

Community involvement made 'call' a success

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Saturday was one of those special days I shall remember for a long time to come. It was made so, first of all, by the presence and vitality of the 60 men who gathered at St. Dominic's in Shortsville to explore the possibility that God might be calling them to seriously consider a vocation to the diocesan priesthood. The day was another moment in the process named "Bishop Clark's Call to Priesthood."

You have read about that process in earlier editions of the *Catholic Courier* and will find a story and photos of the day on the front page of this issue. Allow me in this column to offer some reflections about this effort.

1) In my opinion, this process has been a blessed one since it began because the community has been very much involved in it. One source of its inspiration has been Parish Reflection Teams. When asked to look at ways in which parish communities might need to adjust because of changing patterns in vocations and ministries, they responded that they would gladly do so. But they always expressed the desire that we, as a community, do everything possible to present our need for priests and that we make strong efforts to recruit candidates.

In a similar manner, our priests also expressed their concern that I may not have been as personally and explicitly involved

in the vocations effort as they might have liked. That kind of encouragement from community and clergy has given great impetus to this effort, and I am very pleased by it.

2) The community has responded with generosity and enthusiasm to my request that we try to identify people in whom we see qualities that suit them for the diocesan priesthood. I received 600 names of possible candidates from more than 70 of our priests and probably an equal number of the laity. Parish communities ordered more than 60,000 of the prayer cards we printed in support of this effort. A large number of pastors wrote encouraging pieces about the program in their parish bulletins. And I became aware, from the number of comments I received in my daily rounds, that a high level of interest existed in the community. I have been thinking a lot about such community involvement, and I believe all of us can learn some important lessons from the experience.

3) We need to do some follow-up at several levels. Ten people who signed up for the day of reflection did not attend, and 40 others expressed interest but were unable to attend on Saturday. We need to follow up with these 50 men very soon. I hope we can offer them an experience similar to the one offered on Saturday. Moreover, we have not heard, as yet, from 400 men whom we invited. I am making the pre-

sumption that some of those individuals may be interested, but for one reason or another have not responded. If that presumption is correct, we should reach out to them once again.

In addition to these avenues of follow-up, we'll be thinking of ways to make similar efforts on a regular basis. The evidence is strong that community participation only strengthens such programs.

4) I have finished three in a series of 11 regional meetings with the priests of our diocese. We spend one half of our time during these meetings on a discussion of vocations. A common theme in these discussions so far has been what parish communities can do to support and encourage young men who identify themselves as being interested in priesthood. Often enough, such individuals do not find strong encouragement within their families or among their friends.

5) Something important took place in the gathering on Saturday. That theme was expressed often in the closing comments participants were invited to make. The speakers said they drew great strength from knowing that such a variety of individuals shared their interest and their questions.

6) My thanks to all who have in any way supported this effort. I hope that I shall have the privilege one day of ordaining a large number of those who were at St.



Along The Way

Dominic's. But, whatever the number, I am convinced that we are being blessed in this effort and I am very grateful to God and to you for that blessing. Peace to all.

CUF president makes available detailed evaluation of sex series

To the editor:

With reference to your article (*Courier*, June 22: "New Creation gets OK from two Vatican prelates") I suggest that the "OK" is quite exaggerated. Actually, various points raised in the letters by Cardinals Ratzinger and Baum basically reinforce the judgment already made by Cardinal Gagnon of the Pontifical Council for the Family that, pedagogically speaking, the Wm. C. Brown Co.'s *New Creation* series is "a travesty of sex education." Cardinal Ratzinger acknowledges that the rights of parents have been violated where this sex education series has been implemented over their objections, and that serious "pedagogical concerns" remain with regard to the invasive — and quite sexually explicit — material contained in that series. As to whether *New Creation* is doctrinally suspect in any way, it is not clear whether Cardinal Ratzinger had access to all *New Creation's* materials. If he had, he doubtless would have noticed *New Creation's* favoring the ancient Christological heresy of Christ "the human person" enshrined in the now discredited 1981 "USCC Guidelines in Human Sexuality," upon which *New Creation's* "vision of sexuality" is based.

Calendar should not list Mormon pageant

To the editor:

I can't believe that the *Catholic Courier* would list the Hill Cumorah Pageant in its calendar of events (*Courier*, July 13).

In case you are not aware of it, Mormonism is not just another Christian denomination. It is a polytheistic, anti-Christian cult, replete with gross errors and corruptions of Christian theology and the person of Christ Himself.

I would suggest you find out more of what Mormons believe before you mislead Christians into thinking that the Hill Cumorah Pageant is a harmless show.

By listing it in your calendar of events you are suggesting attendance by fellow Christians. Something I'm sure you wouldn't do if you understood Mormonism and its dangers to Christianity.

