

# Respite offered celebrations and relaxation

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

The interval between my last column and this one has been longer than usual. The *Catholic Courier* did not publish during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

The next week I was in Rome for the ordination of Bishop Henry J. Mansell, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New York and a classmate from seminary days. Last week I was under the weather with a winter cold.

It's good to be back with you. I don't have the records close at hand, but I am quite sure that it was at this time of year 10 years ago that I first wrote this column for our *Catholic Courier*. As I recall, I wrote it during a couple of days of prayer I spent at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Much has happened between my final column of 1992 and today. We had a wonderful Christmas — Epiphany season here at Sacred Heart. In keeping with the practice of many years, I celebrated midnight Mass at our cathedral and celebrated on Christmas morning with the inmates of the new county jail. For years I had gone to the old facility, but this year I went to the new one, and Bishop Dennis Hickey went to the old.

My mother was here for a few days prior to Christmas. She came to the jail with me on Christmas morning. When we finished there, we drove to the home of my sister and brother-in-law to have Christmas dinner with them and my five beautiful nieces.

Father Tom Powers was with us as was Jim Bill, a classmate of Tom's and mine. In addition there were Victor, Scott and Dennis, who are boyfriends of Grace, Jane and Margaret respectively. We had an



## A LONG THE WAY

elegant meal and a wonderful time.

My mother's birthday is on Dec. 28, and we celebrated on the 27th. Dennis is paying his way through school by working in a local restaurant. One of his jobs is preparing and cooking meat on the grill, so we put him in charge of cooking steaks on a grill on the back porch. I bundled up and held the flashlight for him. He did a great job.

The group I joined for Henry's ordination left for Rome from New York City on the evening of Jan. 1. That morning I awoke with laryngitis and the beginning of what was to become a lingering cold. I had the honor of speaking at an interfaith prayer service that morning and, although I had hardly any voice, was able to get through it all right.

My voice returned fully in a couple of days, but

the cold that began on New Year's Eve deepened during our early days in Rome. That and the record-breaking cold snap suffered by the city made this trip more challenging than most.

But I did get to the beautiful ordination ceremony and to the celebrations that were a part of the journey. Henry's ordination was an occasion to remember the events of the 34 years since our class assembled at the North American College to begin our studies together. And his ordination at St. Peter's by our Holy Father evoked memories of the years since I was ordained a bishop in the same place by the same person.

Since our return on Jan. 9 I have been involved in the usual range of activities, but I am happy to tell you that this past holiday time is two or three degrees less hectic than other times of the year. There's plenty to be done, but there is also some time for thinking and planning and preparing for future events.

I had a most delightful experience yesterday. Bishop William G. Burrill invited me to join the Episcopal bishops of this region for an afternoon and evening of conversation about the ministry of bishops in today's church. It was an enjoyable and stimulating experience to share that time with them and a special delight to join them for dinner in the home of Bill and Kay Burrill.

On Monday I'll be in New York for a meeting of the Roman Catholic bishops of our state. Following that meeting at the Pastoral Office of the archdiocese, 14 of us will be going to a retreat center for a few days of contemplation together. I ask you please to pray for us during those days. You can be sure that we will pray for you.

Peace to all.

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*'The joy of the Lord is my strength.'*  
Nehemiah 8: 9-10

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He was a native of Rochester and taught at Aquinas.  
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