

Editorial & Opinion

Realizing God's love in individual, community struggles

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

If you are thinking about some routes for your fall-foilage tours, let me suggest that you think about heading to Newark and Penn Yan. You will encounter not only the splendor of nature, but you also will be able to enjoy the renewed beauty of our parish churches in both towns. The people of St. Michael's, Newark, and St. Michael's, Penn Yan, have made a considerable investment of material and spiritual gifts to renovate their churches, both of which are very much worth seeing.

I had the privilege of presiding at the rededication in Newark last Sunday and will be in Penn Yan this Sunday for their celebration. There is something altogether special about the rite of dedication for a church. The people come to such celebrations with great enthusiasm because they have put their hearts into the project. More than that, the words, symbols and action of the rite say rich things about the love and care of God and about the beauty of God's beloved people, namely about us. There is a strong sense in the assembly that God's love is ever-renewing and calls us always to a deeper appreciation of who we are, of who we are meant to become.

The renewal events at the two parishes may be especially significant for me these days because of other renewal experiences in which so many of us are involved. I think of all the work so many are doing to develop in-

Along
the Way

tegrated catechetical plans in all parts of our diocese and, within that context, of the work being done to renew our Catholic-school apostolate.

I am mindful also of the work to be done during the next month on preparing our parish communities to plan for new forms of ministry in the years ahead. I have asked parish leaders of every parish in the diocese to attend one of 11 meetings on this theme to be held in locations all around our diocese.

The project centering on catechetical plans and Catholic schools and the work in preparation for changing ministerial patterns are as much projects of renewal as are the renovation of the two parish churches men-

tioned above. All three call us away from the familiar, tried and proven ways, and lead us toward something quite new.

It is not easy for individuals to go through changes like that, nor is it easy for communities to do so. But it is the history of the Church that we respond with courage and generosity to the changing circumstances of life and to the Church's developing self-awareness.

If you are invited to participate in these endeavors or any others like them, I hope that you will respond positively. In any case, I hope that you will follow them with interest and support them with your prayers. Our work will be more substantial and our decisions more fruitful to the degree that all in the community contribute to them.

I have said to you often that I am always impressed by the generosity, talent and depth of commitment of the people of this diocese. The levels of all three have been high throughout our history, and they are high now. It is that fact that makes me confident that we will succeed in the work I have mentioned above.

What makes me joyful is the confidence that because we have struggled together in faith we will have a deeper awareness of God's enduring love for us and a greater sense of ourselves as a holy and blessed people. Peace to all.

Letters

Church leaders forget
laity's reasoning skills

To the editor:

Eighty-five years ago, a small group of nuns arrived in New York City from Ireland, bringing with them a servant who had been with them all her life. No one in that religious community had attempted to teach the girl to read and write, even though — or maybe because — the sisters themselves were at least literate if not well-educated. The servant girl was my grandmother, Anna McMahon.

Fortunately for us, the leaders of the Catholic Church in this country had long since realized that the survival of the Church in America depended in large part on the acceptance of millions of Catholic immigrants into American society. Such acceptance depended in turn on the education of those immigrants. The educational system devised to meet that need ultimately succeeded not only because it taught us elements of our faith, but because it taught us how to think.

It is ironic, then, that in the controversy over the film *The Last Temptation of Christ* it seems as if present-day Church leaders were wishing that their predecessors hadn't succeeded quite so spectacularly. It would be so much easier to convince us not to see the film if we were still a Church of ignorant immigrants.

Anna McMahon died without learning to read and write. She would have been ill-equipped to deal with the issues and questions raised in Scorsese's film. But her granddaughter wasn't denied an education. I'll use those reasoning skills so painstakingly passed along to me by the sisters, priests and brothers who were my teachers, when I see the film.

