

Diocese has shown concern for Southern Tier

To the editors:

We read with great interest your recent article entitled "Perceived bias rooted in geography" (*Catholic Courier*, Feb. 28). The piece was well written and illustrated the many difficulties inherent in administering a diocese in a large geographic area which, besides Rochester and its suburbs, included several smaller cities and towns as well as a substantial rural population.

We agree with Father John Mulligan's assessment that the diocese does try to meet the needs of the people, indirectly, through parish personnel.

We would like to cite these outstanding examples.

On June 23, 1972 the Southern Tier of the diocese was in large part inundated with flood waters resulting from the rains of Hurricane Agnes. In Corning, two churches were flooded as was the church in Painted Post. In Elmira, St. Joseph's Hospital and its neighbor Ss. Peter and Paul Church were several feet under water. Hundreds of homes in both communities and surrounding areas were totally destroyed or damaged in varying degrees.

The response of the diocese was prompt and compassionate. Bishop Hogan and key diocesan advisers arrived as soon as the

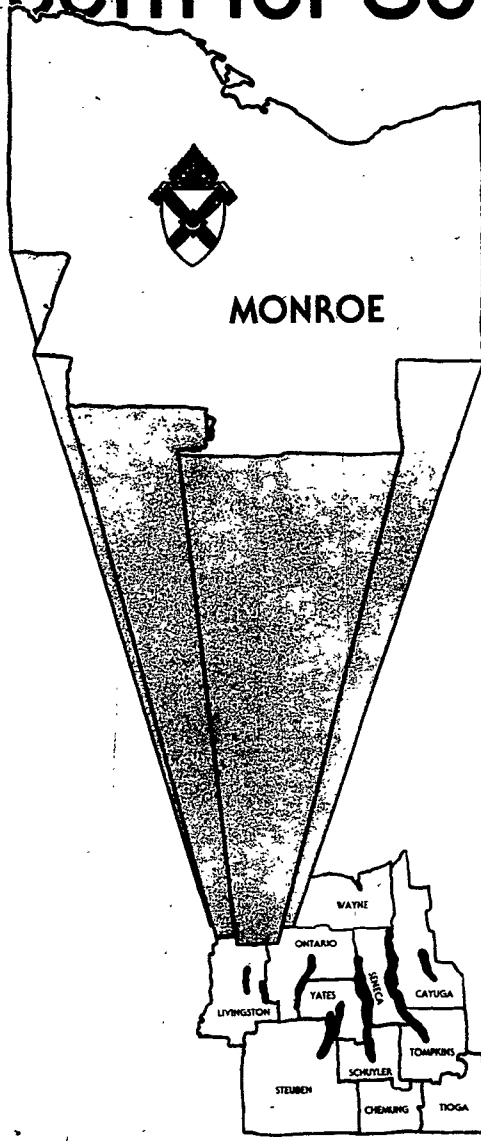
waters had receded to inspect the damage and to decide upon a course of action.

The Office of Human Development swung into action, first under Father Timothy Weider and later under Father Peter Bayer, who stayed in Corning for the next eighteen months. The goals of OHD were soon met. Specifically they were to identify the needs, to mobilize people both inside and outside the area and eventually to turn the organization's activities over to local groups.

Volunteers were brought to our area from all over the diocese by OHD and those good people worked twelve hour days moving out ruined furniture and carrying endless buckets of smelly mud. These teams of workers came all through the month of July, some longer. A computer system was in place as "Operation Cleanup" became "Operation Rebuild." OHD under Father Bayer's direction was an unqualified success.

In 1990 the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry celebrated its tenth anniversary. This diocesan agency is in place to meet varied needs of the urban and rural population of the Southern Tier.

The most recent example which is illustrative of a successful cooperative venture with the diocese was the formation of



Parish Reflections Teams. These teams, composed of laity and one woman religious were assigned the task of finding a solution to the problem of staffing their respective parishes.

The groups met for many months to investigate and to discuss various alternatives. Finally the present model which consists of one Pastor, two Parochial Vicars and one Permanent Deacon was decided upon and subsequently accepted by the Diocese. During the deliberative process interaction with diocesan representatives was both positive and cordial. This model, called the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community, and consisting of four separate and distinct parishes has been in place nearly nine months and is working very well — better than we had ever imagined it could.

We believe that these are outstanding examples of the way in which the diocese has shown concern for those of us who live in places which are far removed from Rochester.

The people of the Diocese of Rochester are truly blessed in having had both Bishops Joseph Hogan and Matthew Clark as our leaders. The problems facing Bishop Clark today are many and complex. To his credit, he deals with them with compassion and sensitivity which reflects his concern for his people. We wish him well and thank him and his staff for their efforts on our behalf.

