

Episcopal succession shows change, continuity of faith

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

I had the great joy this past weekend of celebrating the 10th anniversary of my ordination as Bishop of Rochester. On May 27, 1979, 26 of us were ordained by Our Holy Father, John Paul II, at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. We came from 11 countries in five continents that day.

Five of us were from the United States: John O'Connor, Michael Kenny, Thomas Larkin, William Houck and myself. John O'Connor now serves as Cardinal Archbishop of New York. Houck, Kenny and Larkin were ordained for Juneau, Alaska, Jackson, Miss., and St. Petersburg, Fla., respectively. Tom Larkin, who is a native of Mt. Morris and an alumnus of St. Bernard's Seminary, recently retired because of ill health, but I understand he is doing well and I am happy to hear that he plans to come north once again for his summer vacation.

We all came together for the first time for a rehearsal at St. Peter's on the afternoon before the ordination. I had never met those men before that day, but have come to know them quite well in the years since and look forward to trading happy anniversary greetings with them at our National Conference of Catholic Bishops' meeting at Seton Hall University next week. At our spring meeting, which is usually held over an extended weekend, we devote Sunday to a day of prayer together. It will be a special joy to spend that day with my 10th anniversary companions.

Another group that has been on my mind

are my predecessors as Bishop of Rochester. Bishop Joseph L. Hogan has been a great support over these years and has always been ready with that support and his counsel whenever I have asked for it. I also had an opportunity to visit with Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen at his New York City apartment between my arrival here in late June and his death in early December of 1979. And I remember well Sheen's dramatic embrace of John Paul II in the sanctuary of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York when the pope visited us in October of that same year.

I have only vague personal memories of Bishop James E. Kearney. These remain from his visits to St. Bernard's Seminary when I was a student there from September, 1957-June, 1959. But I have learned a great deal about the man who served here for 29 years and who, to this day, is held in deep affection by those who knew him.

I often wonder what it would be like if those four men, plus Bishops Bernard J. McQuaid, Thomas F. Hickey, John Francis O'Hern, Cardinal Edward Mooney, and I could sit down together and talk about what it is like to serve as Bishop of Rochester. It would be great fun and very interesting, I think, to trade stories across generational lines about what life in the church was like, what it meant to be a bishop in this local church and what we learned through the experience.

What would Fulton Sheen have done had he been asked to be the founding Bishop of Rochester in 1868? What would James

Kearney have chosen as his priorities had the beginning of his years of service as our bishop coincided with the end of the Vatican Council? What would Bernard McQuaid's advice to me be if I were able to ask him for it at this very moment?

Perhaps when you and I and they are together in the fullness of God's Kingdom, we will know the answer to such questions as these. In the meantime, we can learn from history and we can seek the guidance of other local churches. But, finally, it is up to us to make the best use we can of the good gifts our God gives to us for the building up of the kingdom and for our own situation.

We live in a time different from the times in which they lived and we are somehow different because of that. But we do profess the same faith and celebrate the same sacraments. We stand deeply in their debt for all they passed on to us. There is no greater act of gratitude to them, I suppose, than to pass on to those who come after us the good things we have received from our mothers and fathers in faith.

If the heritage we celebrate has a different shape from the one celebrated by our ancestors, it is not because the essentials of our faith life have changed. It is because evolving human experience gives rise to new understandings and to new ways of expressing those understandings in human language.

When McQuaid, Hickey, O'Hern, Mooney, Kearney, Sheen, Hogan and I have our first meeting in heaven, we may



Along The Way

need an introductory session or two to develop common understandings about theological terms and pastoral concepts, but it will not take us long to know that we were all privileged to be a part of the growth and development of this magnificent local church.

Peace to all.

Schools situation calls for new, objective analysis

To the editor:

I admire your courage and forthrightness in publishing several letters in the March 23 issue relative to the Catholic schools situation that are directly at odds with or, at the very least, critical of the posture of the Diocesan hierarchy.

Eileen D'Arienza ("Can schools be success without input?") makes a very vivid point when she points out that we see billboards that proclaim "Catholic Schools — A Success Story," while at the same times are closing — drop in enrollments, financial problems, etc. Would that the Education officials had followed with vigor the recommendations of Richard Burke, a national Catholic Schools consultant, whose advice the Diocese saw fit to seek some six years ago. Mr. Burke, among other recommendations, advocates dynamic fundraising efforts, and a constant and exciting PR campaign that "sells" the product — a great Christian education. In each of these two key areas that spells success or failure, each school was left to its own resources — an almost predictable

hopeless case.

