

# A painful walk in other shoes

At least a hint of sadness must have touched Saturday's otherwise joyful gathering of hundreds of deacons, family members and friends who celebrated the addition of nine new members to the ranks of the diocesan permanent diaconate.

For some of the deacons' fellow aspirants to orders in the Archdiocese of Seattle, that day of ordination may never come.

In March, Seattle Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen announced that he had canceled plans to begin formation of a new class of deacons until the role of women in the church is "more adequately addressed."

The archbishop said he had listened to the voices of women who feel that their gifts are not welcomed or respected within the church. Since Archbishop Hunthausen lacks the power to admit women to ordained ministry, he chose to act in a way that would highlight the urgency of addressing women's concerns.

Many deacons' reaction to the move wavers between respect for Archbishop Hunthausen and sorrow at the blow to their ministry. A statement from the executive board of the National Association of Permanent Deacon Directors — which met in April at

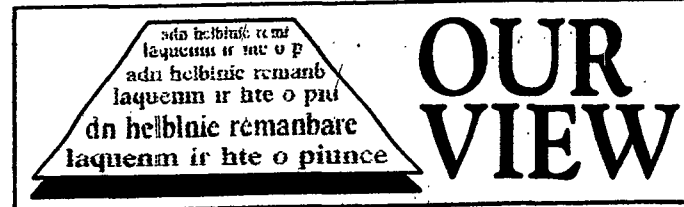
Everett, Washington — pointed out that "needed dialogue on women's participation in the life of the Roman Catholic Church can and should continue without necessarily having recourse to the path chosen by Archbishop Hunthausen."

Without a doubt, the service of deacons has been of incalculable value to the church. As of the end of 1989, more 9,000 permanent deacons were serving in U.S. dioceses, with another 2,000 candidates in formation.

Some people regard the post-Vatican II restoration of the diaconate as a step that has expanded opportunities for lay people by making the sacrament of orders available to married men. Certainly, without such a step, the committee of bishops writing a pastoral letter on women and the church would not be recommending that the U.S. bishops consider admitting women to the diaconate.

Others, however, deplore the creation of a new class of clerics — with or without women included — that helps perpetuate the church as a hierarchical institution.

Advocates of women's ordination also fear that as a class of trained, ordained men, deacons will



perpetuate the church as a patriarchy by stepping into the growing vacuum left by the priest shortage.

Somehow it doesn't seem fair that some men in Seattle should be denied orders because all women are thus denied. But one might also ask if it is fair for our diocesan program to encourage deacons' wives to fully participate in formation and ministry while denying them the sacrament that empowers such ministry?

The kind of radical change that would grant women a full and equal partnership in the church is unlikely until the powerful — men — feel the pain of those who are powerless.

On that score, Archbishop Hunthausen's action has already been effective, judging by the response of at least one local deacon, who said the archbishop's move left him "filled with sadness that the gifts of some people would not be welcome ... but then I realized that's been the case with women."

— The Editors

## Columnist distorted sentence by quoting out of context

To the editors:

In the *Catholic Courier* of May 10, Father Richard McBrien writes: ... "Before the Council (Vatican II), it was also simply assumed in Catholic theology, catechesis, preaching, and teaching that the Church is an absolute monarchy under the pope." ... "Over against this view," he goes on, "the Council taught that the governance of the Universal Church devolves upon the whole college of bishops. ... (Constitution of the Church, nn. 22-23)." In my dictionary devolves means "to transfer from one person to another." Governance means government.

It seems he is saying that the government of the Universal Church has been transferred from the Pope as head or absolute ruler of the Church, to the whole college of bishops. I cannot see any other meaning from his words.

But if he means what he says, then he is saying that the Pope is just another bishop in the college of bishops and of equal weight with them. In this Father McBrien is simply mistaken.

Let me quote further from the same source he uses: Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, nn. 22-23.

"But the college of bishops has no au-

thority unless it is simultaneously conceived of in terms of its head, the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, and without any lessening of his power of primacy over all ... For in virtue of his office, that is, as Vicar of Christ, and pastor of the whole Church, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church. And he can always exercise this power freely."

