

Vitriolic response offered excessive protest

To the editors:

Congratulations to the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild for their excellent analysis of the pending general synod. Their action demonstrates that the spirit of St. Thomas More is alive and that there is hope even for the local church.

I was shocked by the vitriolic response of Father Joseph Hart to the Guild's statement. Upon reflection, Father Hart, don't you think that comparing these defenders of the faith to international terrorists goes just a little too far? Me thinks he protests too much.

In thoughtful, tempered and considerate language the St. Thomas More Guild set forth its concerns about the direction being taken by the local synod. One less temperate might have suggested that the entire synod was rigged

from the outset as was obvious by the agenda established by the Bishop and the appointments of those who could be counted on to control the outcome. Lay participation was invited to legitimize an otherwise illegitimate proceeding.

The Bishop clings to his radical agenda in "tension" with the Magisterium. He has been captured by a clique of radical feminists who view Jesus Christ's references to God as "Father" as discriminating and destructive. This new liberation theology presents a grave threat to the Church and I commend the Guild for calling attention to the misuse of the general synod to advance this un-Christian theology.

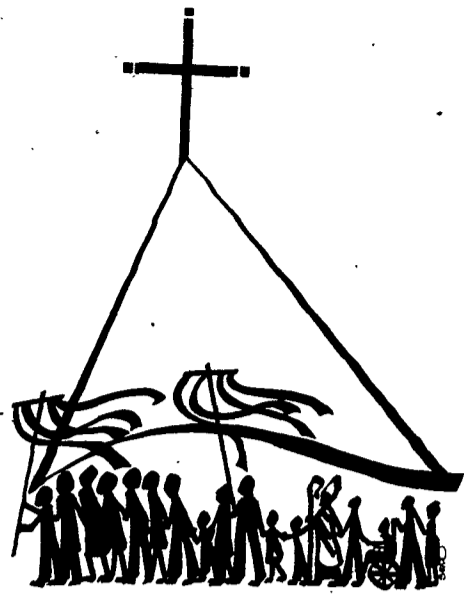
I was amused by Father Hart's article on "Magisterium." Apparently these people believe that if they can capture

the language they can capture the Church. Father Hart, there is magisterium and there is Magisterium. As a father I exercise my magisterium, as a priest, you exercise yours. To deliberately corrupt that term in an attempt to diminish the "teaching authority of the Church" and to magnify the teaching authority of the local bishop is a dangerous exercise.

Finally, Father Hart attacks the notion that the new catechism should be made widely available to the faithful. What are you afraid of, Father Hart? We will only use the new catechism to assist us in the exercise of our magisterium.

Pray God, all this too will pass.

Joseph A.F. Valenti
Franklin Street
Rochester



Column was sarcastic, nasty

To the editors:

In all the sorry discord that has followed Vatican II, I have never seen a more vicious, vitriolic and downright nasty diatribe than that written by Father Joseph Hart in the *Courier* on July 1.

While wrapping himself in "Christian virtue," he angrily compares the authors of an ad differing with "his" Synod to the terrorists who plotted to assassinate our leaders and bomb public buildings. Give me a break!!!

He sarcastically attacks "the few" who oppose the workings of "his" Synod. How does he know that there are only a handful of Catholics in this diocese who support the ad's position? Is he in receipt of some Divine Revelation denied to us mere mortals?

Perhaps the Editors of the *Courier* — who incidentally deserve kudos for printing "the ad" — unwittingly, or not, were directing some comments on Father Hart's column. On the bottom of the same Page 13 in a box was this quote from Proverbs 15, 1: "A mild answer calms wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

I believe that there are many of us in this diocese who still prefer to be Roman Catholics rather than Rochester Catholics and are either bored, annoyed or amused by the whole Synod.

At least Father Hart allows Father Collins his wish that the *Courier* replace thoughtful sincere letters with which he disagrees with comic strips. Father Hart sure sounds like Hagar, the Horrible.

Don Ninestine
East North Street, Geneva

EDITORS' NOTE: We intended no connection between Father Hart's column and the quote from Proverbs.

Lauds bishop's wisdom

To the editors:

This letter is a response to the ad placed by the Board of Governors of the St. Thomas More Lawyers' Guild in your June 24 issue.

In Bishop Clark's letters to Synod participants, he asks those involved to ponder three questions: "What could we as church be doing better? How can we carry on Jesus' mission more effectively? Where is the best place to use our limited resources effectively?"

I was a chairperson of a community Synod group, and in carrying out this charge, there was no sense of being pushed to dissent from the magisterium of the Church. On the contrary, the goal has consistently been to work with the Bishop in preparing "realistically for the future by formulating a prioritized pastoral plan" (September, 1992, and February, 1993, letters).

