been right. But most of the time I am very glad that I was wrong. And tonight I am grateful to my supper friends, to Angie and Jerry, and to Jane for so beautifully reminding me of that lesson about change.

Peace to all.

## Letters

### Appreciated letter

To the editor:

I would like to thank Michael Mangione for his August 4 letter ("Are covenant's provisions being ignored?") concerning the Episcopal-Roman Catholic Covenant. I am an Episcopalian married to a Roman Catholic. We were also present at the beautiful, emotional Pentecost ceremony and cried for what it could mean to us as an ecumenical couple and to Christ's Church. So much hope was felt in our bishops' embrace.

The Episcopal Church has been faithful in our prayers for Bishop Matthew Clark. We are honored to pray for such a holy, loving man during each service. We also pray for unity that "All may be one."

I have been to several Roman Catholic eucharistic services since the covenant ceremony and have only heard one priest pray for Bishop Burrill. It saddens my heart to think of what could be if only both churches would read and live the covenant. Why is it receiving so little attention? Be assured my daily prayers include both Bishop Matthew and Bishop William.

Susan Collins Kohlmeier  
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PEACE



## Enjoys Medjugorje coverage, questions remarks about prayer vs. action

To the editor:

You recently published an item about a priest who was "agonizing" over the uncharitable response to his study of the phenomenon of the Medjugorje apparitions (C-J July 14: "Author in 'agony' over book"). Do you have any identifying information about Father Ivo (Sivric), such as an address? I would like to send him a supportive note.

Your coverage of Medjugorje has been excellent. It would be nice, however, if someone would research some of the obvious blanks. For example, *this* Mary, as presented, seems a somewhat pre-Vatican II Madonna. You quoted one of her devotees (C-J June 2: "Medjugorje messages echo worldwide") as saying, "Mary's asking us to go back to the Church of 35 years ago." In other words, the Church

as it was *before* the Holy Spirit moved Pope John XXIII to initiate Vatican II! Did the Spirit make a mistake?

Further on in the same article, you reported that when one of the seers was asked presumably what Mary thought about social ministries, option for the poor, or the resurgence of the theme of liberation from oppression and injustice — this was not the wording but this is the sense that I got out of the question — the girl replied, "Don't talk about it, pray about it." This is indeed puzzling. We know Jesus suggested it was not enough to pray, or as He said, "to say, 'Lord, Lord.'"

We have been praying about inadequate housing for the poor for a long time, but even Jimmy Carter, a man of prayer, has found it necessary in addition to prayer, to both talk

about the problem and to pick up a hammer and begin pounding some nails in order to obtain such housing.

It would be helpful to know to what degree the teachings of Vatican II have been implemented in Yugoslavia. It could also throw some light on the matter if we knew how enthusiastic the Franciscans there are about these teachings, for one would assume that they are the ones who translate the children's conversations into English for our enlightenment. If their emphasis is different from ours, indeed, if their focus is that of the Church of 35 years ago, the anomalies become more understandable.

The most difficult to understand is the ex-

citement over rosaries turning to gold color. If they turned to gold, it would be symbolic of the kind of thing God does, but gold *color*, which the dictionary defines as tinsel or false show?

Do continue your coverage, and if possible if you can get Father Ivo to write an article or share some portion of his book.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** With the exception of the article we ran on diocesan teens who made a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, all of our information on the apparitions there has come from NC News Service in Washington.

## Are seniors alone in understanding significance of Eucharist?

To the editor:

On entering a Protestant church, one does not see people genuflect, nor does one see kneelers in the pews or a votive light. Why, then, do Catholics genuflect, kneel at Mass, and always have a burning candle beside the tabernacle? The answer is simple, or is it?

Catholics believe in the actual presence of God Himself in the tabernacle in the form of bread — God of all creation, thanks to Christ and the transubstantiation effected by the priest at Mass.

Genuflection, then, must be an act of worship, an act of reverence, an act of humility. Why is it, then, that lately, I have observed

people entering pews before Mass without genuflecting, their children imitating their parents, some teens chewing gum with their hands in their jeans? It seems that only the senior generation continues this reverential practice.

Even some priests, in their haste to consolidate the host in one ciborium following communion, frequently fail to genuflect after closing the doors of the tabernacle.

Could it be that the new generation of Catholics is not taught, or fails to comprehend the significance of the Holy Eucharist?

It's a mystery to me.

Kenn Scullin  
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