As for the Diocese whose philosophy, "To teach as Jesus did ..." and stated top priority of a Christian education for all, something seems to have fallen short of target if they are sincere in these lofty goals. Let me address the financial aspect. In last year's Thanks Giving Appeal literature, a graphic shows \$736,000 for Education. If other information the writer has received is correct, of this figure only \$165,000 went to elementary and secondary schools for tuition assistance. The \$165,000 represents only 4.3 percent of the TGA quota of \$3,850,000, which actually was exceeded. While I realize that there are other educational facets included in the \$736,000 figure, the schools' share represents 22.4 percent of that figure. I shudder to think what it would be if it were not rated "top."

Assuming that the education of our young people is genuinely of prime concern with its influence on such vital concerns as a true Christian education, vocations and the future of the Church, again

something seems to have gone awry. It would seem as though the monetary consideration should be much higher so as to lower tuition costs and thereby make Catholic education available to greater numbers of families. I would even suggest that a meaningful goal be established to accomplish this and either "piggy-back" it with the TGA or run a totally separate campaign for Catholic Schools. A separate fund would very likely be receptive to the general populace as well as business and industry, as suggested by Richard Burke. Many, regardless of religious affiliation, believe in an alternate choice.

With six years of indecision and a plethora of committees that would make Congress squirm with envy or pale by comparison behind us, our schools are still in an ever constant decline. Somebody better take a bold new objective look at the situation. Perhaps there is something left to salvage. Perhaps it's not too late.

Edward J. Sloan
Linden Street
Rochester

Did interviewee attend same convocation as writer?

To the editor:

Within a week of reading your glowing and rosy first-page article on the recent Convocation of the Presbyterate of our diocese about the morale of the priests (*Courier*, April 13: "Local priests weather storm of morale woes"), I ran into Father Gary Tyman whom you had quoted extensively in the article. I simply asked Gary, "Were you at the same Convocation I was?" His response was loud and uproarious laughter. He then explained that he had given those answers prior to the convocation. I assumed, from the response, that much of the material in the article describing the event was written before the event and, as a result, did not accurately portray what happened there.

Yes, there were some bright moments,

specifically Father McNulty's talk and the camaraderie of the priests. There were also some dark moments when the morale of the priests of the diocese was publicly described in frustrating terms by several of the priests present. The frustrations expressed did not center around celibacy or loneliness or overwork, matters often discussed when the topic of priestly morale surfaces. Rather, the frustrations, for the most part, centered around the priests' perceived inability to be part of decisions that affect their lives and their ministry. These decisions are being made at the diocesan level with little or no input from the clergy at large, and yet, these very clergy are being asked to implement such decisions.

This topic, incidentally, is discussed at some length in the recent document,

quoted in your article, from the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Priestly Life. It is a concern expressed by priests across the country. I would humbly submit that we Rochester priests are very much like our brethren in other dioceses and not significantly better in morale, as your article stated.

I write this only to set the record "a wee bit straighter." In using Father Tyman's name in this letter, I am in no way implying his agreement with the opinions expressed herein.

Father John P. Norris
Assumption Church
Fairport

EDITOR'S NOTE: Admittedly, some of the interviewing for this article was done before the convocation occurred; it seemed unlikely that the convocation itself would radically change — whether for better or for worse — the state of priestly morale in the diocese. Nevertheless we, too, were surprised by the "glowing and rosy" tone of comments made to us, and sought out opposing views. But alas, nowhere was heard a discouraging word — on the record, at least.

Catholic Courier



Problems can be solved by centering lives on Lord

To the editor:

Some people look and see a dying church, others look and see a church offering to an increasingly sick world life-giving help with the hope of joy in the present moment and with the hope and awareness of our eternal destiny.

Advances in technology and increasing individual freedoms without ethical regulation, for the most part, has led to situations such as increasing divorce and child neglect, increasing poverty, the drug scene and AIDS, which severely burden the limited resources of the church and all caregivers.

The church's mission and that of all caregivers must be to focus precious limited resources wisely to best use, preventing burnout. The church's mission cannot be to solve all the world's problems, but rather to inspire responsible behavior of those doing wrong and responsible involvement of those preferring to sit on the sidelines while others do the work for them. Surely we can all give up five hours of nostalgic TV watching a week to give some small focused effort to make this world a better place.

Ultimately the solutions to the world's problems will come when we center our lives around the Lord and the way of life He calls us to.

Rob Lighthouse
Whitehouse Drive
Rochester

The *Catholic Courier* 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 choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions of the letter writers.

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