In these complex cultural and economic times, I laud the wisdom of Bishop Clark in asking for the insights of the People of God in his pastoral concerns for the future.

Sister Mary Lynch
East Avenue, Rochester

Guild seems not to have read cited canons

To the editors:

A recent paid "political" advertisement in the *Catholic Courier* (June 24, 1993) by the St. Thomas More Lawyers' Guild raises provocative and unfounded accusations against the Synodal process of the Diocese of Rochester.

Although the Board of Governors generically and apparently for effect makes reference to Canons 460-468 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* which treats Diocesan Synods, they have apparently failed to read them.

Canon 460 briefly and broadly identifies the scope of the Synod as a "group of selected priests and other Christian faithful of a particular church which offers assistance to the diocesan bishop for the good of the entire diocese." This description well follows that of Pope Benedict XIV who in his monumental



work *De Synodo Diocesana* (The Diocesan Synod) accepted the description of a synod given by two earlier canonists: "The legitimate gathering ... in which those things related to pastoral care are deliberated and acted upon."

Such Synod topics as "meeting the

special needs of youth and young adults as well as the elderly and those who care for them" and "improving our efforts in faith development and in inviting others to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ" contrary to appearing "dangerously close to challenging the magisterium of the Church" as suggested by the Guild, seem well suited to the task of the Synod as delineated in Church law. They seem appropriate as well to the bishop and his office which is to be exercised to show that he (the bishop) is concerned with all the Christian faithful who are committed to his care regardless of age, condition or nationality (Canon 383 1).

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'Canon Ball Brigade' waging pious warfare on bishop

To the editors:

The St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild, along with the (Catholics United for the Faith), has given us a new kind of pious warfare and a new slogan. I suggest calling them "The Canon Ball Brigade." They are waging war on our bishop and the clergy and laity that support him; who incidentally far out-number this loud disgruntled minority. It is sad that they see the faith given us by Jesus, only in terms of man made rules and regulations — Canon Law. If they read what they quoted they would understand: "...the (Vatican) council wrote, there exists an order, or hierarchy of truths, since they vary in their relationship to the foundation of the Christian faith."

Unfortunately, the council was unable to change too many rules, because as always there are those in the hierarchy who honor the law and tradition more than the teachings of Jesus.

The Gospels and Epistles have many incidents where Jesus and St. Paul spoke out against that very problem. Tradition is the only justification for the stance taken by some in the church concerning the rule of celibacy for the ordained clergy, or equality for women in the celebration of the liturgy. These rules were written by the men who came after the founder of our church and can't be blamed on Jesus or St. Paul. It is obvious to any serious reader of Scripture that they too were men of

their time and had to deal with and constantly fight a heavy burden of tradition and culture.

The Synod I personally took part in was no call to revolution or dissent, nor were the participants expected to hide their heads in the sand regarding major problems in the church. We have a growing shortage of ordained clergy, and sooner or later expediency will dictate change. Obsolete canon laws will be rewritten and traditions that interfere with the needs of the church will be relegated to the past where they belong; let us pray it happens soon.

George J. Pfeifer
Lynette Drive
Rochester

Why should Synod heighten already-evident tensions?

To the editors:

Having read both the St. Thomas More Lawyer's Guild ad (*Courier*, June 24) and Father Hart's rebuttal of July 1, I am persuaded by the substance and focus of the Guild's contentions. Father Hart's relating their criticism of aspects of the Synod to terrorists tactics is rather extreme.

The Guilds primary objection revolves about, the agreement of the diocese to permit final inclusion of the controversial, divisive and polarizing so-called "prophetic responses." How this decision facilitates "the good of the entire diocesan community" (Canon 460) is unfathomable. Rather, it fosters dispute.

Both Catholic doctrine and specific Papal directives are disregarded. In 1983 Pope John Paul II stated "Catholics must reject the idea of women priests

and withdraw support from any group or individual advocating a female priesthood."

Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* (#25) states "a loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff even when he does not speak *ex cathedra*." Such assent logically precludes dissent and contin-

ued discussion of women's ordination supports dissent.

The Synod's six themes are concerned with social ministry, spiritual development, education and community cooperation. Why introduce issues which are certain to exacerbate tensions already evident?

A.J. Annunziata
Holiday Drive, Horseheads

Don't repeat idiocy of Bishop Sheen departure

To the editors:

In defense of Bishop Clark, I'm tired of this constant contention created in this Diocese by the self-righteous, who, while meaning well, characterize Bishop Clark as an "Archbishop LeFebvre" in the making. Yes, he is more liberal in his views than I am; but please spend more

time in prayer, rather than endless criticism and harangue. Remember when you practically rode Bishop Sheen out of town on a rail. A dark day for this Diocese. You will not repeat this idiocy again; do not turn your wrath to shame.

Joseph R. Quigley
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