

# A Friend Recalls: 'Good Days Ahead'

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"It's okay. I'll watch the time. You guys sleep; I'll just read the Time Magazine."

"Are you sure you will stay awake?"

Each of the other three men travelling took his turn asking the question, as if the additional answers were a remedy against slumber.

To each inquiry, the respondent gave explicit assurance that he was okay.

He would watch the night and wake the group faithfully at 4 a.m., in plenty of time for catching the train to Mainz.

Matthew H. Clark thus took his place in history as one of the great guardians of the night watch. We might better have used a gaggle of geese for all the watching that went on. He must have beat us to slumber because, when we stirred at 4:45 a.m., it was not his nudge that got us off on that run to the station.

In fact, he was so beclouded in his rush to get ready that he left a bag of clothing behind, a bag which he wouldn't recover for several weeks.

We had missed everything but the dawn. Our sentinel of the darkness offered the explanation, "I must have dozed for a minute."

To a man, each of his disheveled travelling companions said in turn, "We never should have let Matt stay awake!"

Such is the stuff that memory offers when one is asked to shake off the layers of time and bring back the past.

The score of years have filled the corners of memory with many such moments. Taken apart they mean little, like separated pieces of a jig-saw puzzle; but as one locks one moment to another, the picture emerges. The line that holds each of the pieces together is friendship.

The earliest days of friendship were rooted in the sandy fields of Camp Tekakwitha, "on the sunny side of beautiful Lake Luzerne."

June of 1957 brought a new group of counselors to join ranks with us "old-timers." Matthew Clark was among those to test his fortune as a counselor of the boys camp sponsored by the Diocese of Albany. Because I had the privilege of moving from diaper row to acne alley because of my veteran's status, I offered my battle-scarred advice to the new mentor.

Memory recalls that Cabin Three, dedicated to St. Charles, should have been titled St. Vitus. Counselor Clark finally stopped trying to keep clothes and campers in order, and for inspection would take the available supply of shirts and shorts and send the campers to the inspection line as he sorted them out.

Once, as Officer of the Day, I remarked, "The kids' shirts are inside out." Counselor Clark snorted that if they didn't shape up he would "reverse their bodies to go along with the twisted shirts." St. Charles failed inspection, but the counselor deemed it a victory if he had all the campers at the line.

When the invitation to study in Rome was extended, I did not know what to expect in many areas of foreign study but I knew I would enjoy my companion's company.

His ability to see the human, and therefore the funny, side of so many occurrences guaranteed our stay. The language proved no barrier: Clark signed and Powers shouted and we were understood. Lots of pointing and gesturing got the idea across when words failed. At the Gregorian University, the St. Bernard's Seminary background got Matthew excused from Church History (one year) and Hebrew. Never will the rest of

the class forgive the dramatic exits he pulled each day as he "left early due to previous study."

His sports ability gained him a place on the first "new man team ever to win the Turkey Bowl."

The game was played on a November day near Thanksgiving; and the tradition and fact was that "new men always lost" the game.

By taking bets on the team which included David "Ox" Keifer, Henry Mansell (later declared All-Rome) and Matt Clark, I had soda money for the rest of the semester.

But time is at best a sieve for events, and the days drop through. The "Albany men" were well-known for being the most likely to: 1) get on the wrong bus; 2) order the wrong pasta; 3) get lost on a sight-seeing tour of a catacomb.

The high school classroom claimed us both. Father Clark was only at Vincentian Institute for a year when he was assigned for further studies. Catholic University and more work at the Gregorian led to Chancery responsibilities. Still, there were the moments when relaxation and leisure interrupted the routine.

There was the time when he lost the bishop's car while visiting Catskill; the time his mother had to call him in New York City to tell him that he had been robbed in his hotel room (he had slept through the event. Police had found his identification cards on the sidewalk after the burglary); the time he flew off to Rome with his family's car keys in his pocket — the list goes on as the memory unravels.

If I may sum up my feelings at this marvelous time, I would suggest that the attitude of the people of Rochester might



Photos from Father Powers' collection: counter clockwise above right, a youthful Matthew H. Clark boards the USS Constitution bound for studies at the North American College in Rome on Sept. 18, 1959; a week later the future bishop and the author posed for this picture on the Isle of Capri; seminarians at the North American College, two years later, from the left, in Father Powers words "Jerry Sullivan, Jim Mackey, Howie Hubbard, Matt, Yours truly."

well be what I experienced many years ago as Matthew Clark and I left the U.S. for study abroad: "We do not know what all is ahead; but with Matthew, it ought to be a lot of good days."

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DeTristitia .

"My timorous and feeble little sheep . . . follow my leadership; if you do not trust yourself, place your trust in me. See I am walking ahead of you along this fearful road."

St. Thomas More

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Heartiest Congratulations  
and  
Sincere Best Wishes

**Bishop  
Matthew H. Clark**



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