

Remembering gifts as summer arrives

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

I am writing to you while aboard an airplane on the way to Chicago and a connection to San Jose, Calif., the site of Santa Clara University and our spring meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. As I have indicated at least twice in earlier columns, I am looking forward to this meeting with great eagerness. By the time you read these words, the meeting will be in its closing day. I entrust it now, as I did earlier, to your prayers.

This is the last column I will write until the early part of August. I'll miss being in touch with you this way each week, but I will welcome the break from the weekly deadline. Thanks so much for your kind attention to this column all through the year

and for your comments, spoken and written, that offer such encouragement and so many good ideas for our diocese.

At this time of year just before summer vacation, it is my custom to remember the events of recent months, to evaluate what has happened, to put aside and thank God for work that has been completed, and to make some early decisions about how best to use my time and energy in the post-vacation months ahead.

As I have gone through that exercise in recent days, I have found myself deeply grateful for all that the people of this diocese have done to serve the needs of their church and to build up the Kingdom of God. I think, for example, of the enormous amount of work our parish reflection teams have done to make the Commitment to

Ministry process so fruitful for us.

Also, I remember all who have labored so lovingly and generously to help us deal with our pressing needs in education and Christian formation. Both of those projects have called for generous commitments from women and men in every parish community in our diocese.

I remember two other diocesan efforts this morning. They have involved fewer people and have had a lower profile than the projects I mentioned above, but they are no less important.

One of those is the work of our newly formed Bishop's Stewardship Council. This group of remarkably generous and committed women and men has offered us all remarkable gifts of counsel and guidance in our financial affairs, in our organizational structures and in ways to deliver good pastoral service as efficiently and fruitfully as possible. I express my gratitude and yours to them for all that they have thus far offered to us. It makes me very happy to remember the formational work they have done this year. Already that work has been very helpful to us, and I am sure that will only deepen in the years ahead.

The second new direction is the synod I announced last week. Once again, we came to that significant moment because some of our sisters and brothers invested themselves deeply in studying its desirability and feasibility. As I thank them for their



generosity, let me invite you to make a part of your summer prayer the hope that God will bless us — each of us — through our synod, making us a people ever more ready to be enriched by and to proclaim the good news.

As I remember these and many other milestones of the year, I am aware that the months have not been carefree or without some measure of pain and disappointment. That is not because any one of us wants to cause hurt to others. I hope that part of our summer prayer will be for the healing and the forgiveness which so many of us need.

Dear friends, I wish you blessings for the summer and I promise to pray for you each day. I'll be writing to you again in August. In the meantime, peace to all.

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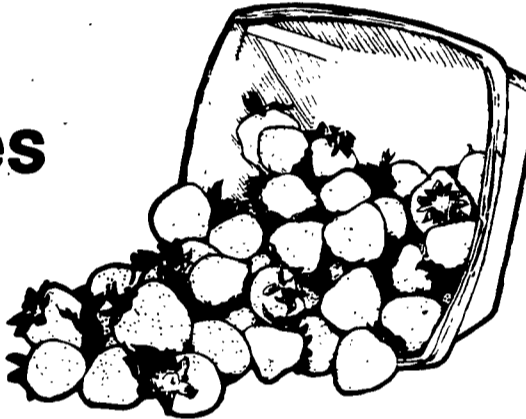
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