

Editorial & Opinion

Students' views on leadership offer food for reflection

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

I was not able to stay for as long as I would have liked, but the time I spent with the students at Nazareth Academy yesterday morning was delightful and most encouraging.

There were two parts to the visit. The first was a celebration of the Eucharist in the school auditorium. That celebration was a joy for many reasons, principle among which were the obvious care with which all had prepared for the liturgy and the high-spirited reverence with which it was celebrated. The young women proclaimed the word, and sang and moved in a beautifully prayerful way. One student reader offered a brief reflection on the beauty and strength of the gifts possessed by the students, and encouraged all of her sisters to make those gifts available to the community for the good of all.

The second segment of the morning visit followed the liturgy. It has become the custom in recent years on the occasion of such visits that I meet with a group of student leaders for orange juice, coffee, pastry and some conversation. I don't recall exactly how many students were present, but there were the officers of the Student Senate; the officers of the senior, junior and sophomore classes; and members of the Perosian Choir, the Black Students' Union and the National Honor Society. The

Along the Way



freshman class has not yet held their election of officers — which is delayed until the new students become better acquainted with one another — but they were very well represented by two young women who participated in liturgical ministries earlier.

The majority of the time I was able to share with them was taken up by the students' thoughtful responses to my questions: "What excites you most or makes you most hopeful about this community as you begin this year of leadership?"

I wish now that I had taped their responses to preserve not only their words but also something of the enthusiasm and humor with which they spoke.

They talked about the beauty of the gifts possessed

by their sisters and about their desire as leaders to do all in their power to help people rejoice in them. They spoke about the patience leaders need to have with others and with themselves when things don't go just as everyone hoped they might. They recognized that they can not give orders, but that they need to persuade and encourage others if the good things they hope for are to be realized. And they seemed to have at least an implicit realization that — if they serve those goals faithfully through the year — then they, as well as the students they represent, will both be much enriched.

The prayerful participation of students in the liturgy was a great encouragement and so was the discussion with student leaders. With them I realized once again how many gifted and generous young people we have among us. Through their discussion of leadership and what that means to the life of the community and to their own lives, I found new encouragement and fresh food for my own reflection. My daily call differs from theirs in many ways, but I was happy to realize through the exchange just how much we have in common.

So I thank the young women of Nazareth Academy for the good gifts they gave me yesterday, and in doing so I acknowledge the giftedness and generosity of all of the young people of our diocese.

Peace to all.

Letters

Says Catholics should disregard IRS rules

To the editor:

Father Richard McBrien adopted the recommendation of the toothless U.S. Catholic Conference to not have any bishop, pastor or diocesan newspaper endorse either presidential candidate ('Essays in Theology,' C-J Sept. 1). His particular biased fear was that an endorsement of pro-life Bush might jeopardize the Church's tax-exempt status. An obscure group, Abortion Rights Mobilization, is attempting to blackmail the Church into silence by demanding the enforcement of guidelines of the Internal Revenue Code.

Back in the early 1940s, the Dutch bishops were faced with a similar dilemma, except money wasn't an issue. The bishops and priests were outspoken on the treatment of Dutch Jews. For their efforts, they received their crown in heaven. Hopefully soon, they'll be canonized on earth. Their defense of truth wasn't compromised by worldly trivia or intimidation.

The same truth must be expounded from every Catholic pulpit and newspaper in this land. With 20 million innocent already dead, we can't afford to let the holocaust go on for another four more years — or longer with a Dukakis Supreme Court. Since money is only a temporal treasure, losing our tax-exempt status would be a small cross to carry.

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On blasphemy, man in pew wiser than so-called experts

To the editor:

