

# Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



Rome (Sept. 18) -- Some notes on a happy week.

● Wednesday, Sept. 14 -- There was some suspense and mystery for me in today's general audience with the Holy Father.

When the assistant to Pope John Paul II called out the names of pilgrimage groups from English-speaking countries, it went something like this:

"From the United States of America, a group from the diocese of Grand Rapids." Cheers! Shouts! Applause and the smiling nods of pilgrims in the area who greeted them.

"We also welcome a group from the diocese of Pueblo, Colo." The same cheers, shouts, applause and nods!

"We have another group from the diocese of Rochester." Dead silence! -- except for the poker-faced comment of a brother pilgrim who observed, "You sure have a lively group, Matt!"

I wondered what happened and began to fear that something had gone terribly wrong.

But that ended only a few minutes later. Our Holy Father began to salute the same groups and when he mentioned the Rochester group, our 70 pilgrims made it abundantly clear to the thousands in the square that they were very much there. They had traveled from Sorrento that morning and arrived late for the audience because they lost some time in the heavy Roman traffic.

It was a joyful experience of the Holy Year and the Church. Some 70,000 people gathered in the square on a bright, warm morning. I stopped counting at 34 the number of countries represented but they included Korea, Indonesia, Loweto, Mexico, Japan, the United States, Brazil and virtually all of the nations of Europe.

Music is always a part of audiences. Groups sing their favorite hymns to the delight of the whole community and draw their warm applause. A special touch was added this time by a Lutheran group from Copenhagen. Some 150 in number, they formed an orchestra and chorus whose performances were touching and deeply appreciated by all. They added to the visual beauty of the day as well since they, all of them, were dressed in red and white.

● Thursday, Sept. 15 -- A pleasant evening with our pilgrimage group. We had a meal together at a restaurant on the Via Aurelia.

My lasting memory of the group will be their unity, enthusiasm and joy. To enter their company was to realize that they had shared something important and lasting. And to be with them for a while was to share in that goodness because they gave it so freely.

I have seen many groups of travelers over the years but I don't remember any so much alive and so ready to go after so demanding an itinerary.

(I remember from an earlier column that I should not refer to a meal without giving a menu: tortellini, veal marsala, green beans, salad and cream cake. Very good!)

● Friday, Sept. 16 -- For me the high point of this stay in Rome. Our Rochester group met for 7 a.m. Mass at the altar of Christ the King in the crypt area of St. Peter's.

In the morning quiet, we celebrated the Eucharist for you and your loved ones and for all of the intentions which unite our hearts during this Holy Year of Redemption.

Stan Kacprzak of St. Cecilia's, Irondequoit, had returned from his Summer ministry in London and served as deacon at the Mass. He has one more year of study in Rome before returning to Rochester.

At that Eucharist, I was deeply touched with an appreciation of who we are as a people. All of the travels, the meals, the sharing, the music and the prayers; all memories, all sacrifices, all hopes and dreams of each person there became in Christ, Our Lord, our common offering to a loving Father. You were very much a part of that offering.

I have had a remarkably graced time here and look forward to what remains.

But I must also confess that the memory of that Eucharist at St. Peter's makes me anxious to see you all again. Peace.

## We Prayed in Each Church for Rochester

By Father Louis Vasile

"It is my wish, then, that in every place prayers shall be offered with blameless hands held aloft, and be free from anger and dissension." (1 Tm. 2.8)

St. Paul's instruction to Timothy, his friend and companion, sets the scene for our journey of faith which began Sept. 4 for 77 pilgrims at the Monroe County Airport. Pope John Paul II's invitation to "open the door to the Redeemer" becomes our focus as we travel more than 1400 miles in Italy itself.

We began our journey in Rochester and landed (eventually) in Milan. The first leg of our journey brought us to Stresa, a resort in the North on beautiful Lake Maggiore where we caught up on our rest (jet-lag) and enjoyed an evening together visiting outdoor restaurants and enjoying Italian music and dancing.

In the morning we were on our way to Milan for a tour of our first cathedral. The

squares leading to each of the churches we visited were usually quite beautiful. Pigeons and those who fed them, as well as vendors of food and otherwise were in abundance.

In every area the church structure represented the faith and love of those who labored so hard to produce each masterpiece. It is very difficult to describe each church. It is sufficient to say that some of the churches are as old as Christianity itself, and of course some are very new -- about 400 years old.

We prayed in each church for the people near and dear to each of us and most especially for our friends at home, the people of the Church of Rochester.

The cathedrals in Milan, Venice, Florence, Padua, Assisi, Siena, Sorrento and, of course, in Rome were absolutely amazing.

Yet, as amazing as they were, the people we met, and the scenery (lakes, mountains, flowers, birds, sea) were certainly natural wonders for making God's greatness more evident to each of us.

I wish I could adequately

describe the beauty of the Dolomite mountains, the majesty of the blue waters of Capri and Sorrento, the parks and gardens of Rome, the quaint splendor of the Umbrian Province where Assisi sits so high on a mountain top.

