

Vacation's end signals time for meetings and decisions

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

In June I placed before you a question of two about this column. I asked whether I should change from doing a column every week to doing one once a month. And I wondered if such a monthly column should be longer and more formal in its tone and content than the current column is. In the weeks since then, more than 40 of you have been kind enough to write to me, and at least that many have spoken to me about it when we have met along the way.

The vast majority of those who were kind enough to write and speak to me in response to these questions has indicated that they are pleased both with the style and frequency of the column. Almost without exception they asked that it be continued under the present format. Many of those did say that they understood the need for a longer, more formal piece from time to time, but stated their preference that those articles be offered not in place of, but as a complement to the present format.

I thank you very much for your response. In view of it, I have decided to maintain this weekly column. From time to time, I shall offer a longer, more formal piece about pastoral or theological questions of particular interest.

Before I leave this subject, I want to thank you as well for the warmth of your letters and for sharing with me as much as you did about your faith and what it means to you in daily living. I have saved all of those letters and may be referring to them — without identifying the writers — in future columns. Several writers said they preferred the current style of this column because they felt we had become better acquainted through it. I can certainly say the same from my experience of what you have shared with me through your letters.

Today is a day that will be special. I will be enjoying the first of 11 regional meetings with the priests of our diocese. One-half of each of these meetings, which will take place over the course of this month and next, will be devoted to a discussion of vocations. The other half will be devoted to a variety of pastoral and ministerial themes. The inaugural meeting will be with the priests of Tompkins and Tioga counties. Father David Simon, pastor of St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin, graciously invited us to meet at his place at Seneca Lake. We will be meeting there, but Dave will not be with us today because his mother died last evening after a long illness. As you pray for our priests and the

success of our meeting, please pray also for the eternal rest of Helen Simon and for comfort and peace for her family.

On Saturday of this week, we will welcome to the beautiful new parish center at St. Dominic's, Shortsville, the young men whom you have designated and who have accepted my invitation to meet for a day of prayer and discussion about vocations to the diocesan priesthood. Father Tom Valenti told me yesterday that we are expecting about 50 participants on Saturday and that another 30 who are unable to attend that gathering have expressed a desire to pursue the idea in other ways. For this effort, too, I ask your continued prayers.

One final request for prayers: Before I left on vacation, I received the final report from the commission I named to study our Catholic schools and to recommend to me ways in which we might reorganize them for a stronger future. Since my return from vacation, I have spent considerable time studying that report and speaking about it with some of our pastors. In the near future, I will be communicating to you my decision about the direction I will be asking everyone to take. Please pray that we'll do this as a community of faith and affection.

Until next week, peace to all.



Along The Way

Do Catholics live up to call to be a 'royal priesthood'?

To the editor:

As baptized Catholics we are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). Does our life reflect this high calling? What are some signs that we do?

Do we really believe in God and love Him more than anyone or anything else? Do we give a faithful and loving service, full of joy, trust, and confidence as we obey the Commandments, emulate the beatitudes, and fulfill the duties of our state of life in good times and bad?

Do we love all people because they are children of God who are created in His image and likeness? Do we avoid making judgments? Do we pray for our enemies, for all sinners, and for the tragedies in the various media?

We are redeemed because the Blessed Mother said yes. Everyone, but especially Catholics, should be deeply and sincerely devoted to and thankful to her as our co-

mediatrix and co-redemptrix. The daily rosary would be very apropos.

Knowing that the Catholic Church is the body of Christ and is the means established to help us reach heaven, do we accept and believe all that the teaching magisterium proclaims as the right path to follow?

Realizing that we live in a world enmeshed in evil and that even the just man falls seven times a day, do we try to receive the grace and strength of the sacrament of reconciliation at least once a month? Do we actively pursue penance for our many sins of omission and commission?

Do we regard attendance at Mass as a privilege rather than an onerous obligation and we would never even think of missing it on the sabbath? In fact, when we are able, we attend daily mass as well.

