

# A week filled with diocesan and state business

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

I write these words from Waterford this morning, the day after Mothers' Day. I came here Saturday afternoon to celebrate the day with my mother and to celebrate three birthdays. My nieces, Grace and Mary Ellen, celebrated their 21st and 18th birthdays, respectively, on the 13th, and my friend Tom Powers celebrated his yesterday. We all gathered at my sister's and brother-in-law's home for an indoor picnic. It was, as it always is, a wonderful treat to be with family.

When I finish this column, I am going to Albany to sign an agreement with Bishop Hubbard, which I hope will be the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship between St. Bernard's Institute and the Diocese of Albany. After careful negotiations, we have constructed an arrangement whereby interested people in the Albany area can pursue courses and degrees offered by St. Bernard's. These courses will be taught at Albany's Pastoral Center, by Albany-based professors and occasionally by professors from Rochester. Arrangements have been made for students in the Albany program to use the libraries at

Siena College in Loudonville and St. Anthony on the Hudson in Rensselaer. We are hoping that this endeavor will be of great benefit to the Diocese of Albany and St. Bernard's Institute. Please pray for that intention.

Early tomorrow morning, Bishop Hubbard and I will leave for the Catholic Center in New York City to meet with our six counterparts from the other dioceses in our state. We eight bishops form the Executive Committee of our state Catholic conference and meet twice a year to advance the work of the conference. We'll be dealing with a range of issues including aid to education, asbestos problems, the death penalty, abortion and substance abuse. We will also have the opportunity for the kind of private conversation and experience and sharing which are often the most interesting and useful parts of such meetings.

I will be back in Rochester on Wednesday for a budget meeting, and that session will be the last step in constructing the 1989-90 budget. We began some budget reform this year. I believe we have made some good progress on it and look forward

to continuing improvement over the next two years.

I have a confirmation in Caledonia-Mumford Wednesday evening. On Thursday, I will be in Syracuse for a meeting of the New York State Catholic Conference's Public Policy Committee. We meet quarterly to develop strategies and share ideas about the broad range of legislative issues that have particular significance for the Roman Catholic community of New York state.

Thursday is the day I try to keep for myself, but when the Public Policy Committee interferes with that, as it does four times a year, I reserve Friday as a day of rest.

This week is unusual in that I am away from the diocese more than I usually am, but it is very much like most others in the variety of issues and concerns that will be a part of the week's agenda and in the great number of people I will be privileged to meet. I find all of that quite stimulating and interesting, but I confess to being very happy that Thursday (or this week on Friday) I'll be home.

Peace to all.



## Along The Way

## Questions Episcopal bishop's viewpoint

To the editor:

In his recent article (March 16: "Small communities pioneer covenant course") *Catholic Courier* staff writer Richard A. Kiley posed the question, "Has the covenant signed last May by Rochester's Roman Catholic and Episcopal bishops ... begun to accomplish what it set out to do?" Perhaps a question more to the point would be, "Is the Truth of the Roman Catholic Church being attacked and undermined in our striving for ecumenism?" Based on Mr. Kiley's well-written article, it would seem that the answer, unfortunately, is an unequivocal "Yes."

He reports that Episcopal Bishop William C. Burrill, when questioned by a Brockport Catholic parishioner, defended his joining the Rochester chapter of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights by stating that "pro-life and pro-choice are both truths that must be upheld ..."

Apparently believing that the best defense is a good offense, the Episcopal Bishop goes on to explain that he is "deeply hurt by (the Catholic Church's unwillingness to accept fully the ministry of women and by the Vatican's tendency to inhibit theological discussion" referring to Fathers Charles Curran and Matthew Fox.

Let's consider first the issue of abortion. The Catholic Church has clearly condemned abortion as an "abomination" and forcefully stated that no right to procure an abortion exists. Bishop Burrill equates a right to procure an abortion with the right of the unborn child to live, both being "truths that must be upheld ..." While the covenant signed by both bishops calls for "a deeper knowledge of and respect for each other's traditions", a Catholic would be hard-pressed to respect the view that having the right to end another's life is a right and a truth to uphold ...

It seems dangerous for Catholic lay people to enter into dialogue with the leader of another faith who holds such an anti-life, anti-Catholic view. The effects of such a dialogue can be seen in the Brockport parishioner's response. Are we, as Catholic lay people, really prepared to defend the teachings of our Church in a dialogue with the learned leaders of other faiths? If we are not, it would seem that we best begin to

equip ourselves through an earnest education in the Conciliar documents, encyclicals, and declarations that explain, promote, and defend Catholic teachings ...

I, for one, do not agree that the Catholic Church is "unwilling to accept fully the ministry of women" or that the Vatican has a "tendency to inhibit theological discussion" and I strongly object to those judgments being passed by Episcopal Bishop Burrill ...