We were privileged to celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday, Sept. 11, at 3 p.m. at the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi in Assisi. There were 77 Rochester pilgrims, 5 priests and 300-400 who gathered from time to time to visit Francis' tomb.

For me, originally a parishioner from St. Francis of Assisi in Auburn, I was coming home. To celebrate this Eucharist was one of the highpoints of my trip. Pilgrim after pilgrim found peace (Francis' gift from God) here.

We were at the papal audiences (and so were 250,000 other pilgrims) on the morning of Wednesday, Sept. 14. What a thrill to hear ourselves called "the pilgrims from Rochester, N.Y." by the pope. He would turn and we sat close enough (in fact, very close) to see him and have him see us, thanks to

Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

Bishop Clark was at the audience and greeted us afterwards. What a thrill to see "our bishop and shepherd." During the audience the pope addressed every group of pilgrims in the language of their country. It was not unusual to see representatives dressed in native costume. The very columns of St. Peter's seemed to say, "Welcome Home Pilgrim."

Thursday evening we shared a beautiful meal with Bishop Clark, and on Friday we celebrated the Eucharist once again. Bishop Clark was the celebrant. The Mass was at St. Peter's Basilica at the altar of Christ the King. This altar was located at the tomb of the popes. We had the tombs of John Paul I, John XXIII, Pius XI, St. Peter and Paul VI surrounding us. We prayed once again for all churches, nations, and especially for you, our brothers and sisters in Rochester.

Finally, before leaving Rome, we celebrated the Eucharist on Sunday evening at the Casa Sancta Maria which is the graduate house for our American priests who



reside in Rome. (Fathers McKenna and Laird will be there in October). Also, our seminarian deacons, Alexander Bradshaw and Stan Kacprzak reside at the North American Seminary and will return to Rochester in June 1984.

All in all our journey of faith from America to Italy was first begun as a journey of the heart and became a love affair with our God. Pilgrims during the Holy

Year -- in Rome and in Rochester -- are now one because of the 77 pilgrims who brought the Church of Rochester to Rome and Rome to Rochester.

May God our Father, who has provided this blessing to this unworthy pilgrim find many opportunities during the Holy Year of Redemption to share the Good News of salvation with all of you.

(Father Vasile is secretary to Bishop Clark.)

## Faces Tell Story of Holy Year Pilgrimage

By Sr. Mary Louise Heffernan, SSJ

The days spent traveling through Italy were filled with new experiences, new people and new life. Reflecting on these experiences my consciousness focuses on the people present in the different places. To celebrate our pilgrimage I wish to share with you the story of faces.

Sunday, Sept. 4 found 77 pilgrims from Rochester waiting in the holding area of Alitalia at JFK. Faces reflected a deep happiness that our Holy Year journey was beginning. Faces lined with wisdom, faces youthful and full of life, faces burdened

with cares and suffering waited to board the plane.

In Stresa on Lake Maggiore the serenity of the place took root in the faces of our group and there was a feeling of letting go and being free to enjoy.

Awe struck faces looked at the Cathedral of Milan as well as so many other cathedrals and basilicas during these days. Within each church we always found people praying intently. In Padua I recall the face of a woman (of Padua I expect) lighting a candle in the cathedral. Her eyes spoke of her faith and faithfulness.

The faces of the hundreds of thousands of people in the square of St. Peter's on Sept. 14 was a deep experience of faith for me. Beautiful faces from Italy, Poland, Costa

Rica, Nicaragua, Korea, the United States, and other parts of the world spoke to me of the unity among us. For me it was an experience of entering into the Paschal Mystery. The living, suffering, resurrected Christ in oneness calling for peace and reconciliation.

After leaving the square we were greeted by Bishop Matthew H. Clark. Faces shone with joy and the bishop's face reflected his happiness that we had arrived.

I paused for a few moments early one morning and watched the people pass through the Porta Sancta (Holy Door) opened during the Holy Year. I recall vividly the face of an Oriental man approaching the door. His face reflected a reverence for the holy place as he passed through and stopped to pray.

The faces of our pilgrimage group portrayed a sense of commitment the day we journeyed to Assisi. Our hearts beat eagerly as we climbed the cobbled street to the basilica of St. Francis. There was wonder and love in each one's face as we participated in Mass at the tomb of St. Francis. It was a moment of unity within our pilgrimage. I felt everyone resonate with joy and desire for reconciliation as we stood in this holy place.

There were faces of children on pilgrimage with their families. Children whose eyes store in their hearts forever the beauty and richness of Christianity.

All of this brings me to a sense of littleness, recognizing more fully the universality of our struggle for wholeness. We are home now but

our Holy Year pilgrimage will shape the life experiences we share with the local

church of Rochester. I give thanks to my God for this.

### Diocesan Appointments

**Father Edward Dillon to associate pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help from associate pastor of Holy Family.**

**Father Ronald Frederick to associate pastor of St. Ambrose from associate pastor of St. Philip Neri.**

**Father Mark Miller to associate pastor of St. Philip Neri from associate pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.**