

Signs of Easter life call us to witness

On this snowy, cold May afternoon, I sit in the quiet of Sacred Heart Rectory thinking about life in our local church and especially of the ways I have been privileged to experience it during this Easter Season.

I think of the most impressive gathering here this morning of men and women from all over our diocese who were baptized or received into the church at the Easter Vigil in their respective parishes. They brought to our celebration an almost palpable sense of joy. And they were received with a beautiful warmth by those who came to celebrate with them.

I remember as well the exhilarating Peace Day Celebration on Friday, which brought together at the Church of the Annunciation the beautiful children from four of our schools: Annunciation, St. John's on Humboldt Street, St. Andrew's and St. Joseph's of Penfield. In song and dance, motion and color, prayer and sharing, the young people from these schools signaled their commitment to be peacemakers in a world that so deeply yearns to be free of violence. One child from each of the classes in each of those schools was recognized as a peacemaker by his or her faculty and fellow students. I was privileged to present

each award and was deeply touched by the holiness of our children.

Also on my mind this day are the Sisters of the Cenacle who celebrated their feast day yesterday. We gathered in their chapel with many of their friends as they observed the principle feast of their congregation and renewed their own commitment to religious life. They are a community of women who remind us that there is more to life than endless activity. They speak to us with care about the best part of ourselves, of our capacity to grow in freedom and love.

On Friday evening the community at St. Bernard's Institute were the people who spoke to me of Christ's care and presence in the community. People who explore our wonderful tradition, appreciate it deeply and find new words in which to express it to the people of today are those who truly conserve all that should be cherished and passed along to those who follow us. We are blessed to have in our local church the resources for theology and ministry offered to us by St. Bernard's.

Ithaca College's parish community celebrated the confirmation of 19 of her students and the reception of one young

woman into our faith community on Saturday evening. Among the 19 were students from four countries and from every one of the eight dioceses in our state. Our community is blessed with deeply talented and committed young people, and we should never lose sight of that.

I could continue listing events of this kind, which are occurring all over the diocese. I won't do that, but I encourage you to think about the ways in which you have been touched in this season by signs of Easter life.

Our Easter call to contemplate such signs of life is not meant to draw us away from an awareness of the pain and sorrow that is all around us. Rather it is for our strength and is meant to foster our recommitment to witness to Christ in the world. The strength will help us to be peacemakers and reconcilers in a world that grows more violent every day. It will help us to cherish and preserve life in all of its stages so that no one need destroy or injure any human life in order to deal with human problems. It will help us walk with people who seek freedom from addictions and dependencies. Easter life carries with it a powerful and inescapable call to be concerned for the lives of others. And, I believe, that call re-



Along The Way

lates not only to the needs of individuals but to the structures and policies by which people's lives are significantly affected.

If the task seems huge, please remember the promise of Christ to be with us always in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Peace to all.

Priest 'shocked' by quote about abortion, covenant

To the editor:

In a recent article (*Courier*, March 16: "Small communities pioneer covenant course") your newspaper reported about local diocesan efforts to implement the "covenant" signed by Bishop Clark and Episcopal Bishop Burrill. The article mentions several shared ministry experiences, which could bring about a closer collaboration of the two churches and be an aid to ecumenical dialogue.

However, two recent events were mentioned as having possible negative effects on the ecumenical effort. The first was Bishop Burrill's public pro-choice stand on abortion and the second was the election of Bishop Harris, first woman Episcopal Bishop. Both, of course, are contrary to Catholic teaching and practice.

Therefore, I was shocked to read that Margery Nurnberg, Director of the Department of Ecumenical Affairs for the Catholic Diocese of Rochester, believes that these two issues in no way harm the Episcopal/Catholic dialogue. As to the first issue, Ms. Nurnberg says abortion "has never been an ecumenical issue." Says Who?

The Catholic Church has constantly taught that abortion is murder, the unjust taking of human life, and until *Roe vs. Wade* (1973) this position was held by all Christian denominations. A change of

heart about this teaching on the part of a denomination or local bishop would at the very least, create another issue that divides rather than unites.

