

Fellow bishops offer gift of friendship

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

We had an overnight guest at Sacred Heart last night. That's not unusual; we often have friends and visitors with us. What is unusual is that our guest was Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany.

Howard — who is a dear, longtime friend, schoolmate and vacation buddy — has come to speak at a Ministry Day, the theme of which is "Chemical Dependency: A Challenge for the Church."

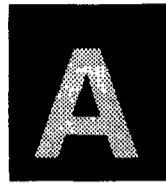
I am delighted that he is with us. Last night when he arrived at Sacred Heart from the train and I returned from a confirmation at St. James we had a chance for our first visit in a month.

It is always good to be with Howard, not only because he's been a friend for 35 years, but also because he, too, is a diocesan bishop and we have much to share about our experience of ministry. We packed quite a bit of such sharing into a relatively short time last night. And we'll do some more of it on our drive to Canandaigua this morning.

But I am happy about Howard's visit for more than personal reasons. A good measure of my happiness stems from the fact that he is here to share with our pastoral ministers his extensive experience in dealing with chemical dependency.

That experience began in 1965 when Bishop Edward Manginn asked Howard to interrupt his graduate studies in social work at Catholic University to open a storefront outreach program in a deeply troubled section of Albany.

Howard's response to that unexpected invitation 27 years ago was, quite literally, the



LONG THE WAY

kind of stuff of which legends are made. And part of his response was an incredible body of work fighting chemical dependency and helping the addicted.

One need not look far away or probe deeply to know that chemical dependency is a major problem in our society. "Drug-related crime" and "driving fatality involving alcohol" are phrases all too commonly heard in our community.

These phrases remind us that — even short of fatalities — abuse of drugs leads to destruction of self and others, and to a gradual erosion of the strength of our communities.

Our pastoral ministers deal with such realities every day, and I am glad that they will have the opportunity to be encouraged and strengthened by the program in which we will participate today.

Working with Howard on the same morn-

ing program will be Mike Nirnery, director of Training, Narcotic and Drug Research Inc. His theme will be "Assessing Chemical Dependency."

In the afternoon, we will have presentations on empowerment and access to care. Carolyn Portanova, Betty Mandly, Ruth Lopez and Carrie Schmidt, all of Catholic Family Center, will lead this portion of the program. Collaborating with them will be Carl Hatch, also of CFC; Giovina Caroscio of our Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry; Sam Green of our Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry; and Betty Smits of the Drug and Alcohol Council.

Before I finish, a word about another bishop. Our dear friend Bishop Rafael Garcia Gonzales — for 17 years bishop of Tabasco, Mexico — recently was installed as bishop of Leon, Mexico. We all wish him Godspeed and many blessings in his new ministry, and express our thanks for the commitment, warmth and deep sense of faith he brought to our sister-diocese relationship with Tabasco.

Though he will remain our friend, I know that I am one among many who will miss his presence in the Tabasco community.

When a new bishop is named in Tabasco, we will be in touch with him to express our desire to continue a relationship that has meant so much to our community.

I was present for Bishop Rafael's installation as bishop of Leon, and was able to express your best wishes and affection to him. I am happy to convey to you his warm greetings and his promise that he did not leave the people of our diocese behind him on his journey from Tabasco to Leon.

Peace to all.

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