I was also disturbed by the patronizing tone of the Episcopal Bishop's statement following his judgments on Catholic Church teaching: "However, we will continue to pray for your bishop and for the

Roman Catholic Church." One is tempted to ask, "To whom and with what intent?"

Bishop Burrill needs to understand that the Truth of the Catholic Church and her teachings are not reached by consensus, dialogue, or pluralistic compromise. No compromise is acceptable when God's Truth is at stake; we need only consider the lives of the saints and martyrs to remember that ... Perhaps this is where Bishop Burrill and the covenant miss the point.

Edward Gaffney  
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Gorham

EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter has been edited to comply with space limitations.

## Appreciates bishop's statements on concerns of women in church

To the editor:

Not only as a woman in ministry do I applaud Bishop Clark on his call to the Church to reform on women's issues (*Along the Way*, May 4: "Church is called to reform on women's issues"). On a much more basic level, as a human being, I appreciate and support his statements. For I have come to believe that women's issues are at their root human issues.

Women's issues have to do with human dignity, with affirming that divine spark and those God given gifts within each and every one of us. If any of us — male or female, old or young, rich or poor, Black, Yellow, or White — is diminished in any

way, we all suffer. If anyone is oppressed, the freedom we all share is curtailed.

Therefore, I appreciate the authenticity and the courage it takes for Bishop Clark to speak out on any human issue: whether it be compassion for AIDS victims, opposition to the death penalty, support for priests in difficult and changing times, the affirmation of women's gifts, or any other issue of human dignity. We are fortunate to have such a Christ-centered bishop as our leader.

Gloria Ulterino  
Adult and Family Ministry Coordinator  
Good Shepherd Parish  
Henrietta

## Bishop deserves respect, support

To the editor:

Perhaps it is time for the Church of Rochester to come together and work as one with Bishop Clark to preach the Gospel of Christ more effectively. We have had our opportunity to air our differences, ventilate our anger, offer different proposals from the ones recommended by the Bishop and his staff, and, now it is time to move on!

The Bishop is a courageous man who is willing to accept the challenge of the 1980s and '90s. He is addressing difficult issues that will not be easily resolved, but he has the vision and competence to do something about them!

Changes are difficult for many of us within the Church; we protest why not leave us alone, but perhaps we do not have the same information or information that is as accurate as the Bishop and his staff! The Bishop and staff are doing the best they can to minister to the needs of the entire Church of Rochester.

The Bishop deserves our respect, our loyalty, and our support perhaps now more than ever! We should lay aside our own feelings and frustration and give him the help he needs.

Father Bruce F. Ammering  
Blessed Sacrament Church Rochester

## Priest says highlighting ordinations might inspire priestly vocations

To the editor:

In your last several issues, I have read the notices of two ordinations to the priesthood for the Diocese of Rochester. These notices did not seem to warrant much space or attention. They were relegated to back pages.

Perhaps highlighting the joyous occasion of an ordination by more appropriate

newspaper coverage might give young men some inspiration to follow Christ as priests.

Father Robert G. Hilfiker  
Church of Ascension  
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EDITOR'S NOTE: It certainly was not our intention to minimize the significance of priestly ordination. For several months,

we have been planning our next "Insight" section (scheduled for June 8), which will focus in great detail on the question of vocations to the priesthood. Nevertheless, we regret that at the time of the ordinations we failed to make readers aware of these plans, and we apologize for any offense caused by what may have appeared to be disregard for these most happy events.

Catholic Courier



## Applauds spirit evident in plays

To the editor:

At a time when so much has been written concerning the closings of Catholic Schools and the turmoil within parishes, not enough has been written about the good things that are still going on within Catholic Schools. I'm referring to the successful performances of Nazareth Academy's *Camelot* and Aquinas Institute's production of *Sugar*.

Anyone who had the privilege of seeing these shows would agree that they were of professional quality and evidenced immense talent and dedication. I had the extra privilege of watching Aquinas during rehearsals the week previous to their performances. What I witnessed were very dedicated teachers and students who put their whole selves into their work. Mr. Brian Buff, Director of Drama at Aquinas, was incredible in the management of the students there. The experience and enthusiasm he brought to this group was exhilarating!

CONGRATULATIONS Nazareth and Aquinas. I have never had any doubts that my children would attend Catholic Schools and watching your programs just made me more convinced. The values I treasure were so evident in your work:

- a spirit of community
- of sharing and cooperation
- of commitment and effort
- of walking that extra mile and above all, of using the talents God gave you to their fullest extent.

Take note Rochester. We can't afford to lose any more Catholic Schools!

Lucyann S. Ormiston  
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