Eleanor and Vincent Sementilli
Chemung Street Corning

Truth in reporting requires fair treatment of the British

To the editors:

When I saw the headline over the letters to the editor section of the *Courier* dated 14th March, "News service unfairly reports British activities," I thought, "At last, someone is finally going to give the British a little fair treatment." Instead of which we were treated to more of the same, except that by a most-tortuous route the writer managed to involve African-Americans via South Africa with the very sad situation in Northern Ireland.

I do not know whence Mr. Larson obtained his information concerning coal being imported from South Africa to Northern Ireland, but I do know — as does anyone who is the least familiar with the geography of the British Isles — that Britain has many rich coal fields; enough

to export coal to Ulster without sending to South Africa for this commodity. How do you suppose that the phrase "Like carrying coals to Newcastle" — the equivalent of redundancy — came into use?

I am no supporter of apartheid, but to blame it all on Britain is again a canard. South Africa was originally settled by the Boers, or Dutch, and eventually they were pushed out by the British. But the government in more modern times has been headed by white African leaders — Afrikaners — mostly of Dutch descent, e.g. Piet Botha, de Klerk.

As for bombings, there have been many and not only in Northern Ireland. Almost two years ago, when I was visiting in Southeast England, a barracks was blown up and 11 young musicians, all under 21 years of age, died. Recently while British servicemen and women were fighting side by side with Americans in the Persian Gulf, the same brave IRA terrorists attempted to blow up the British Cabinet. Many innocent civilians in England have died since before WWII because of these people.

I would go on and on, but I do agree that we could all use truth in reporting — on all sides of the issue.

Joyce P. Szwagiel
Drummond Street
Auburn

Diversity fosters growth in church

To the editors:

Reading Father Robert Collins' letter to the editors in *Catholic Courier* March 7, may I respond by saying with him "Vive la difference!" when he speaks of the balanced approach of the columnists.

Since my Catholic background goes back to parochial school learning of the 1920s and '30s, I want to lean heavily toward Father Cuddy's and Father Shamon's views. I'm severely tempted to skip over the views of those with whom I disagree, especially Father McBrien because they arouse a very deep struggle within me. I want to ask the Lord what He thinks about that struggle. The answer within my spirit directs me to look at and pray for the struggles of those who see differently than myself because they could be as strong as my own.

As I pray, enjoy and study with my "opponents" in my daily life, it becomes clear that in sharing our insights and discoveries, we can grow together on the road to unity within our own Catholic Church.

Thank you, Father Collins. "Vive la difference!"

Dorothy Frederick
South Clinton Avenue
Rochester

Bishop Clark praised for spiritual leadership

To the editors:

I read your editorial page every week and so I am very much aware that not too many of us readers write when we like something of someone. That runs true to life "across the board."

So for the record I'd like to say: "Bishop Clark, I like to hear about your nieces. Your column is always warmly human, interesting and spiritually motivating. You are a great spiritual leader and we are fortunate to have you in this Diocese. Priests and lay people whom I meet from other Dioceses envy us in Rochester. Hang in there and know that a lot of us love you."

"E.Z." Zimmer
Clark Street
Auburn

Remedy for humanity's ills resides only in Christ's 'New World Order'

To the editors:

In light of the forgoing articles and letters in regard to the Persian Gulf ceasefire I do not find it hard to believe that so many people could be so duped that they believe peace will hold.

The so-called "Crisis of Faith" has spread to all quarters of Catholic faith and to all peoples and nations. When any Catholic's thinking is in conflict with the teaching authority of the church, then he or she is in conflict with the teachings of Christ.

When a President begins speaking of a New World Order for sure a world dictatorship is on the way. When our government and state leaders have cut and cut programs that they are creating an impossibility for the Church to discharge its Christ-given mission even among the nations. Just legislation alone has succeeded worldwide in putting an end to Catholic education in many places.

The terrible crime of abortion, pornography as a means to sexual permissiveness, the establishment of pervasive sex education and the total elimination of Almighty God from society, then I as a Catholic am deeply concerned. Violence begets violence and we as a nation cannot

fight evil with evil and this is what we did in the Persian Gulf. The U.S. has killed 100,000 Iraqis and caused the Baghdad refugees to be homeless, hungry and in rags. The New World Order that I pray and hope for everyday is the New World Order of Jesus Christ, not the one that President Bush says he is establishing. Our Lady told us at Fatima to have great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to her Immaculate Heart and this is the remedy for evil. Christ denied, Justice denied. Our hope in Jesus Christ is non-violence. When anyone speaks of Peace it must not be a peace just absent from war but a just and lasting peace that comes from the very heart. Be gentle and kind to each other and love our neighbor as we love ourselves. And now we are up to "an act of God," the ice storm. It is a time to love and a time to die. We are bringing the chastisements on ourselves by not turning away from sin. And to think all it is, is a free act of the will, to follow Him or not to follow Him. I shall continue to love my fellow men and all humanity. I thank God everyday that only with His mercy I did not end up hating anyone.

Bernice Kleinhammer
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