

Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



Did you ever hear or use the phrase "South of the Barge Canal"?

In the circles in which I move, that expression is usually employed in a sentence such as "...in this diocese they (i.e. people in Rochester and Monroe County) don't know there's anyone South of the Barge..."

I know at — at least I hope! — that no one uses the expression in a totally serious sense. At the same time I take it to indicate that some judge that there is in me and other diocesan ministers less awareness of, interest in, and commitment to people South of the Barge Canal than they would like to see.

I got thinking about that phenomenon on Friday night as I was driving home from a delightful confirmation celebration at Immaculate Conception in Ithaca.

Following are a couple of the reflections on which I spent some time during that drive and one bit of information regarding my own travels which I thought might be of interest to you.

● I believe totally that the Holy Spirit guides the life of the Church. I do claim, however — and, I hope, without irreverence — that this Lover of us all entrusted to a particularly mischievous imp the location of the See Cities of the five dioceses in upstate New York, Albany, Ogdensburg, Syracuse, Buffalo and Rochester are all as off-center as they can be and still remain in their respective diocesan territories.

My experience in Albany and my conversations with the bishops of the dioceses mentioned above indicate to me that our challenge to grow in unity as a family of faith notwithstanding distance and diversity is not one that we face alone but with many other local churches.

● Fairly often I say to individuals or groups of persons that one of the great joys in my ministry as bishop is the frequent opportunity I have to meet so many faithful and loving people. I usually add that one of the more difficult aspects of that same ministry is the fact that I can not get to know all of you and share your lives as deeply as I would like to. In that sense I can much appreciate Peter on the Mount of

Transfiguration when he said that it was good to be there, that he wanted to stay a long time.

You do me a great favor if you believe that for me to come to your parish community — wherever you are! — is a great joy.

● Following the drive from Ithaca, I took out my 1984 calendar just to see where I had been during that year. I discovered that I travelled South of the Barge Canal — i.e. outside Monroe County to visit some other part of the diocese — 84 times during that 12-month period.

In the span of months I left the diocese for ministry-related trips 14 times for a total of 37 days. These journeys included meetings of the New York State Catholic Conference, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, committee meetings of each, a retreat for priests in St. Petersburg and visits to our diocesan missionaries in Brazil and Mexico.

Peace to all — especially this week to my friends South of the Barge Canal!

Sister Jane LeFrois, Dies at 85; Missionary in Ghana for 39 Years

Sister Jane Evelyn LeFrois SSPS, a native of Rochester, died March 21 in Ghana, Africa. Her funeral Mass was concelebrated at the Martyrs of Uganda Church in Accra by Bishop Dominic Andoh, DD, and the Papal Pronuncio Archbishop Ivan Dias along with the clergy, religious, and representatives of all the societies in the diocese.

Sister Jane was buried March 25 at Nsawam. The gathering in the cemetery was moved when the lepers at the grave expressed their love and gratitude for their Mother Jane who had shown them, her children, so much love and care, according to Father Charlie Erb, who attended the ceremony.

Sister Jane, 85, spent 39 years in Ghana and was in her 60th year as a religious. The

following is excerpted from a eulogy read at the funeral by Sister Marese, sister provincial of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit:

Sister Jane was born September 18, 1900, in Rochester. Even before she became a sister, she was ministering in her own parish, teaching religion and doing social work in her spare time.

In 1922, she entered the congregation of the Missionary Sisters, Servants of the Holy Spirit in Techny, Ill., and took her first vows in July, 1925. After obtaining her master's degree at DePaul University, she taught high school and college until going to Ghana in 1946.

She and another sister were the first Holy Spirit sisters to start missionary work in

Ghana, and Sister Jane was the region's first regional superior. During her time of office, 1946-1953, she established St. Mary's Girls' School at Korle Gomo and also the Catholic girls' schools at Koforidua, Msawam, Akim Swedru and Nkawkaw. She also sent sisters to Agomanya, Nkawkaw and Kwahu Tafo to open polyclinics and maternity clinics.

As her involvement in teaching became lessened, she devoted more time and energy to the work with the lepers at Weija whom she loved dearly and who loved her in return. She was a real mother to the lepers and would not shun any effort to help them both in their material and spiritual needs.

When she returned from her last home leave in 1982, her health started to deteriorate

slowly, but she still kept on with her Bible classes at Nima and her work for the lepers. In 1983, she was seriously sick, but rallied again for some time. Sister Jane had to take life at a very slow pace, but with the help of another sister, still kept up her work at Weija until the last six months of her life, during which she was nearly bedridden.

