

Reasons to rejoice at home and abroad

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Saturday, May 12.
Mexico City.

It has been a joyful and exciting week. I am in the airport in Mexico City on my way home from my annual visit to Bishop Rafael Garcia Gonzalez and our sister Diocese of Tabasco. The usual time for this visit is late February or early March, but Bishop Rafael invited me to come in May this year so I could share the experience of John Paul II's second pastoral visit to the Mexican people.

The Holy Father has been traveling throughout Mexico since last Sunday and will leave for a one-day visit to Curacao late tonight. He came to Tabasco yesterday, arriving at the airport at 1 p.m. After the usual greeting at the airport by church and government officials, he came to the cathedral in Villahermosa where a great crowd waited to greet him. The pope blessed the construction work which has been done on the cathedral in recent years and then spent time visiting many of our sisters and brothers who were brought there on stretchers or in wheelchairs. I have had the opportunity on several occasions to witness the tender care shown to

the sick by John Paul II. It is clear that although his time with such individuals is brief, his care for them is real. There is something quite touching in the moments he has with the patients for him and for them.

After the ceremony and further greetings, the pope and the bishops present were invited to share a dinner in Bishop Rafael's home. It was a pleasure to meet and share a meal with those good men. I enjoyed the opportunity to practice my rusty Spanish and several of them welcomed the chance to use their English.

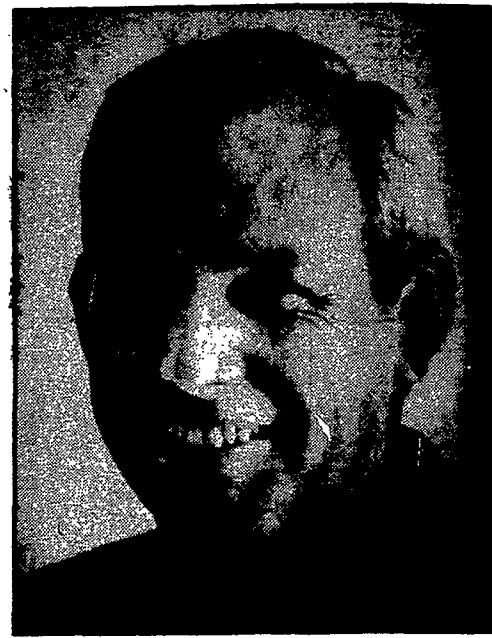
When the meal was finished we went to a huge field that had been prepared for the eucharistic liturgy. The Mass began shortly after 5 p.m. in the warm afternoon sun, moved through the twilight hour, and finished sometime after 7:30 p.m., when it had grown quite dark. Through it all, the hundreds of thousands of people who were there made the celebration a deeply joyful one with their music, their cheers, their banners and their shouts of joy. Some had been there since 6 a.m. but none lacked enthusiasm or spirit for the event. It was, for me, a beautiful experience of the faith of

the people. And I do believe that anyone who was there yesterday would say the same.

I know one person who was thoroughly delighted with the day. That was our dear brother, Bishop Rafael. He was obviously deeply touched by the faith of his people and by the warmth of the interchange between them and John Paul II. And I am sure that he was proud of the way the local church worked to organize such a complicated event in a way that made it so peaceful and enjoyable for all.

We made our customary visits to the seminary and to the leaders of the cooperative that you support so generously through Operation Bread Box. I wish that each of you could meet those people. It would bring you great joy to know how much good you do through your participation in that project.

The day visit allowed us to participate as well in a dinner and a eucharistic liturgy at the cathedral in honor of Bishop Rafael's birthday. The bishop presided at the eucharistic liturgy, but some last-minute difficulty with arrangements for the papal visit forced him to miss the meal.



Now we're on the way home. I am going to stop in Waterford to celebrate Mother's Day and the birthdays of my nieces, Grace and Mary Ellen, and of Father Tom Powers. Grace and Mary Ellen's birthday is May 13. Tom's is on May 14, but we'll celebrate them all on Sunday.

I hope that your family enjoyed Mother's Day and that this Easter season has been a happy one for you.

Peace to all.

God's love for His people brings forth celebrations of commitment

By Mary Lu Coffey

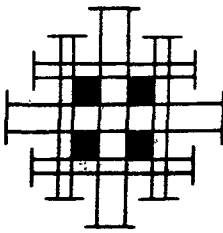
Diocesan Liturgical Commission

Eastertime has been described as Christ's honeymoon with His church. The image of the relationship of bride and groom was often used by Christ in reference to the church. The love, commitment and tenderness a bride and groom provide for one another all have something to say about how Christ loves us.

