



File photo
Auxiliary Bishop Austin B. Vaughan of New York pensively awaited his second arrest in approximately six weeks last June as he participated in an anti-abortion demonstration. The bishop's arrest came during an Operation Rescue protest at an abortion clinic in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

Votes can't gain heaven's gates

To the editor:

Hooray for Bishop Vaughn! Why can't more Catholic bishops be more like him? A Catholic bishop had the courage to warn the governor that he was in danger of going to hell for his political stand on abortion. Heaven is not a democracy, and entrance is not gained by vote, governor.

You see, the governor's political stand is pro-choice and his personal stand is pro-life. Unusual? Impossible! Except for politicians and governors. Somehow, no one sees a problem with the governor's anti-death penalty stand, which is correctly consistent with Catholic teaching, and which I support. There, he can veto bills against the will of the people because of his personal beliefs.

I wonder why more people don't take the Catholic Church seriously when a spokesman places Catholic guidance above criticism he knew would come. Pro-choice logic wants religious people and churches to keep their morality out of this issue. But at the recent forum at Monroe Community College, the pro-choice panel contained a minister and a rabbi. The message: keep your religious views out of this, unless of course they support pro-choice, then you're welcome.

In Cuomo's One on One interview in the *Democrat & Chronicle*, he obviously was affected by Bishop Vaughn's statement. I

wish ex-governor Hugh Carey, who has come to publicly admit his errors in this regard, could visit with Cuomo as the ghost of Marley. It's not too late, governor!

Dominic Salamida
 Furnace Road
 Ontario

Mass stipend article provided impetus for reader to change bequest

To the editor:

Thank you for bringing up the question of Mass offerings (CC: Feb. 22). "Paying" for Masses for the deceased implies that the rich can buy their way into heaven, which you and I know just ain't so. It's like paying someone to do your praying for you! I must confess I'm guilty, too. My will contains a bequest to my parish, specifying that it be used for Masses for the repose of my soul. I did not realize, either, that the money could go elsewhere if the Masses are not offered locally. I intend to correct this at the first opportunity.

The heart of the matter lies in the statement you made in your article that "every Mass is considered the property of the whole church, and is offered for the intentions of every member of the community." The Eucharistic prayer also provides for remembrance of the living and the dead. Mention can be made, aloud or privately,

Baseball analogy placed McBrien in minor leagues

To the editor:

Pryor "Lefty" McBee really didn't help my beloved Chicago White Sox too much during his brief American League career. Lefty, who pitched in only one game during the 1926 season, lasted one-and-one-third innings and walked three batters before heading for the showers with a 6.75 ERA.

Lefty probably wouldn't have fared too well against All-Star National League shortstop Arky Vaughan, whose considerable baseball skills were acknowledged by Father Richard McBrien in his March 8 column. Nor was Father McB. able to get his curve ball past Bishop Austin "Arky" Vaughan in the column with respect to the bishop's celebrated statement to the effect that Governor Mario Cuomo risked hell for his official actions which have facilitated the performance of abortions in New York state.

Father "Lefty" McB. accuses Bishop Vaughan of the sin of rash judgment for his remarks. But "Lefty" is (so to speak) way off base. For one thing, Bishop Vaughan has nowhere pronounced judgment on the

state of the governor's soul. Even the *New York Post* headline quoted by Father McB. got it right — "Jailed Bishop to Cuomo: You're Risking Hell" (emphasis added). Bishop Vaughan was only pointing out that it was quite possible that, depending on Governor Cuomo's interior disposition, his complicity in the deaths of pre-born New Yorkers might be mortally sinful. By so indicating, the bishop was in fact doing the governor a favor, insofar as the eternal loss of any of God's people is a tragedy for all.

For another thing, Father "Lefty" fell for the same sucker pitch that he thought he had Bishop "Arky" struck out on. By intimating that the bishop had sinfully judged Gov. Cuomo, "Lefty" did the very thing he said was morally wrong — he pronounced on the state of another person's soul.

No question about it: "Arky" and "Lefty" were — and are — in different leagues.

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'Pinchy, satiric, modernist' again throws dust into eyes of Catholics

To the editor:

It has been known for a long time that the syndicated columnist, Fr. Richard P. McBrien, is a pinchy, satiric, modernist theologian. He harshly criticizes the conservatives, even if they are from the Vatican Curia. He never ceases criticizing the bishops, cardinals and even the pope. On the other hand, he almost never mentions Fr. Curran and "company," who are trying to create permissive attitudes toward homosexuality, divorce and abortion.

His most recent criticism against Bishop Austin Vaughan (CC: March 3) gives us enough evidence to see his false arguments against the church authority ...

Quite often Fr. McBrien's theological essays sound horribly rationalistic and put dust into the eyes of many Catholics who don't fully understand his satiric, tricky and slanderous arguments. He tried to ridicule Bishop Vaughan, who is the first bishop in America to be arrested and jailed for defending the right to life of innocent, unborn children. The bishop's courage rightly made him famous and he should be called a hero.

Is it possible that Fr. McBrien thinks that in doing such a job, he is really serving God?

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of the name of the deceased or the intention for which the stipend is given but the entire Mass is not the property of the one who made the offering.

Wisdom dictates that each of us should earn our own "brownie points." What better way than through this year's Lenten theme: "Repentance to Rebirth through Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving."

If each person were limited as to the number of Mass requests per year, and no charge made, it would be fair to poor and rich alike. Then, of course, our priests' salaries should be adjusted accordingly. They receive far too little as it is!

Why not try what I have started to do? Make a donation to the church memorial

fund and ask that the bereaved be sent an acknowledgment. The money can then be put to work immediately — to decrease the parish debt or, if there is none, to be applied to the education fund or for the church's own almsgiving, etc. Our own note to the bereaved could state that they are in our prayers and, more importantly, that we plan to attend Mass on a certain date and will include them and their deceased in our special intentions during that Mass, and invite them to join us on that day, or a day that is mutually convenient. It's something to think about.

Grace B. Carnes
 Eagle Ridge Circle
 Rochester

Local church wounded by dissent, but one in Christ's unity

To the editor:

In regards to Deacon William Schmitz's letter to the *Catholic Courier* of March 8, 1990; he suggests editorials or essays dealing with forgiveness, reconciliation and the restoration of unity in the bleeding local church.

I suggest we need to reconcile OURSELVES to the fact that even those who have differing opinions than our own and those who dissent are in fact already one with us in Christ. I suggest that the bleeding local church is a sign that we are indeed poor and needy and that now our Creator God will enter into our broken life as church and recreate in us a new heart. I suggest that we all learn that there can be unity in diversity. In fact, diversity is a sign of our life and our strength. I pray that we learn to find some truth in differing and dissenting views. Especially where we bleed, may we find our unity and be reconciled in Christ.

My prayer for all of this is:

Limitless God, God of diversity, God of growth and change, my vision of you has been so limited, so small. I've been afraid of your surprises and changing face. You lead me to new places. I catch a view of the something more — then I try to hide. Help me reach for the more! In order to do this, I must let go of my old vision, my limited way of seeing you. You will not be contained in my dogmatism, my legalism, my limited view. You are ever expanding, ever growing, ever moving, yet it seems this is done in the silent hiddenness of everyday living. I am surrounded, I am immersed in you. I cannot be separated from you, ever. You are living, breathing life. You are constant Creator ... O God, change me into living water.

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