Believing that Christ is actually and truly present in the Holy Eucharist, we would never pass a Catholic church without mak-

ing a short visit or acknowledging Him by some outward sign or interior prayer. Do we fully appreciate this great Sacrament and pray before and after our reception?

Do we view our inevitable death as the joyful end of our struggle or as an ominous fear?

Are we people of prayer in the morning, at meals, during the day, and at night? Do we set aside a special time every day to be alone with our God?

Faith without good works is hypocrisy. What are we doing as good works? Do we at least help those in need that cross our path in life with some of our talent, our time, our treasure? Are we cheerful and trusting tithers?

Brevity limits this exposition, but these are some of the very basics that would verify that we are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation."

Jerry J. Paladino
Rock Stream, NY



Catholics encouraged to take active role in anti-abortion fight

To the editor:

The July 3 decision of the Supreme Court, opening the way for the states to restrict abortions, is certainly a great step forward for those working in the pro-life area. And, isn't this the time for those people also concerned about the taking of the lives of innocent babies to think about helping in this important life and death struggle? Call one of the groups listed below and find out what you can do — it may be a lot or a little but it will help.

Project Life of Rochester, Rochester Area Right to Life, Birthright of Rochester, Catholic Family Center or Crisis Pregnancy Center

Mary Studier
Mosley Road
Rochester

Bishop Clark urged to voice support for ongoing table grape boycott

To the editor:

We want to commend, join, and thank Bishop Clark for his recent, public opposition to the death penalty.

When he expressed his support for human rights, we students were in the latter half of our senior year at Aquinas Institute. We, too, were active in supporting human rights: we wrote letters, talked with students and met with state legislators.

Your vocal solidarity, Bishop Clark, was most welcome.

Also during this past year — and during our academic studies — we became involved in another struggle — this time, for justice. Its success depends upon a boycott of California table grapes.

Led by Cesar Chavez, the boycott is an effort to achieve protection from toxic pesticides for farm workers and residents of California's agricultural valley. We are appalled at the pesticide-induced birth

defects, miscarriages, and child cancer clusters occurring throughout California.

And we find unacceptable the health threat posed by pesticides to consumers — especially children.

We urge all consumers NOT TO BUY OR EAT California table grapes. We ask, instead, for support of a basic tenet of justice: that the economic greed of grape growers not supercede the basic health of human beings.

Founding fathers sought to root nation's laws in God's law

To the editor:

Since the recent Supreme Court ruling limiting rights to abortion, it is little surprise that many secular members of our nation have become unglued over this restraint. They feel duty bound to exercise their independence. As Milton wrote, "would rather rule in hell than serve in heaven." As for the citizens of the kingdom of God, it should be an occasion for great rejoicing. To have our nation's character restored is an answered prayer. The founding fathers of these United States understood the necessity of self-control also, that the liberty of all was ensured by law. Not law dictated by some despot, but that which has its roots in God's law which is good by all standards. This has always been the foundation of this great nation. Have we become so obsessed with our own ideas of rights that we have become blind to the supreme good? To guard and protect the dignity and sacredness of

We are confident, too, that you, Bishop Clark, will once again add your voice to those striving for a more just world.

It is, after all, one of the many missions of our church.

Tara White
Rochester
Beth Reiter
Chili
Paul Ciavarrri
Rochester

all life, embryonic to geriatric, is our civil and moral responsibility. All are free yet subject to choice, to choose between good and evil. Always obliged to choose that which is good or suffer the consequences.

I'm most puzzled about the position many of my Catholic brothers and sisters have taken. Those who insist on the freedom to violate God's Law. Which is not freedom at all, but a pseudo-liberty, it is the worst type of bondage because those who fall into it are unsuspecting of its death grip. If we've been baptized in Christ, we are no longer our own masters. God has purchased us with the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ, this is a sacred covenant. The presumption that God's justice can be circumvented by the foolish word games some people play is a serious error. Please rethink your motives, are they truly life giving and worthy of God?

Mark Petersheim
Damsen Road
Rochester

Catholic Courier

Catholic Courier Letters Policy

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.

We reserve the right to edit all letters. Mail them to: **Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624.** Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.