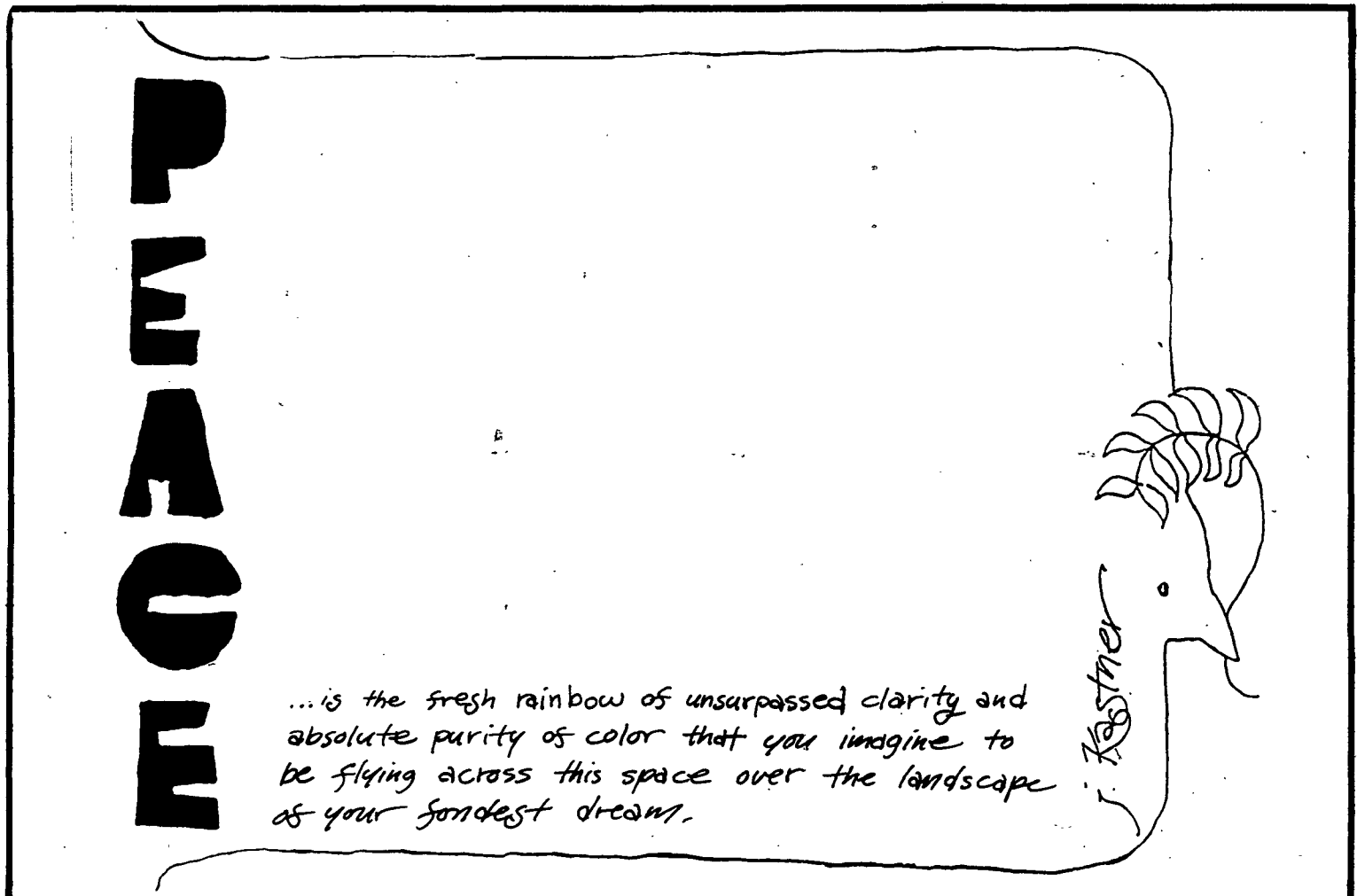
According to my 1980 *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, blasphemy is the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God. Isn't it amazing that the average man in the pew knows this instinctively, while the experts are so overwhelmed with "critique" that they lose sight of the essence of the disorder presented by the Scorsese film?

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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



'Last Temptation' merely latest episode in Hollywood's moral decline

To the editor:

As an ex-actor, a graduate of the Catholic University of America in speech and drama, a holder of a master's degree in communication arts from the New York Institute of Technology, a past intern at ABC Television and a former writer of TV commercials, I am compelled to speak out on the mistitled "Last Temptation of Christ." A true title would have been "The Latest Temptation from Hollywood."

Before graduating from Catholic University in 1971, I had given up my desire to act. The stage and screen were becoming peep shows of passion and violence. Today more and more professional actors are required to perform and, thereby, promote lustful and mean acts or else not be employed.

Gone are the scripts written for Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart. Expletives are not deleted; they are added to achieve lower ratings,

from "G" to "PG," from "PG" to "PG-13." Sex and violence are kept just above the lowest depths of the "X-rated" gutter in order to rank the coveted "R." It seems that the Roman colosseum has shrunk to the size of the local theater or TV room.

Producers, writers and actors are building vast international audiences of voyeurs, which Webster's defines in two ways: "one who habitually seeks sexual stimulation by visual means" and "a prying observer who is usually seeking the sordid or the scandalous." Moviegoers become peeping Toms, watching and waiting in the dark for the next obscene or vicious word, gesture or act.

Where have all our heroes gone? Perhaps they were locked out when Rhet Butler slammed the door. In today's Hollywood, the good guy rarely does only good. Is good, like beauty, only in the eye of the beholder? The good guy sleeps around with women, men or both. He lies, steals, cheats. He uses machine guns and condoms. He is macho; he is a wimp. He is not a Christian!

And so it is with the alleged christ in "Last Temptation." He is not Christ. He is a Hollywood fantasy, dredged from an hallucinating novel. He is an anti-christ so ideal from the giant screen and Dolby sound.

This film is a voyeur's dark dream, rich in blood and guts, blasphemy and sex. Coming attractions could read, "Come and see the christ that never was!!! A last supper with blood coming from the lips of the apostles!!! An alleged christ has a sexual fantasy while dying painfully on the cross and he is naked!!! A demon-possessed non-christ with Satan in-

side him!!! A false christ who does not really know who he is!!! Come and see this non-christ rip his heart out for all to see!!!

Sound like Hollywood? It is, and it is a lie! It is writing, acting, directing and producing at their worst, and voyeurism at its zenith.

When I studied and worked to become an actor, I sought truth, charity, hope and humor in the roles I played. This movie fails on all counts. Unfortunately, "Last Temptation" won't be the last temptation from Hollywood. It is merely the "Latest Temptation from Hollywood."

Catholics and all men of good will can only expect pride from the proud, lust from the lustful, lies from liars. Catholics do not expect Christianity from atheists. But we can pray for them; we can expose their lies to the light of truth and, most importantly, we can live as true followers of Christ. We can "be humble of heart" as Jesus called us to be, and we can repent when we fail. We can imitate Christ who came "to serve and not to be served."

Witness the effect the real Christ is having on the world through the work of Mother Teresa and through the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, who care for destitute cancer victims. Countless priests, brothers, sisters, deacons and laymen are trying to live all of the Church's teachings. Each one must expect humiliation in order to be more like the most humble of all, Jesus. That was how it was in the days of the amusements of the gladiators; that is how it is today.

George Morton
Vice president

Catholics United for the Faith