# Southern Tier trip offers many rewards

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

I have just finished reading the newspaper on this Election Day morning. I went through all the news, as I usually try to do, but read today's paper with a special awareness that as soon as I finish the column, I'll be heading for John Marshall High School to vote.

At the end of the day, when we have finished confirmation at St. Margaret May Parish in Irondequoit, I'll be anxious to learn the results of all of the elections in our region. My hope is that a very high percentage of eligible voters will go to the polls and that all of us will cast our ballots as thoughtfully as we know how.

Over the weekend I went to the Southern Tier: first to Immaculate Heart of Mary, Painted Post, for a Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting, then to Our Lady of Lourdes and St. John the Baptist, both in Elmira.

At our pastoral council meeting, Father Peter Clifford reviewed for members the basic shape and responsibilities of Parish Support Ministries, the ministry group he heads. He also shared with the council some of the planning in which his group and parish communities now are involved.

In my conversation with the representatives, we continued our common reflection on the purposes of the council, the responsibilities we have to our community, and how we envision the composition and work of the council through and beyond our synodal process. The group is helpful in many ways especially in its capacity to continually provide a basic sense of what is on the minds of the people in our diocese.

I presided at the 5:30 Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes on Saturday afternoon. The parish community was concluding their celebration of their 50th anniversary as a parish.

I was delighted to be with them on that occasion and had the pleasure of hearing Father Paul McCabe preach the homily. I often hear from you about how much you enjoy the homilies in your parish. I don't often hear others preach, but when I do I am enriched as I was by Paul on Saturday.

After the Eucharist, Paul, Fathers Dan Holland and Jim Boyle, and I had a relaxing supper together at the parish house at Lourdes. It was a delightful experience — social, unhurried and relaxed. I was happy to be with them, to end a busy week in such a pleasant manner.

On Sunday morning, I joined the parish community of St. John the Baptist for a celebration of their 125th anniversary as a parish and of the 100th anniversary of the parish church.

I did preach at this one, and had a wonderful time with the people who gathered to thank God for all of the life and growth they and their ancestors had experienced in the community. Mr. Hoffbauer, for example, recalled walking 10 miles from his home near Mount Saviour Monastery to take of convert instruction from Father Stemmler.

Father Dave Gramkee, the pastor of St. John's, and the planning committee had arranged for a brunch to be served in the parish hall immediately following the liturgy. It was quite a feast and a wonderful opportunity for me to sit and talk with the people of the parish whose table I shared.

Now another week is well begun. We have our monthly Priests' Council meeting at St. Dominic's in Shortsville today. On Thursday, I'll be in Albany for a meeting of the Public Policy Committee of our state

Catholic conference.

On Saturday, I am going to Washington, D.C., for a meeting of the Administrative Committee of our national bishops' conference. Committee meetings fill Sunday and fold into the November general assembly of the conference which runs from Monday through Thursday next week.

Because of those meetings I will not have a column for you in the next. edition, but I'll be back to you in two weeks. In the meantime, please pray for me, and I'll be praying for you.

Peace to all.



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