

Some notes to you all before our bishops' meeting in Washington, D.C., this week:

- My room hasn't been this clean since the last time my mother visited Rochester. Father Paul Tomasso left me ample free time to put things in order yesterday. My pleasure at returning next Sunday will be doubled by the fact that I won't have to climb over anything to enter my room.

- Among the more pleasurable activities of the day was responding to personal correspondence which had been piling up for several weeks. Among those I wrote to were Father Charlie Mulligan, now serving with Maryknoll in Chile; another friend, now a resigned priest, who recently re-established contact by a most delightful letter; a friend in Massachusetts who wrote of her concerns about the Church and offered her prayers for this week's meeting; a brother priest who recently wrote to me in a gracious and healing way.

I find writing letters of that kind of be a rewarding experience. It puts me in touch with the people to whom I write and with what's really important inside me. That's why I enjoy working on this column each week.

- If you're passing through Genesee stop

at St. Mary's Parish to visit their magnificent new parish center. You will realize immediately why the people of St. Mary's are so proud of it.

Last night we gathered there for confirmation and the blessing of the new center. I was impressed by the whole evening, but was especially touched by the sense of the parish about their new center. It is to be a place to which the people can come to develop their community of faith. It is to be as well a place from which they will serve the larger community, especially those in need.

- The magazine sections of two of the Sunday papers I looked at this morning carry cover stories on Roman Catholic priests. Rochester's Upstate features Father Jim Callan and the vigorous community of faith at Corpus Christi, Rochester. The New York Times Magazine features Father David Tracy of the University of Chicago. Dave and I were in school together for several years, so I'll read both articles with particular interest. Whether you like the stories or not, no one can argue that the Catholic Church is not in the news these days.

- I had the great pleasure on Friday of attending the inauguration of William Pickett



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

as the fourth president of St. John Fisher College. It was a delightful experience made so by the easy hospitality of the John Fisher community and the outstanding addresses delivered that day by the new president and Governor Cuomo. I have had the pleasure of meeting Pat and Bill Pickett, and I am very happy that they have decided to come to our area.

- One of the unfortunate but predictable side effects — locally and nationally — of the current tensions in the Church is an increase in the number of persons now appointing themselves guardians of the faith.

They write many letters and sign some. Typically such letters are negative, judgmental and inquisitorial; pretend to understand hearts and know the motives of all parties to an issue; are devoid of compassion; and contain no evidence that the writer under-

stands that no person or group of persons is perfect.

I don't know any easy way to deal with that issue. Such persons place heavy burdens on others without offering any help in carrying them.

Perhaps you'd consider the suggestion that such letters should not go unanswered by those who see the life of the Church in brighter light. Thoughtful, critical, compassionate, constructive, challenging letters contribute to our common life. The type mentioned above, I think, repress and anesthetize our communities.

- Thanks very much to all who have written or spoken their promise of prayers and support for our National Conference of Catholic Bishops' meeting this week. Such gifts are most encouraging.

Peace to all.

Consultative councils meet, consider alternative model

By Teresa A. Parsons

As they come together for the first time in five years next weekend, members of the diocese's three major consultative bodies will examine an new approach to shared responsibility.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) and the diocesan sisters' and priests' councils will convene at St. Stephen's in Geneva on Saturday, November 22, not only to examine new possibilities, but also to look at their own history and growth, and to share one another's current experiences and struggles.

"We have always been concerned with how effective we are and how to be more effective," said Ronald Jodoin, DPC president. "I think this opportunity is very good because we haven't in a number of years seen and talked with these people to get an overview of the process of consultation and how we do it in this diocese."

In the Diocese of Saginaw, Mich., the pastoral, priests' and sisters' councils function as a single unit. During Rochester's joint meeting, Barbara Walkley, a representative from the Saginaw diocese, will describe how that model works.

Last year, Bishop Kenneth E. Untener of the Saginaw diocese was the featured speaker at the biannual diocesan Ministry Conference. His description of Saginaw's Joint Pastoral Council prompted interest from local Priests' Council members, who suggested a meeting to learn more about the Saginaw model.

"We have heard expressed that they (the Saginaw diocese) did some things we might want to look at," Jodoin said. "It will give us a look at a completely different model... to see if there are elements that might be appropriate to improving Rochester's consultative process."

Also on the Nov. 22 agenda will be Judith Kollar, diocesan director of continuing education. Formerly the DPC's executive secretary, Kollar will describe Rochester's model of consultation and its development.

Since they were established in response to the Second Vatican Council, all three of Rochester's consultative groups have seen up years and down as they have sought identity and purpose in their advisory relationships to the bishop and other diocesan leaders.

The Priests' Council, founded by Bishop Fulton J. Sheen in 1967, is the oldest of the consultative groups and the only one established and required by canon law.

As such, it has overcome some of the growing pains still felt by the diocese's other consultative bodies. "We've been going for almost 20 years," said Father Kevin Murphy, Priests' Council president. "We've kind of figured out where we're going and worked through all the mechanics that a 20-year-old group has to or it doesn't survive."

Representatives are elected to the council from each of the diocese's 11 regions and serve two-year terms. Other members who attend the monthly meetings include representatives of religious orders, diocesan officials and delegates specially appointed by the bishop.

In 1970, local women's congregations also

came together, forming the Diocesan Sisters' Council as a forum to bring together women religious and to provide them with a united voice to diocesan leaders.

Each congregation of sisters serving in the diocese is invited to send at least one delegate to the council, which meets approximately five times a year. Orders with large local memberships are allowed one delegate per 50 sisters, but no more than eight delegates in all.

Since its establishment, the sisters' council has struggled with the question of whether it ought to concentrate on fostering interaction between women religious or whether it could and should act as a policy- and decision-making body, similar to the priests' council.

That question has lingered into the 1980s. Three years ago, the sisters' council decided to revise its by-laws — a process that dragged on into 1985 and was plagued by a lack of clear purpose.

Finally, last November, seven members were chosen to try and discern together what the council's direction ought to be. So far, they have produced a new statement of covenant, which calls the council to greater efforts at recognizing and proclaiming the concerns of

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Diocesan Appointments



Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following diocesan appointment:

Father David W. Mura from temporary administrator of St. Mary's Church, Waterloo, to parochial vicar of St. Michael's Church, Penn Yan, and St. Andrew's Church, Dundee, effective December 5, 1986.

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