

'Blunders' lead to violence in society

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

On Monday of this week I was the guest at an event sponsored by the Coalition for a Better Auburn/Cayuga County. That group, which seeks peace through education and constructive activity, invited Arun Gandhi, grandson of the great Indian leader, Mohandas K. Gandhi, to spend the day in Auburn discussing themes of nonviolence with interested citizens (see story, page 5).

I was able to attend a midday public lecture at which Mr. Gandhi addressed the theme, "Why the Gandhi and King Dreams Remain Unfulfilled." His presentation was a thoughtful one. He drew heavily from the teaching and example of his grandfather and argued that nonviolent solutions to today's problems will always be more effective than violent ones.

He contends that violent solutions attack people; nonviolent ones attack problems. The session was made even more interesting by questions from the audience of several hundred students from high schools in the region.

Following the public lecture, I joined the planning committee for lunch with Mr. Gandhi. At that meal we heard a few more words from the guest of honor, and I was among those invited to offer comments about the day's events.

I would love to have remained in Auburn for the evening workshop Mr. Gandhi was to present on: "Anger: How



A LONG THE WAY

to Deal With It Positively." I look forward to hearing about that session from friends in Auburn who were able to attend.

As we entered the room where the Gandhi lecture was to be held, each of us was given a bookmark sized souvenir of the event. I was speaking with someone on the way in, so when I received the memento I thanked the person who gave it to me and put it in my pocket. It was only after the Rite of Election at Sacred Heart Cathedral last night that I read what was on the card.

The card listed what in Mohandas K. Gandhi's judgment were the eight blunders that lead to violence in society. I find them deeply thought-provoking and share them with you for your Lenten prayer and reflection:

- Wealth without Work
- Pleasure without Conscience
- Knowledge without Character
- Commerce without Morality
- Science without Humanity
- Worship without Sacrifice
- Politics without Principle
- Rights without Responsibility

The message on the card concludes with the words: May you dedicate your lives to the reduction and elimination of these blunders and have the courage to practice *ahimsa*, the way of nonviolence.

If you read Along the Way with any regularity, you know very well that, having shared this list with you I'm now going to ask you to do some thinking about the eight blunders Gandhi claimed lead to violence in society.

Do YOU think that they apply to the United States in the 1990s?

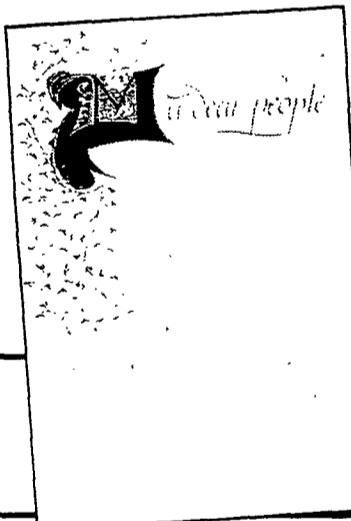
Would you add any blunders to the list? Which one of the eight holds the deepest significance for you? Why?

How does violence touch your life? How do you respond to it?

Thanks for reading this column and for considering the questions I raise. I hope that this moment of reflection will help us all to be a little more aware than we have been of the pervasive presence of violence in our society and of how we, even unwittingly, can contribute to it.

Peace to all.

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—Bishop Matthew H. Clark
December, 1994

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