

Priests of two dioceses gather for retreat

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Tuesday, October 28.
Last week at Stella Maris Retreat Center in Skaneateles, 32 priests from the Diocese of Syracuse and Rochester — and two permanent deacons from Syracuse — gathered for a directed retreat experience.

You may recall that a directed retreat is an experience of prayer during which the person on retreat meditates on the Word of God in Sacred Scripture and shares her or his experience of prayer with the person who serves as her or his retreat director.

The term director may be a bit misleading. It does not indicate that one person tells another person what to do. Rather, it's meant to indicate that one person accompanies another who is at prayer, and helps that person to realize and follow the grace of the prayer.

Sixteen priests from our diocese participated in the program. Father Dan Tormey, the pastor of St. Mary's in Scottsville, Sister Muriel Curran, SSND, formally vicar for religious in our diocese, and I were privileged to serve on a team of seven directors. The other members

were Fathers John Rose and A. Robert Casey, priests of the Syracuse diocese; Mr. Jim Kirscher of Syracuse; and Father Harry Cain, SJ, from Weston, Mass.

It was a wonderful experience. It was memorable first and foremost because of the witness of faith offered by the retreatants. It was a joy to be there during those special days in which these busy individuals put everything aside to be alone with the Lord.

And it was a special gift for me to meet — for private conversations every day — with each of the five retreatants I was privileged to accompany through the experience. It was a privileged opportunity to appreciate anew that God calls us each by name and stays with us in love every day that we live.

One of the retreat's many joys for me was to be there with so many of our priests. There were Fathers Ed Steinkirchner, Emmett Halloran, Bob Kanka, Bob Gaudio, Lou Sir-ianni, Bob Ring, Frank Lioi, Chuck Latus, Scott Kubinski, Bill Darling, Tony Valente, Ed Palumbos, Pete Deckman, Alexander Bradshaw, Bob Kennedy and Bill Moorby.

By virtue of my office and of my experience of ministry with these men, I know much about the good they do, and have some insight into their personal stories. It was truly special to be with them for this time of prayer.

Harry Cain mentioned during the course of the days at Stella Maris that he was not aware of other dioceses conducting this kind of retreat for their priests.

The thought had not crossed my mind, but Harry's comment makes me curious to find out more about that. When I go to Washington next month for our meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, I'll ask around among other bishops to find out if other dioceses offer such opportunities.

Last week marked the third time that Rochester and Syracuse have cooperated in this venture. There has been an increase in the number of retreatants each year.

Judging by that and by the satisfaction of those who participated this year, I expect that the program will continue for a while. I hope that it will. In the 25 years or so since this kind of retreat experience was redis-



covered from our rich spiritual tradition, it has been a source of blessings for many people. I know that I count my experience of this kind of retreat at Guelph to be among the best I ever had.

Peace to all.



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A new monthly calendar will appear in the Catholic Courier on the last Thursday of each month.

THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

PRAYER SUGGESTION

External Father, we lift up to you these and all the priests of the world. Sanctify them. Heal and guide them. Mold them into the likeness and holiness of your Son, Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. May their lives be pleasing to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.


(With ecclesiastical approval)

NOVEMBER, 1991

DIocese OF ROCHESTER, NY

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