Likewise the election of Bishop Harris has only happy ecumenical results for Nurnberg. She says Bishop Harris' election makes it "even more imperative to dialogue in view of our responsibilities." Whatever that means. Yet, this very issue prompted emergency communications from Pope John Paul to the Episcopalian world leadership prior to her ordination. He warned of the serious setback the ecumenical dialogue would receive.

How can Bishop Harris' election possibly be good for ecumenism? She has openly supported homosexual marriages, pro-choice for abortions and of course women's ordination. In fact such recent pastoral decisions have distanced the Episcopal Church from her own tradition, as worldwide Episcopal debate will testify.

The fact remains, two parties espouse as true, contradictory positions on such fundamental issues as the sacredness of human life and the priesthood. Where does Ms. Nurnberg propose we go from here? Forward, of course, but not without added difficulties as a result of these events.

Father Tim Horan
St. Michael's Church
Newark



Ukrainian Catholic priest urges Corning to end sister-city relationship

To the editor:

Despite glasnost and perestroika there continues to be many recent, ongoing, flagrant abuses of basic human rights by the Soviet government and officials of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Ukraine. The Soviets agreed to observe these rights in the U.N. Universal Charter of Human Rights, Helsinki Agreements, Vienna Accords.

I cite a few examples. For a week prior to a meeting on human rights and support for the Armenian earthquake victims in Lviv on December 10, 1988, Lviv was placed under military siege. The crowd of 10,000 at the meeting was dispersed by Deputy Mayor Ivan Nikolaevich Panciuk of Lviv, who on October 1, 1988, signed a sister city pact with Mayor John Kostolansky of Corning. At the same time Deputy Mayor Panciuk refused the Ukrainian support of the earthquake victims of Armenia while later in a letter thanking Mayor Kostolansky in a letter for the American sup-

port. Many at that meeting were arrested.

On January 22, 1989, Metropolitan Nikodim, hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church in Lviv had the poetess Iryna Kalynetz arrested as one of the members of the initiative committee to establish the Marian Society, compassion because she asked him to hold a prayer service for the children of Chernobyl and Armenia on the 70th anniversary of the reunification of Ukrainian lands. He had her arrested.

On May 12, 1989, again Deputy Mayor Ivan Nikolaevich Panciuk of Lviv had the Special Forces, (or) "Black Hundreds," brutally disperse a crowd of 100,000 people of Lviv, over one-tenth of the population. Over 300 were arrested.

I demand that the Corning-Lviv sister committee bring this to the immediate attention of their sister city of Lviv, including Deputy Mayor Panciuk and Metropolitan Nikodim, and demand that they immediately stop this barbaric behavior, these continuing flagrant violations of basic God

given human rights.

And if they refuse, I demand that the Corning sister committee immediately break off their relationship and sister city pact with Lviv. Otherwise they will be acting as silent accomplices in continuing to condone this barbaric behavior and as such will be held responsible in the eyes of God.

If you do not break your relationship then you in effect will be saying to the So-

viet and Russian Orthodox officials that we are still willing to be your friends even though you continue to behave in such an uncivilized manner in a civilized society.

In the name of truth and justice and in the name of God, I ask that this be done.

Rev. George Lukachyk, Pastor
St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church
Elmira Heights

Current pro-life campaign demands concentrated effort

To the editor:

Regarding *Catholic Courier* article of March 30: "Bishop denounces death penalty." Article states that delegates from New York State Catholic Conference and the eight dioceses of New York State met with representatives to discuss the death penalty, public assistance grants, and school aid for removing asbestos. Certainly these are important issues but when and where is such lobbying being held regarding legislative elements of the pro-life

issue? Why is it that the lay diocesans are doing the letter writing, the phoning, and the calling on our New York State legislators regarding Medicaid funding for abortion and regarding parental consent?

This year the pro-abortion people are fighting hard to keep their lead and God knows we pro-lifers need all the help we can get and we strongly feel we should be getting more help from the diocese.

Mary Studier
Mosley Road Rochester

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