

# Peace dividend should repair Central America

To the editor:

Hundreds of pilgrims prayed the rosary as they walked the 10 miles from Juigalpa to Cuapa, Nicaragua's Marian shrine. The Cardinal-Archbishop of Managua celebrated the Mass to Mary, Queen of Peace, on this (May 8) 10th anniversary of the reputed appearance of the Virgin to a man of humble origins by the name of Bernardo.

Meanwhile, only 25 miles away, the Contras are gathering their forces into cease-fire zones where they should surrender their weapons to the United Nations peacekeeping troops by June 10. If this does indeed transpire, let Western New York Catholics — instead of visiting Medjugorje — come to Cuapa to pray: "Holy

Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners ... " Why Cuapa? Because Cuapa is part of the Central America where their country has sought over the span of the last 10 years to impose a military "solution" at the cost of over \$20 billion, but which has only left the average Central American worse off economically and with 150,000 dead and over 2 million displaced.

"Pray for us sinners" assumes a new perspective for the U.S. pilgrim to Cuapa, where the war has claimed local victims, but where the centuries-old real enemy of humanity — poverty — has yet to be engaged because the decision to resort to violence, rather than to Gospel-inspired means, is still unrepented. Ten years of arming El Salvador is still unrepented.

Military bases for Honduras and not child-nutrition programs, unrepented. Those of your readers who feel some responsibility for repairing the damage done during the 1980s because of misdirected military spending worldwide, can turn to Bread for the World (802 Rhode Island Ave., Washington, D.C., 20018) and ask about their "Harvest of Peace Resolution." It's a policy statement by which the U.S. Congress would set the nation on a new course for the 1990s by cutting military spending significantly and insisting that the resulting peace dividend be used, not just to reduce the deficit, but to repair the damage done to Central America, as well as to benefit environmentally sustainable development elsewhere, such as in West Africa where

the Holy Father himself supports it, even ahead of investment in his own beloved Eastern Europe.

As of April, only 60 of the 435 U.S. congressmen had co-sponsored the "Harvest of Peace Resolution." People of faith and Marian devotion can write Bread for the World for material to help them persuade their own congressperson. But is it do-able? Answer: Don't people of faith and Marian devotion pray in the Memorare: "Never was it known that anyone who ... implored your help ... was left unaided?" Would Mary leave us powerless to build a better world?

Bernard A. Survil  
Managua, Nicaragua

## Bishop Clark's statements create further confusion on moral issues

To the editor:

It is with sadness that I read ("Bishop offers hopes for church of tomorrow," CC: May 24). Our diocesan leader seems to be perplexed in the areas of birth control, abortion, celibacy and the ordination of women.

Although we may or may not have all of Bishop Clark's four hopes come about, what we do have is a powerful Holy Spirit, wisely guiding our Church. The desired increase of vocations, evangelization and conversions, to list a few desired achievements, will be enhanced by a greater knowledge in the deep and rich meaning of the central act of our faith, the Eucharistic Liturgy. Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk's booklet, "Understanding the Mass" is a must for every Catholic to read. It is published by Our Sunday Visitor for \$1.50. The result will be the true freedom of obedience, more contentment, greater unity, and a willingness to be a bit more patient with the Catholic teaching authority of our magisterium, instead of proceeding with omission or commission of Church directives. The following two statements of Bishop Clark are most alarming: "when

life is fast and very complex, and when in my opinion the Holy See is moving toward a more centralized control of church life" and "pilgrim people whose journey is by the light of faith, who need always be ready to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, to leave the safe and familiar places when God calls us to a new place. If that tends to discourage us, we need to remember that Jesus promised to be with us always, and Jesus is always faithful." We must not forget that Christ comes with his Church and thus, statements like these only encourage more dissent and disunity. Our newly established "cluster" parishes in our diocese, along with others, will only be more confused by an opinion such as this. This is alarming because Bishop Clark has the emulation of a large flock of sheep under his care. Moreover, this is devastating, especially in the area of liturgical and educational norms.

Prayers for our Holy Spirit's enlightenment and proper discernment to all of our American Bishops.