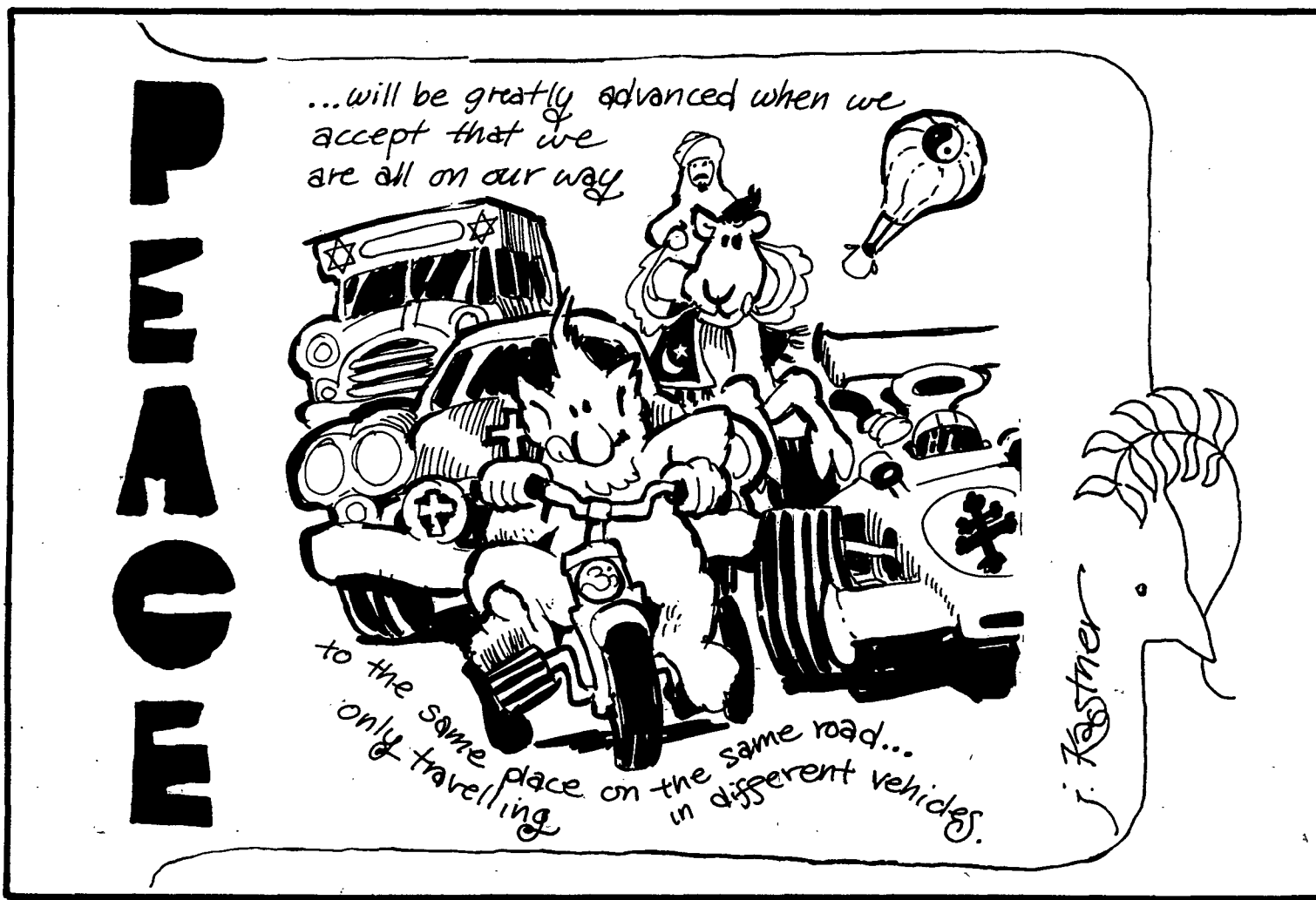
Tracy Monahan
Wood Street
Ithaca

Medjugorje pilgrimage calls
couple to the center of faith

To the editor:

We returned this week from a pilgrimage to Medjugorje. Contrary to the report that Mary is calling the Church back to 35 years ago, we found Mary's message calling us to the center of our faith — her Son. We were called to adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist, to prayer, to fasting and to reconciliation. The sun spinning and rosaries turning to gold, which we saw, paled in comparison to the spirit of sacrifice and faith of the parishioners of the Church of St. James, to the reverence of the pilgrims — especially the young people — and the spirit of peace in the valley. Medjugorje is truly a holy place where Mary calls our attention not to herself, but to her Son, Jesus.