The sacraments we celebrate are signs of that love — festive actions where we celebrate our loved experience. During the celebrating of such occasions, we come closer to one another and the Lord. As we have moved through these grace-filled Easter weeks, we have been reflecting on the sacraments. This week's reflection focuses on Marriage and Holy Orders, ways of ministry to the church and the world.

Marriage is a spiritual relationship much like the covenant between God and his beloved spouse, the church. A man and woman, whose relationship has grown and been life-giving for both of them, promise

From
Repentance
to Rebirth



themselves to one another for a lifetime of good times and bad, health and sickness, prosperity and sacrifice. It takes a great amount of trust and hope to make that kind of a commitment.

Rings are blessed and exchanged as a sign of fidelity to one another. In the presence of the community gathered those promises are made, the couple is blessed with prayers for a long life of fidelity to one another and to God, and their life together begins.

What began in a spirit of festivity is often lived out day-to-day in suffering and sadness. It involves struggle and hard work, and a lot of self-sacrifice. But the joys can be great also, as the couple learns

to accept and forgive; to give in and grow up; and to compromise and to celebrate the small joys and triumphs of daily life. As they learn to love one another more and more deeply, they also learn more about God's love. Hopefully, they will share that love with God's people, the church. A relationship that is fruitful gives life in many ways to the world, and is a sign of God's love for all who are touched by it.

Holy Orders, the ordination of deacons, priests and bishops, marks their entrance into a life of public ministry and service to the church and changes them both in their own eyes and those of the community. In each rite, the community says that it has observed in the one being ordained the spiritual gifts needed for the church's mission and affirms his candidacy by some visible sign (often applause).

The ordained in turn professes his willingness to shape his life to the needs of the Gospel as the church defines them. This commitment also calls forth courage, trust and hope. It also demands self-sacrifice

and growth, struggle and change and dying to self. It can also bring great joy to the ordained, life to the community of the church and is a sign of God's love for the world.

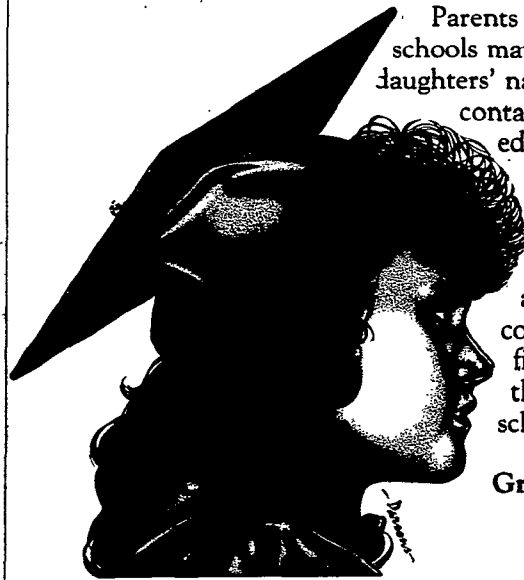
In the ordination of a deacon, the Book of Gospels is presented with the admonition, "Believe what you read, teach what you believe and practice what you teach." During the ordination of a priest, as the gifts are presented for the celebration of Mass, the bishop says, "Imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord's cross." In the ordination of a bishop, the Book of Gospels is presented again — along with a ring — as a seal of the bishop's fidelity to the "the bride of God, his holy church." Finally, the staff is presented, a sign of the pastoral office, with these words: "Keep watch over the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has appointed you to shepherd the Church of God."

Both of these sacraments, Marriage and Holy Orders, are sacraments of service to the church. Like all the sacraments, they are celebrated in the community and give life to the community, always pointing to the greater reality of God's love for God's people. As St. Paul has taught us: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that such overwhelming power comes from God and not from us." What exhilarating good news that is!

Graduation '90

To recognize the achievements of seniors at both public and Catholic high schools throughout the Diocese of Rochester, the Catholic Courier will present a special **Graduation '90** supplement in its issue of **June 14**.

This annual section includes feature articles, listings of graduating seniors, information on commencement exercises, and photographs of class valedictorians and salutatorians.



Parents of students attending public high schools may arrange to have their sons' and daughters' names listed in this special section by contacting their pastors or religious-education coordinators. The deadline for submitting names to our offices is May 25. We will not accept any names over the telephone.

This annual supplement has been among our most popular, and local companies and organizations should find it an ideal opportunity to promote their enterprises while applauding the scholastic efforts of diocesan youths.

To place an advertisement in **Graduation '90**, call:

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