

Reaction From Saginaw

By A.J. MATT JR.

The recently concluded series by W.H. Marshner on The Church in the diocese of Saginaw has provoked a storm of reaction. Many priests and laymen have written to thank us for publishing the truth about conditions in Saginaw and express the hope that the publicity may result in some corrective action. As might be expected the reactions from "establishment" sources were not very complimentary.

A statement issued by the Michigan Federation of Priests' Councils accuses this editor of employing McCarthyite tactics by "smearing innocent people" and proposing "Hitlerian remedies" to resolve problems in the Church. The Wanderer is charged with proposing "a Fascist use of power and authority to beat people into submission and then show them off as having 'faith' . . ." No, the above was not published in Pravda, but by the MFPC. Of course this is not too surprising when one considers that the president of MFPC is one Fr. Charles E. Irvin, who last year asserted that he wanted no part of a hierarchy that paid any attention to the likes of The Wanderer or CUF.

The editor of the Saginaw diocesan paper, Fr. Neil O'Connor, is more reserved in his criticism. Marshner's article, he declares, "blows out of proportion certain liturgical practices indulged in" by some Saginaw priests. Note carefully, Fr. O'Connor does not deny the validity of Marshner's assertions. Accusing The Wanderer of unfairness and lack of charity, Fr. O'Connor concludes that "It is not here a question of truth in describing mistakes in our Church of Saginaw. It is not a healing process but divisive."

Here it seems, Fr. O'Connor demonstrates a typical unwillingness to face reality by those in authoritative positions. Is it really possible to effect a "healing process" within the Church when those most responsible for its illness are allowed to continue their divisive tactics unchallenged and uncensured? Why is it so "divisive" on the part of The Wan-

derer to expose the sources of division and dissent within the Church? Is it really more charitable to remain silent while orthodox priests and laity are persecuted and the minds of Catholic children are being filled with fraudulent teaching?

No, if The Wanderer is wrong about conditions in Saginaw, let those who can, tell us why we are wrong. We stand ready to become part of any "healing process" designed to eliminate the divisions within the Church. But we are not about to accept quack medicine when the only effective healing remedy is the sure and powerful medicine of orthodoxy.