

Youths provide encouragement for all

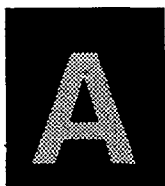
By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

As I sit down to write this on Monday evening, I do so with a pleasant distraction pushing at my mind — a visit by 65 teenagers from Temple Sinai. At this moment, Father Tom Mull is giving the young people a tour of Sacred Heart Cathedral. When he finishes I will join the group for a conversation with them and do my best to respond to 28 questions they sent to me in advance.

It will not surprise those of you who deal regularly with teenagers when I say that the questions are not easy ones: What is the nature of the human being? What is the nature of the world? How do you explain evil in the world? I have decided that the 45-minute time frame for our meeting — together with the number of questions submitted — reasonably will allow me to give very brief answers.

This evening's visit will make this a special day because I also began the day with young people. This morning I celebrated the Eucharist with the Aquinas Institute community. It is always a pleasure to visit and celebrate with that community, and today's experience was no exception.

After the liturgy I met with leaders of the Aquinas Peer Ministry Program and the student government. We had a wonderful discussion about the challenges of leadership, and about the hopes and dreams these young men and women have for Aquinas for the current school year. My impression is that these gifted young people will offer much to the Aquinas community this year. And I'd be willing to bet



LONG THE WAY

that the experience they will gain in these positions of service will greatly enrich their education.

I had a like experience in a recent visit to Nazareth Academy. On that occasion the young women represented the three upper grades, the Student Council, the Black Student Union, the National Honor Society and the Cultural Diversity Club.

The conversation that day explored ways in which persons in leadership positions can engage the energies of others in common cause; how they can respect the diversity of the community and still call them to a fruitful unity.

I have enjoyed sessions like the one at Nazareth for several years and always look forward to being with them. Although I am

not always sure they believe me when I tell them so, I always draw encouragement from those young leaders when I have an opportunity to be with them.

One final and thoroughly enjoyable encounter with young people — this time with much younger than those at Aquinas or Nazareth — was a visit I paid to Holy Family School last week. It is such a joy to be with the very young ones as they go about the business of learning and growing. They sang songs, showed me their computers, asked questions, explained their lessons and generally let me in on what is happening in their young lives.

Sister Lorraine Burns, SSND, principal of Holy Family, very kindly accompanied me during the visit. As we walked toward the kindergarten, Sister told me that when she needs cheering she often visits those precious little ones. I can well understand why this is so. I find similar encouragement when I spend time with our young people.

In the near future, I'll be visiting St. Andrew's School, St. Monica's School and Corpus Christi School at Blessed Sacrament and Northeast Catholic Junior High School. It will be good to be with all of them.

I just returned from the visit with the delegation from Temple Sinai. They're beautiful kids, and I'm so pleased that they visited our cathedral tonight.

Peace to all.

EDITORS' NOTE: Bishop Clark's mailing address is 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

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