Bill and Diane Knittle
Parkridge
Pittsford



Writer says paper slants coverage toward liberal views

To the editor:

Your article "Lack of analysis flaws pastoral, evaluators say" (C-J Sept. 1) has several characteristics which deserve some attention and illumination:

1) Only one side is examined in the discussion of the merits and flaws of the pastoral letter. I say this because it is obvious that the comments of the critics emanate from those who favor the themes of the letter.

Shouldn't the objective of fair reporting be inclusion of pro and con sides to an issue? Ignoring the opinions and views of the many Catholics who disagree with the basic premises of the letter is a form of news censorship hardly befitting the aegis of a diocesan newspaper.

2) The issue — increased inclusion of women even to the extent of ordination — is after all a Catholic concern. It is not just the concern of a specific group like the local members of the Women's Ordination Conference. It is the concern of all Catholics. Is it necessary then to turn for advice to the provost of Colgate Rochester Divinity School or the head of the Harley School? Their fields of expertise do not necessarily qualify them for evaluation roles in matters which pertain to strictly Catholic dogma, practices and functions.

In conclusion, may I offer as a "balancing" alternative to your article an excerpt from a document (entitled) "Affirmation for Catholic Women," issued by Women for Faith and Family: "We therefore also reject as aberrant innovation peculiar to our times and our society the notion that priesthood is the 'right' of any human being, male or female. Further-

more, we recognize that the specific role of ordained priesthood is intrinsically connected with and representative of the begetting creativity of God in which only human males can participate. Human females, who by nature share in the creativity of God by the capacity to bring forth new life, and, reflective of this essential distinction, have a different and distinct role within the Church and society form that accorded to men, can no more be priests than men can be mothers."

It just seems to me your paper is discharging its responsibility to a great part of the diocese in a very meager way. You are not representing the "conservative" Catholic or Christian view on many issues. That is your responsibility whether you deem it so or not. This issue of women's ordination is a good example. Prominent coverage has been extended in your recent issues of August 25 and September 1. There is the other side, and you are far from giving equal or fair coverage to their cogent positions. I realize that Bishop Clark is an enthusiastic supporter of women's ordination, but does that give him the right to suppress dissent from Catholic organizations that differ from his opinions?

I call upon the bishop to reconsider his policies regarding publication of his — our — diocesan newspaper and rectify its deficiencies that leave many of its readers with the feeling that they have not had a "full meal!"

William T. Hammill
Clardale Drive
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: First of all, let me reiter-

ate that never during my three years and more with the Courier-Journal has Bishop Clark demanded, asked or even subtly hinted that the news should be slanted to correspond to whatever views he may hold.

Now, Mr. Hammill is largely correct in his assessment of journalistic ethics. When a reporter actively solicits views on a given topic, he or she is required by journalistic ethics to present both sides of the issue. But the September 1 article to which he responds was coverage of an event, which is altogether a different matter.

Normally speaking, when a reporter covers an event, he or she deals exclusively with the material presented therein, largely disregarding outside input. And in most cases it would be biased to do otherwise, because bringing in outside material would misrepresent the event. The forum in question drew an audience composed almost totally of people who, as Mr. Hammill puts it, "favor the themes of the letter" and, not surprisingly, their views were the ones presented. Although opponents of the pastoral could have attended and voiced their views, they did not.

Nevertheless, conservatives may have a point in thinking that their views on the pastoral — and/or other timely issues — are not receiving adequate coverage. If so, they might consider participating in forums being sponsored by others or staging substantive study sessions of their own. One hopes that everyone concerned could learn from such gatherings.

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