

Vocations – inklings to years of growth

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

You'd never guess it by the way he bounded down the stairs or by his witty participation in our dinner conversation, but Father Joe McDonnell, beloved pastor-emeritus of St. Michael's Parish, Newark, is recovering from a recent heart attack.

I enjoyed the hospitality of Father Ed Steinkirchner and the St. Michael's community on Saturday evening as I presided and preached at the 5:15 eucharistic liturgy, and afterward joined Joe, Ed, Sister Mary Agnes Trabold and Father John Roach for a leisurely and pleasant dinner.

We were all delighted that Joe sang his songs (his favorite on Saturday was "When I Told Them How Wonderful You Are They Didn't Believe Me"), told some of his stimulating stories and, as he always does, contributed so much to the peace and relaxation of the evening.

Just this morning I sent him my copy of a biography of Archbishop John Ireland, who was archbishop of St. Paul, a contemporary of our Bishop Bernard McQuaid and a towering figure in American Catholic life. The sharing of the biography was triggered by Joe's enthusiastic comment about a recent book that deals with the relationship between American bishops and the Vatican in the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

I find so much to admire in Joe and others like him. At 87 years of age he not only makes a gift of his experience and wisdom to co-workers and community, but he continues to explore and reflect upon human experience through reading, good friendships and service.

Those qualities in such a person would draw



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LONG THE WAY

my admiration at any time, but I am sure that my appreciation of Joe was heightened further by some other persons and events that were part of the weekend. I won't go into great detail about all of them, but in light of the lessons Joe raised up for me, I think of:

- Deacon Brian Cool, who preached at all of the Masses this weekend at St. Patrick's in Seneca Falls. Brian was speaking about vocations and in the course of his excellent homily, told the story of the beginnings of his own attraction to priesthood, describing what his ordination to priesthood — now less than a year away — means to him. He spoke of others (Father Mike Conboy, Sister Chris Lloyd) who had helped him and how he, in his priestly ministry, hopes to encourage others as he has been encouraged by them.

- Father Mieczyslaw (Mitch) Zygaldo, parochial vicar at St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls. I

presided at their 9 a.m. Mass on Sunday morning. Brian preached, Mitch and Father Dave Gramke, now pastor of St. Patrick's, celebrated. At the end of the liturgy, Mitch, in the presence of the parish community, signed a document that completed a long and prayerful process by which he becomes a permanent member of the presbyterate of our diocese. It was a moment of deep and obvious joy for Mitch and for all of us who participated in the moment.

- The 10 young men who came to St. Alphonsus, Auburn, on Sunday afternoon to explore, with the help of some of our seminarians and priests, the possibility that they might have vocations to the priesthood. I had a chance to share some of my own experience with them and to hear some of the questions they hold in their hearts about priesthood. I was much impressed by the men who attended and heartened to learn that 18 others expressed strong interest in the program, but — for a variety of reasons — were unable to be present Sunday.

As I drove home from Auburn last evening, I began to put together the various stages in the vocational story represented by the persons mentioned here: first inklings and initial inquiry; the beginnings of public, ordained ministry; pivotal moments along the way; the events that help to mold and shape us; and the deep satisfaction and continued growth for which one can legitimately hope, no matter the number of one's years.

My thanks to Joe, Brian, Mitch, the 10 young men and to all in Newark, Seneca Falls and Auburn who enriched my life over the weekend.

Peace to all.

Kids' Chronicle Answer Key

"I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people, you also did for Me."

Matthew 25:40

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?

The following prayer was dictated by Our Lord to Sister Josefa Menendez at Poitiers, France, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 3, 1921, with the instruction: "Josefa! Repeat these words daily."

JESUS PRAYER FOR HIS PRIESTS

O Jesus, by Thy most loving Heart, I implore Thee to inflame with zeal for Thy love and glory all the priests of the world, all missionaries and those whose office it is to preach Thy word, that on fire with holy zeal, they may snatch souls from the devil and lead them into the shelter of Thy Heart, where for ever they may glorify Thee.

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SEPTEMBER, 1992

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Reverend Fathers:	1 Charles E. Curran	2 Joseph F. Hogan	3 George C. Vogt	4 Bartholomew O'Brien	5 Bernard J. Nowak
6 John Lee, CSB	7 Joseph A. Trovato, CSB	8 John Cavanaugh	9 William Marceau, CSB	10 Lawrence J. Wroblewski	11 Francis E. Blighton	12 Richard T. Farrell
13 Thomas F. Corbett	14 John D. Dillon	15 George P. Heyman	16 Christopher Linsler	17 Michael J. Mahler	18 Kevin P. Murphy	19 John E. Roach
20 Gary L. Tyman	21 Francis M. Feeney	22 J. Walter Carron	23 Francis H. Vogt	24 Jerome F. Schifferli	25 James C. Enright	26 John Poluikis CSB
27 Patrick Sullivan, SJ	28 Daniel J. O'Brien, SJ	29 David L. Bonin	30 David J. Faraone	For subsequent months or extra copies write to: MIPRP, 70-A Green Knolls Drive, Rochester, NY 14620		

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