Clara Pasto  
Corning

## Earlier priests' retirement illogical

To the editor:

In the April, 1988, DPC meeting, the members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council asked Father Schrader, the head of the Priest's Board, and Bishop Clark, if, due to the diminishing number of priests, the local diocesan rule of making priests retire at 70 instead of 75, even if they were healthy and wished to continue their pastoral roles, could be eliminated in order to retain as many priests as possible for a longer time. Father Schrader replied that "we will look into it."

Now, more than two years later, after even more priests have had to retire, and more priests than expected have gone to their eternal rewards or left the diocese for other pursuits, etc., the diocesan proposal on the table is to further reduce the age when priests in the Diocese of Rochester must retire!

By even the smallest amount of logic that we humans have been granted by God, this tells us that there will be even fewer priests available sooner! The proposal is not logical — if we want Rochester's Roman Catholicism to survive and continue as part of the Universal Church.

If we wish this, ordained priests will always be necessary to perform those canonically required activities, i.e., Consecration of the Eucharist, Penance or Reconciliation, etc., in the One, Holy, Roman Catholic, and Apostolic Church. There cannot even be a good rationalization for the current proposal.

Since the proposal does not come to this logical conclusion, we must all ask what is the diocese's agenda here?

David Kimmeth  
Garford Road  
Rochester

## McBriens of the world know not what they do

To the editor:

Apparently, your Father McBrien has decided to temporarily forgo his usual papal bashing in favor of directing his divisive, derisive and denigrating ramblings toward Our Blessed Mother's role in the salvation of mankind.

His column (CC: May 17) — replete with sarcasm — quotes the writings of John Cornwell who found "distressing" the advice of a priest in Medjugorje to read Our Lady's messages. Father McBrien, however, cleverly refrains — as is his usual practice — from quoting the writings of ... one Lucia dos Santos of Fatima, Portugal, who quotes the warnings and predictions of Our Blessed Mother concerning

the Russian revolution of 1917, the Communist takeover of that country, the outbreak and devastation of World War II, the subsequent Communist enslavement of dozens of countries, an era of peace and the ultimate triumph of Her Immaculate Heart ("Distressing?" Mr. Cornwell would have gone into a catatonic state!)

Perhaps Father McBrien may be undeservedly fortunate in that the "triumph" mentioned above may include an exhortation from our ever-loving Mother Mary to her Son to forgive the McBriens of this world "for they know not what they do."

A.J. Annunziata  
Horseheads



## Military aid perpetuates Salvador's suffering

To the editor:

For more than a decade, the military of El Salvador has been repressing and murdering its own people, and the United States has been giving them the money to do it. We must ask Congress to stop all military aid to El Salvador.

Historically, the Salvadoran government and military have served the interests of a wealthy few who live in luxury while the majority of the people in El Salvador live in shacks, without adequate food or drinking water. ...

In an attempt to destroy the rebels and their supporters, the Salvadoran military, together with its para-military "death-squads," have murdered thousands of civilians, including four nuns, Archbishop Oscar Romero, and most recently, six Jesuit priests. They have also abducted and tortured thousands of others whom they merely suspect of undermining the Salvadoran government. The United States has been supporting this repression through millions of dollars in military and economic aid. ...

International human rights groups believe that if the United States were to cut off its military aid, the Salvadoran government and military would: 1) be unable to continue the repression and at-

tacks on their people; and 2) be pressured to take the rebels' demands for justice and reform more seriously.

Please write or call your representatives in Congress immediately ... We must stop supporting murder and torture in El Salvador.

Mark Lickona  
Cortland, N.Y.

## Right on Archbishop!

To the editor:

After reading "Diaconate weathers 20 years of changes," I again feel compelled to take pen in hand and comment.

Cheers and plaudits to Archbishop Hunthausen who announced he would not form a new permanent deacon class in the Archdiocese of Seattle until the role of women in the church was more adequately addressed.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all 'one' in Christ Jesus."

So, right on Archbishop, if one can't get it right, can the program!

Marion L. Brown  
Irving Road  
Rochester