

Community must provide room for all

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

On Saturday, April 29, the Feast of St. Catherine of Siena, and the 13th anniversary of the publication of "Fire in The Thornbush," our pastoral letter on women in the church, I went to St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, for a program celebrating the publication of that document.

The program, co-sponsored by the parish and Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier, drew many people from the southern part of our diocese and even a few from the Rochester area. Participants gathered around four themes that were discussed twice so that all could enjoy two sessions during the day.

When asked to prepare a brief reflection on "Images of God" for a prayer gathering that opened the day, I gladly accepted — not realizing how much I would enjoy thinking and reading about the subject. The experience reminded me of how often feminine images are used to describe God in the Scriptures and how seldom we use such images in our worship and everyday conversation.

It had been my intention to attend the sessions being offered through the day, but as it turned out, I spent the time conversing with some women who wanted to speak with me about particular questions and concerns they had about the themes that gathered us that day.

I won't go into much detail about the conversations, except to say that they reminded me of how much work remains for us if we are ever to come to a more peaceful and community-supported place on these questions.



A LONG THE WAY

As I see it, there are great numbers of bright, faithful men and women out there who find it extremely difficult to find room in their hearts for the church's official teaching on the ordination of women. The arguments offered in support of our position are not persuading them. And, until good seeds of persuasion are sewn, appeals to authority yield few results.

It troubles me deeply that many bright and vital young women find this reality so painful that they no longer participate actively in the life of our community of faith. It is of no less concern to me that many others who remain active do so even though they feel that they have been asked to swallow a very bitter pill indeed.

Since that Saturday session I have been thinking about a statement Archbishop

Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee issued when *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* was published. In his statement, Rembert recognized the authority of the document and accepted it. But he also expressed his view that it raised some very serious pastoral problems that would not easily be solved.

When I read Rembert's statement, I thought he was right. Experiences like the one I had in Horseheads last Saturday leave me even more convinced that he is correct. We have some very serious pastoral problems on the head of official church teaching about the ordination of women.

What can we do in a situation like this? We know that we are to respect the authority of the church and that we should be willing to assent to it in all matters in which it is appropriately exercised. But how do we relate to people who simply do not as yet find it possible to give their assent to this teaching because it does not rest peacefully in their minds or resonate with what their life and faith experience tell them?

I have no easy answer for that question, but I think it is vitally important that we have ample room in the church for people who are in that position. All of us — the Holy Sec, bishops, all men and women of the church — need to provide a community in which the honestly held views of faithful Catholic people can respectfully be aired, even if they do not perfectly coincide with the official teaching of the day. I think that our history is filled with examples of how the church has prospered when that kind of exchange has been possible.

Peace to all.



Yellow Rose Crafts

A craft shop unlike any other, presenting a collection of wonderful handmade items by local artists.

Our lovely selection of Mother's Day Gifts include:
Jewelry, Baskets, Lovely Spring Wreaths,
and more...

25 South Main Street • Pittsford • 383-0870

DiPonzio Funeral Home Inc.

Across from St. Theodore's Church
Dominic A. DiPonzio - Lic.Mgr.
Christopher B. DiPonzio - L. F. D.
Joseph D. DiPonzio - L.F. D.

219 Spencerport Rd. • Rochester
429-6700

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)
Vol. 106 No. 31 May 4, 1995

Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.

Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340. Second-Class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

**Cemetery
Flowers & Plantings**

GRAVESITE

• PLANTINGS • MAINTENANCE • BOUQUETS

*Reasonable & Reliable
Color Photo Confirmation of all Services*

716-377-8590



!!Finally!!

"The music you've been asking for is here"
"All new recording...over 50 minutes of beautiful music...
...exquisite performance by recording artist Keith Wells..."

Here I Am, Lord **Be Not Afraid**

On Eagle's Wings

Prayer of St. Francis Hosea
And Many More!!!
Not Sold In Stores

Mail check or money order with the form below:


----- Cut On Dotted Line -----

Make Check Payable to: Golden Lyre Records P.O. Box 1100 West Acton, MA 01720	Qty. Price Total Compact Disc _____ \$15.95 Cassette Tape _____ \$12.95 Shipping/Handling _____ \$ 2.95 Total Enclosed _____
---	---

Please Print:
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

100% 30-day money back guarantee! RNY

**ARNDT
FUNERAL HOME**
Family Owned & Operated



**RONALD JOHN ARNDT
ROBERT J. ARNDT**

Funeral Directors
225-6350
1118 Long Pond Road
(South of Maiden Lane)

**HART
MONUMENT
COMPANY**

Since 1856

**Monuments, Markers
and Cemetery Lettering**

2301 Dewey Avenue
(OPPOSITE HOLY SEPULCHRE CEMETERY)
(716) 865-6746