

Documents will offer guidance

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

The meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops held in Washington, D.C., last week was a lively and interesting session.

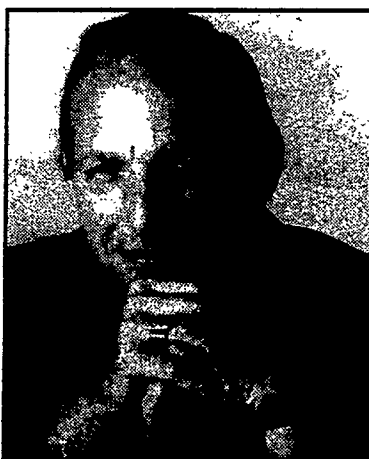
We covered issues ranging from the revision of the Sacramentary, to the updating of our ethical guidelines for Catholic health-care institutions, to the passage of our conference budget for the coming year.

Our membership also approved for publication two statements I hope will both confirm us in work we are doing in our local church and help us to advance that work.

The first of these documents, "Strengthening the Bonds of Peace," is a pastoral reflection on women in our church and society. This paper calls upon local churches to recognize the talents, experience and expertise of women, and to involve them in the processes by which decisions important to the life of the church are made.

I am delighted at the publication of the document because its content gives strong affirmation to our Synod priority #4. And I believe it offers a range of specific and helpful suggestions for your consideration.

As we begin to work with the document, I am confident that it will spark some constructive initiatives for our community. As dioceses across the



A LONG THE WAY

country do the same, we will have some wonderful opportunities to benefit from their reflections and to share ours with them.

The second document we approved for publication is "Confronting A Culture of Violence." As its title suggests, this statement explores the issue of violence in our nation. It considers some of its underlying causes of violence, raises some thoughtful questions and makes some practical recommendations about what we can do to address this serious concern.

I am delighted that we will have this thoughtful paper as a resource as we try together to live our commitment to Synod priority #2, the Consistent Life Ethic. Both of these documents should be

published before the end of the year and will be available through our conference.

One of my themes through the years has been the pride I take in your willingness and ability to deal with real issues in a consistent and thoughtful way. My experience at our meeting this week did nothing but confirm that conviction. Thank you so much for your generous openness to life's sometimes difficult challenges.

As I express that note of thanks to you during this week of Thanksgiving, I am mindful of and grateful for the wonderful signs of hope and life that are so evident in our communities.

Just since my return from Washington, I have spent time with the people of Good Shepherd in Henrietta, Holy Angels in Nunda, St. Patrick's in Mt. Morris, St. Mary's Hospital and our campus parish at the State University of New York College at Brockport. In every one of those communities there is evident much life and the kind of spirit that gives hope to those who are privileged to visit them.

For all of them and for you I shall give thanks as I celebrate the Eucharist with the people at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Thanksgiving morning.

I hope that you and your loved ones have a joy-filled and blessed Thanksgiving weekend.

Peace to all.

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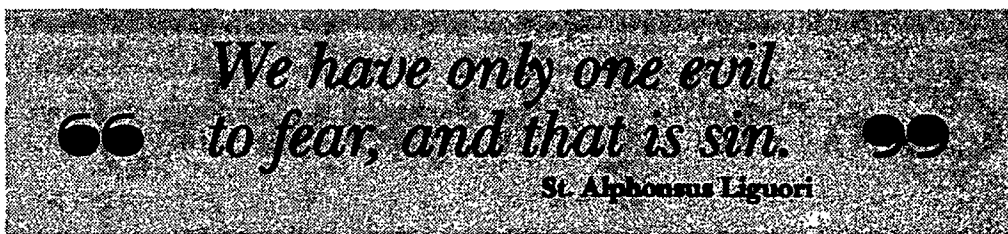
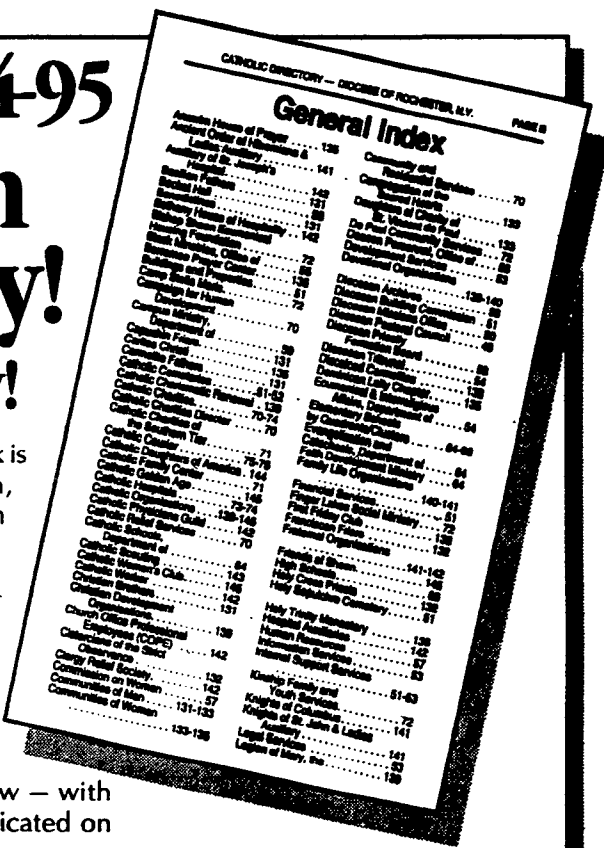
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THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?
A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Lord Jesus, you have chosen your priests from among us and sent them out to proclaim your word and to act in your name. For so great a gift to your Church, we give you praise and thanksgiving. We ask you to fill them with the fire of your love, that their ministry may reveal your presence in the Church. Since they are earthen vessels, we pray that your power shine out through their weakness. In their afflictions let them never be crushed; in their doubts never despair; in temptation never be destroyed; in persecution never abandoned. Inspire them through prayer to live each day the mystery of your dying and rising. In times of weakness send them your Spirit, and help them to praise your heavenly Father and pray for poor sinners. By the same Holy Spirit put your word on their lips and your love in their hearts, to bring good news to the poor and healing to the broken-hearted. And may the gift of Mary your mother, to the disciple whom you loved, be your gift to every priest. Grant that she who formed you in her human image, may form them in your divine image, by the power of your Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. Amen

O Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to you. (3X)
With permission of Most Rev. Felix S. Zafra, D.D., Bishop of Tagbilaran (Bohol, Philippines)
Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him on behalf of His priests

DECEMBER, 1994

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