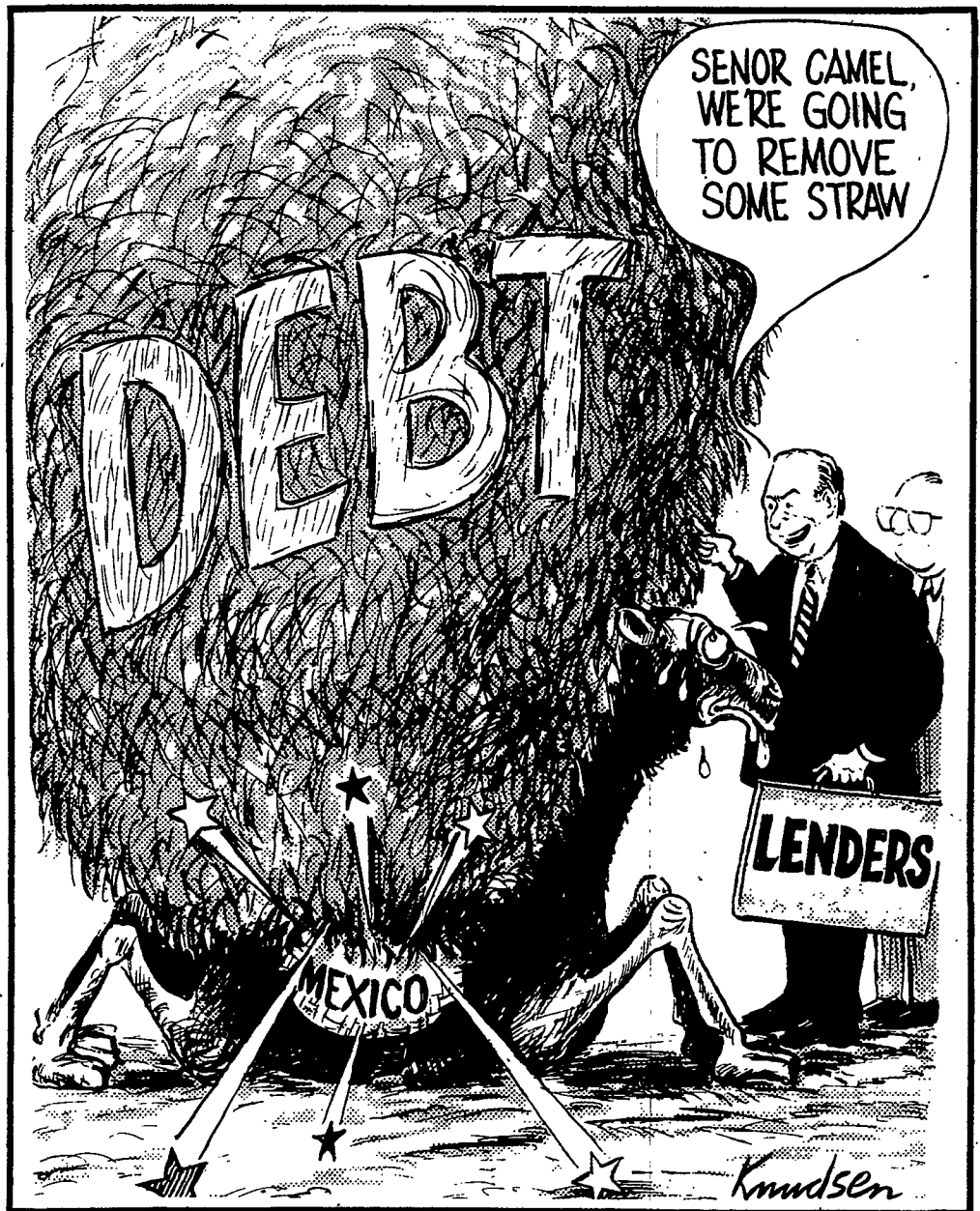
Thomas J. Scott
Sharon Court
Webster

If Cardinal Baum recognizes that inappropriate material and inadequate safeguards have characterized the introduction of *New Creation* into Catholic schools, this is because of the clinical and naturalistic character of that series. Since Pius XI's encyclical *On Christian Education* it is clear that such "education" is at odds with that "education in chastity" the Church desires for her children. Now, all three editions of *New Creation* brutally disregard the latency period of young children, and there can be no question that discerning Catholic parents will continue to oppose this educational atrocity in their parochial schools. There is increased concern among Catholic parents as to the suitability of Classroom-Curriculum sex education at all in the light of Catholic teaching concerning the Primacy of Parental rights in Education, the need to protect the chastity and modesty of children from the "sexperts" in the classroom, and the obligation of schools to respect the "Law of subsidiarity" vis-a-vis the rights of the family. How Catholics can look the other way at the immoral programs of "sex education" in operation in the public schools — promoting the social acceptance of the contraception-abortion-population control society — really boggles the mind. How Catholics can allow clinical and naturalistic sex education programs which constitute a perversion of authentic religious catechesis to be placed in their schools is another burning question of the day.

Parents everywhere are becoming concerned at what unwholesome school programs are doing, not for their children, but to their children. They are realizing that Classroom-Curriculum sex education in both public and parochial schools is but further evidence of the secularization of morals that has been taking place all around us. Such "education" is the antithesis of the pedagogy of the Saints.

Detailed evaluations of the *New Creation* series explaining why Catholic parents have rightly objected to its being imposed on their children are available by writing CUF, 50 Washington Ave., New Rochelle, NY 10801.

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Deterrence should match degree of crime

To the editor:

One of the arguments used to oppose the death penalty is the belief that it doesn't serve as a deterrent to violent crime. Bishop Matthew Clark during a press conference with other members of the clergy cited statistics that indicated just that.

However if that were true why would any penalty deter crime? Doesn't our criminal justice system operate under the assumption, the greater the penalty, the greater the deterrent?

Over the years we have created more legal loopholes for the benefit of the murderer while the families of murder victims are sentenced to a lifetime of economic and

psychological deprivation.

Has this leniency lowered the murder rate substantially?

While the charge is made that capitol punishment discriminates against minorities and the poor, so does leniency. More often than not murder victims are poor and minority people. Also the majority of these people support the death penalty.

We should remember that while the death penalty kills the body it doesn't kill the soul unless the condemned dies unrepentant. Most likely the murder victim was never given the opportunity to make peace with God before dying.

Robert Bart, Ithaca

Catholic Courier