

Workshop fosters educational insights

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Last Thursday I went to the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Buffalo for a workshop on communications skills in the television medium. There were six other participants in the daylong presentation, which was one of a series being held in our state for people from the eight dioceses of New York.

Lourdes Perez-Albuera, Father John Firpo and I were the delegates from Rochester. Father Miles O'Brien Riley, a priest of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and an expert in communication, led the team of communications experts and television technicians who put us through our paces.

We worked from arrival time at 8:30 in the morning until 5:30 in the afternoon. We were interviewed in several different

settings; participated in mock press conferences; and even served as interviewers of other participants in the program of the day. Each of us was videotaped seven or eight times. We met with the other participants after each taping session, and with Miles' leadership evaluated the work that we had done.

The person who was taped offered the first comment on what she or he had done. For example, Miles would ask, "Matt, what worked for you that time?" and when I had answered, he might ask, "And what didn't work?" or "What would you do differently on some other occasion?" Miles would comment on what the subject had said, add his own observations and then invite each of the other six participants to offer their criticisms. Each person in

turn had the opportunity to receive that kind of feedback. We also filled out evaluation forms for each of our friends.

It was a fascinating experience in so many ways. As I look back on it now, I think of the reactions the seven of us experienced and shared through the day. For example, we all felt a certain degree of nervousness as the day began, and noted that the embarrassment diminished as the hours passed.

Secondly, we realized that the knowledge and teaching skills of the crew helped all of us to improve as the day moved on. And certainly all of us had to admit how strange it felt to see our own faces in extremely tight close-up shots on the television screens.

But the experience provided food for thought that goes beyond the details of the day and the development of skills helpful for television work. Let me mention three themes that were stimulated by the day and upon which I often have reflected since then:

1. Miles, who served as our instructor, knew he had some nervous people with him that day. We were in a real sense quite vulnerable and tender. Yet our instructors who had the task of offering criticism did this job in a way that affirmed and encouraged us participants. We had many laughs as Miles and we critiqued each other's work. But there were no put-downs. There were only respect for one another and honest comments meant to help one another improve.

2. We noticed that we came across most convincingly when we were speaking out of our own experience; when we were using ordinary language, and when we were as concerned about listening carefully to our interviewers as we were formulating



our responses. When we were successful in doing those things, it was reflected on the screen. There was confidence in the eyes, relaxation in the posture, and the interview took on the tone of a conversation between two people.

3. Education among adults is a powerful process that invites people to partnership, draws benefit from the lived experience of each and opens new horizons for all. It is much more than a process by which one or a few give what they have to others who do not have it. Rather, it is a commitment to mutual exploration into areas of common interests, with the hope that all will come away with something more than they had when they started.

Thank you for your kind attention to these reflections. I hope that Lent has been a season of special blessings for you and your loved ones. Please continue to pray for those preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, and please pray for your bishop.

Peace to all.

Information meeting set for Asian-Pacific families

ROCHESTER — An informational meeting for Asian-Pacific families wishing to send their children to a Catholic school in the area will take place on Tuesday, March 5, at 7 p.m. at Holy Family School, 899 Jay St.

Staff members from the Catholic School Office will be on hand to provide information concerning registration and tuition assistance at K-8 schools in the diocese.

Registration forms will be available in four languages — Vietnamese, Korean, Laotian and Cambodian. Translators will also be available.

Parents are asked to bring their child's birth certificate, immunization record and baptismal certificate if possible.

Contest slated for logo, junior high name in quad

The Southwest Quadrant Communications committee is sponsoring a quadrant logo contest and a southwest junior high name contest for all members of the quadrant. If you have a logo idea or a name for the new junior high, please submit them to: Southwest Quadrant Communications Committee, 659 Chili Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14611. Include your name, parish and school affiliation and your reason for your junior high name.

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