

President

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

General Manager

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey

Editor/Asst. Gen. Mgr.

Karen M. Franz

Editorial Department

Managing Editor

Richard A. Kiley

Staff Writers

Lee Strong

Finger Lakes

Rob Cullivan

Monroe County

Mike Latona

Southern Tier

Photo Editor

Babette G. Augustin

Photo Interns

Kellie Mc Cann

Erik Kunkel

Business Department

Circulation Manager

Jeanne A. Morin

Office Manager

Amy D'Accursio

Receptionist

Lenna Hurley

Advertising Department

Advertising Manager

Bernie Puglisi

Advertising Account Exec.

Kathy Welsh

Production Department

Graphics Manager

Lorraine Hennessey

Graphic Artists

Michael Fleckenstein

Kim Parks

Letters Policy

The *Catholic Courier* wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome all signed, original letters about current issues affecting church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions of the letter writers.

We reserve the right to edit all letters. Mail them to: *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.

Participation in synod is essential

To the editors:

It's time for the pendulum to swing back to center.

We have been sated with programs, renewals, retreats, or what have you, aimed at making us feel comfortable with ourselves and suggesting that we spend a great deal of time "enjoying" God and His creation. Nothing wrong with that, and it's a good way to discover our gifts, but so little time has been spent on showing specific ways to use those gifts.

It's old-fashioned to refer to the Baltimore Catechism, but I learned it at my mother's knee and remember the answer to why God made me: "to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him in the next." It seems to me that we have put the cart before the horse and we seek to enjoy Him in this world, letting Him do the knowing and loving and serving us. That's exaggerating, of course, but there is truth in it.

One speaker I heard talked about luxuriating in the shower, thinking of the symbolism of the water, its cleansing effect as it slid over her body. I thought of Mother Teresa and her sisters, using a small basin of water for their ablation, and places where there is no water at all because of severe droughts, and the way we waste water. Another mentioned hugging a tree, enthralled with God's creation. Fine! I thought of hugging a person emaciated from AIDS and about to die. And so on.

What's the antidote? I think it lies within the Diocesan Synod. Your readers' input is not only desirable but

A SYNOD PRAYER

Loving and gracious God, open our minds, inspire our wills, guide our actions, draw us into one, and support our faith.

Give your people the grace to discover your gentle love in one another, and in this discovery, help us discern your will.

When we struggle, help us to be hopeful.

When we speak, inspire us to be kind.

When we decide, grant us patience and understanding.

When we pray, create peace within us.

In all we do, help us labor to renew your church.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

+Matthew H. Clark
Bishop of Rochester

imperative. It's so easy to say "Let Jane do it or let Bob do it. I don't have time." Make time! Turn off the "boob tube." Say the Synod prayer each day. It takes only a couple of seconds. Attend the Synod sessions in your parish in September and make your thoughts heard.

Your participation might turn out to be the most important thing you've done in your whole life. Don't miss the opportunity.

Grace B. Barnes
Eagle Ridge Circle
Rochester

Rely on sacraments to prepare for synod

To the editors:

As Chairperson of my parish Synod team, I have reviewed the Synod information sent to me. To answer the six questions seems much to large for any group to handle, and much to important a task for mere humans to perform. Yet the answers to such questions are relevant, and under obedience to our bishop, the answers must be attempted.

Bishop Clark writes: "We will need God's unflinching help to act carefully and most reflectively, surrendering ourselves to what we discern Christ most asks of us at this time in history and in this place."

God has put us here. Each of us is called to get involved whether it is to pray, talk, write or listen. I have recom-

mended to my group what Cardinal Ratzinger recommends when we are faced with any major task or change in carrier or vocation, that is, a sincere, thorough confession — sacrament of reconciliation. In doing so, you are better prepared with God's grace, open to the workings of the Holy Spirit and confident that good fruit will come of your undertaking.

Because this Synod is a way of (quoting the Synod Manual), "listening to the people of God, reflecting on the Scriptures and tradition, and making recommendations for the future," we need all the channels of grace open to us. Father John A. Hardon, SJ, has explained in *Catholic Catechism*, page 214, the means of grace and sanctity come from "the doctrines of faith and morals, the Mass

and sacraments, directives from those in ecclesiastical authority and the merits of the Church ... the source of which is the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ."

The Synod manual goes on to say that this is a "grace-filled opportunity to assess how well a diocese is fulfilling its mission as Christ's Church and to plan for the future." Are we up to this task? Jesus once said (Mark 10:18), "No one is good but God alone." If we realize that we are all poor sinners in the eyes of God, we will use various means of grace, such as the confessional and Mass, to prepare and strengthen us. In so doing, by His guidance, we will be grace-filled and do our job well.

Frank Netti
Weedsport-Sennet Road, Weedsport

Republicans' platform is closest to Catholic beliefs

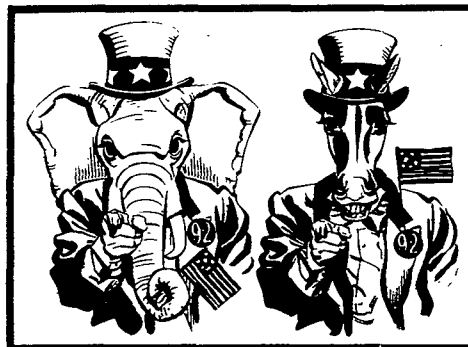
To the editors:

Several weeks ago in the *Catholic Courier*, a Catholic delegate to the Democratic National Convention expressed the opinion that it was inconceivable that a Catholic would vote Republican.

In view of the fact that the Democratic platform embraces abortion, homosexual marriage, as well as Rev. Jesse Jackson's statement that our Blessed Mother was a single, homeless parent, I find that opinion outrageous.

While the Republican party isn't in lock step with the Vatican, it is far less offensive to Catholic beliefs than those held by the Democrats.

Looking at a few of our prominent Catholic Democrats like Governor Mario Cuomo and Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, it is evident that they give lip service to the Catholic position on



abortion.

Stating their refusal to impose their moral views on abortion they nevertheless impose their views on capital punishment even though the majority of New Yorkers support the death penalty.

The party of compassion then would allow the innocent to die via abortion while protecting the lives of murderers by refusing to impose capital punish-

ment.

On other issues like gay rights, activist groups like Act-Up are supporting Governor Bill Clinton in his bid for the presidency.

Act-Up, by the way, was responsible for the 1988 disruption of a Mass at New York's St. Patrick Cathedral where sacred hosts were desecrated.

If this is the kind of support the Democratic Party wants then Catholics should bow out.

Catholics should also remember that pro-life Governor Bob Casey of Pennsylvania was denied the opportunity to speak at the Democratic National Convention.

This speaks volumes concerning the moral direction of the Democratic Party.

Robert Bart
PO Box 594
Ithaca