"The order of bishops is the successor to the college of the apostles ... Together with its head, the Roman Pontiff, and never without this head, the episcopal order is the subject of supreme and full power over the Church. But this power can be exercised only with the consent of the Roman Pontiff. For our Lord made Simon Peter alone the rock and key-bearer of the Church (cf. Matthew 16:18-19) and appointed him

shepherd of the flock." (cf. John: 21:15ff.)

Later in the same article, the bishops are told that one of their duties is to safeguard the unity of faith.

Can anything be plainer than these quotations from Vatican II? Can any meaning be more clear? Has the Pope transferred any of his authority, or has it been lessened?

Why does Father McBrien choose only one sentence and ignore all the rest of the document which underlines over and over the Pope's "full, supreme and universal power over the Church?" Has the government of the Church changed radically?

I really think this question calls for an answer.

Doris Pace  
Keuka Park, N.Y.

## Nazareth coverage was exploitive

To the editors:

As a teacher at Nazareth Academy for several years, and now as Communications Coordinator for the Sisters of St. Joseph, I read the three articles in the recent issue of your paper on Nazareth Academy (owned and operated by Sisters of St. Joseph) with a keen eye. I am almost ashamed to respond to these articles because of the shallow, narrow and uninformed point of view they share.

What did the editors expect to be the outcome of the photograph and article on teenager Tonya (Harding)? The photo may win some photographic prize, costly as that may be to Tonya. With or without her consent, the girl is being exploited.

And I was astounded at the editorial column! There, a school whose mission is to bring young women of all backgrounds to their fullest potential is criticized in apparent ignorance of the educational achievements of the school. And to whose advantage? Women? The comments tossed

out on women boomerang since a school that nurtures a variety of young women with a great deal of compassion and acceptance is suddenly to be rejected on the basis of a hair-do. How can an editorial that uses hair-dos and a traditional graduation ceremony of white gowns and red roses as the illogical jumping off place for a misplaced discussion of women's roles in the church truly be supportive of women in any capacity?

Joan McDowell, SSJ  
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Rochester

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We recognize Nazareth Academy's tradition of helping young women from diverse backgrounds realize and achieve their potential, which only compounded our dismay at the administration's action over the issue of hairstyles — particularly styles that were only deemed inappropriate as graduation approached.

## Priest prefers positive approach to Eucharist, recommends study assignment for Fr. Cuddy

To the editors:

Regarding Father Cuddy's article of May 3, 1990, I would suggest that he would serve a nobler cause if he wrote a positive article on devotion to the Eucharist instead of dredging up a statement of one individual, made in a conversation more than 20 years ago, and then continuing with his all-too-often list of negatives.

For accuracy's sake I would further suggest that he study the documents on the liturgy beginning with the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy from the Second Vatican Council. He could follow this up with the post-Vatican II documents, e.g. "The General Instruction on the Roman Missal" of Pope Paul VI of 1969, Chapter V, Part X, nos. 276 and 277. Finally, he might study the document of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops "Environment and Art in Sacred Worship," Chapter 5, nos. 78,

79 and 80.

The center of the sanctuary is not supposed to be the tabernacle, taken figuratively or literally, but the area for worship. I agree the tabernacle should not be put on a stand in a corner, but in the many churches I have visited, I have never seen this to be the case. As the liturgical documents state, the ideal is to have a Eucharistic Chapel.

I lament, along with Father Cuddy, that it has become necessary to keep most churches locked. I have noted, however, that at many churches there is a sign stating that those who wish to make a visit can stop at the rectory and they will be admitted to the church.

Father Walter L. Wainwright  
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church  
Painted Post, N.Y.

## Bishop unfairly singled out Proud's death-penalty stance

To the editors:

I wonder why Bishop Matthew Clark is being so hard on Gary Proud (D-131st District) and his decision on the death penalty. Gary Proud has been working for amendment to the death penalty to make sure that innocent people are not executed.

What about the other two candidates Eber and John who are for abortions, the killing or executing of innocent babies that have committed no crime. You are quiet on that.

Bishop Clark get your priority straight. There are other politicians in the Rochester diocese for the death penalty. I don't see

you writing about them.

If life is so precious to you why not save a life at the start and help it grow ...

Why not mention the other two candidates and their stand on abortions?

Gary is against abortions and I don't see you speaking out in that behalf. The other two candidates Eber and John don't seem to get any criticism from you on their stand.

Makes you wonder are you supporting these candidates?

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