Two of her sisters, now dead, were Sisters of St. Joseph in the Rochester diocese: Sister Alphonsa Marie and Sister Rose Cecilia. Two other sisters were the late Loretta LeFrois and Genevieve Winteroth, both of Rochester. Sister Jane is survived by her brother, Father Bernard LeFrois, SVP, and John LeFrois and Lilie Michael LeFrois of Rochester.

Separated, Divorced Catholics Set Conference

The annual conference of the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics, this year entitled "You are the Salt of the Earth," is scheduled for June 7 through 9 in Cazenovia. The conference is designed to aid those experiencing the early pain and loss of marital breakup as well as those whose divorces or separations occurred a few years ago.

Three keynote speakers have been scheduled for the conference. Kathy Kircher, executive director of NACSDC, will open the session on Friday evening. Kircher has traveled extensively throughout the United States and Canada leading groups of lay and religious in challenging lectures and workshops.

The Rev. Mike Stine, a Lutheran pastor and member of the theology faculty at

Catholic University, will also make a presentation. Stine was the keynote speaker at the international conference at Notre Dame last summer, where he was homilist at the evening Mass. In addition, Father Bernie Kellogg will add his humor, creativity and spirituality to the conference.

The workshops will be conducted by experienced lay and religious leaders and are designed to present a variety of topics pertinent to people at various stages of transition.

For a brochure and information on conference registration, interested persons may contact any of the following: Bob Cobbett, (716)872-6276; Angie Gallo, diocesan Office of Family coordinator, (716)436-5450; Carl Ritz, (315)789-2686; or Kathy Rampulla, (607)739-4502.

Fisher Commencement

The 31st commencement ceremonies at St. John Fisher College marked a first for the school as well as a 50th anniversary.

The college's first graduate degrees were awarded to Tod Ziegler, Peter Niche, James Berandicurti and Louis Visco, who each received an M.B.A. degree. Sunday also marked the 50th anniversary of St. John Fisher's canonization.

Along with 380 undergraduate degrees awarded, Father Charles J. Lavery, chancellor of the college, Robert B. Wegman, chairman of Wegmans' supermarkets, and Commodore Grace Hopper were honored with honorary degrees.

Father Lavery, one of Rochester's most distinguished leaders in education, served as college president from 1958 to 1980.

Wegman, an honorary trustee of Fisher who served as chairman of the Board of Trustees from 1964-71, has overseen the growth of his family's supermarket chain since 1937 in various positions. Commodore Hopper, the commencement speaker, is a former math professor from Vassar College who pioneered the computer language COBOL and at 78, is the oldest person on active duty in the U.S. Navy.

Also honored was Dr. Samuel J. Stabins, who received the Trustee Medallion of Honor in recognition of his dedication and service to the community. During more than 40 years of practice, Stabins has been clinical professor and professor emeritus of surgery at Strong Memorial Hospital, chief of surgery at Genesee Hospital, and founder and first chairman of Monroe Community College's Board of Trustees.

Diocesan Appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following appointment:

Father Gerard McMahon, from pastor St. Patrick's, Moravia, to pastor, St. Gabriel's, Hammondspport, and St. Patrick's Prattsburg.

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CROSSROADS III

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Sunday's Readings: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23

The Pentecost readings call Christians to be aware of the signs that surround them. The Acts of the Apostles recount those strange and wonderful scriptural signs that surrounded the coming of the Spirit: wind, fire, quaking earth and various tongues. Paul speaks of different gifts, different ministries, all of which give witness to the same Spirit. Jesus speaks of peace and reconciliation — the goals toward which all Christians journey and the signs of the true presence of the Spirit.

The Lent-Easter-Pentecost season comes to its close today. It is a day of prayer and jubilation. Look at our journey: we have witnessed signs of hope in the Lenten scriptures and identified those same signs of hope in the world around us ... living signs of hope. We have traveled with the early Christians and become aware of their awe and wonder at the magnificence of their risen Lord and the power of the Spirit of God. Through this Spirit, their lives witnessed the hope of the infant Church. The challenge now is ours: we have that same Spirit! We must be living signs of that Spirit's presence, alive and transforming the world.

This final celebration best exemplifies the power of the Spirit when it represents the variety of gifts and people that make up our parish communities. What has been celebrated during these weeks? Answer: parishes, regions and diocese. What are we to do now? Answer: Continue!

Project:

1). rejoice in the Spirit and realize that all that we say and do gives evidence of the Spirit's presence. We are called to be ever-renewed, living signs of hope.