

'Typical' days offer much variety

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Often enough people ask me to tell them what a typical day in my life is like. I welcome the question because it springs from a kind curiosity. But I always have difficulty answering it because my days are so varied that it's difficult to speak about one day that gives a good sense of all the rest.

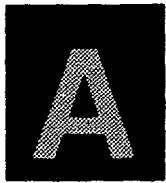
Today was a good example. As I do most evenings when the day's activities are over, I have been remembering the things I did and the people I met. These moments are not an effort to remember every single detail of the day. Rather, they provide an opportunity to review, in a peaceful fashion, the significant moments of the preceding hours and to dwell on their deeper meaning. I find that this exercise helps me to make connections with people, to relate the events of my life in something of a pattern, and to get below the surface of life's experiences to be in touch with their deeper meaning.

Here is a sense of what I have been thinking about as I reviewed today's activities.

6:30 a.m.: Mass with the Sisters of St. Joseph at Nazareth Academy Convent. I filled in today for Paul Tomasso, who went to Boston with Father Chuck Latus for the funeral of Sister Karen Dietz's father. It's good to be able to do some small favor for a person who daily does so much for me.

And it was wonderful to celebrate with the sisters. After Mass over a cup of coffee, they spoke with great happiness about some community discussions in which they've been engaged. All were mature, well-experienced women. All were enthusiastic about growing into tomorrow.

8 a.m.: Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse. This meeting was with Sister Rosemary St. Peter, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph; Sister Ann Miller, president of the Sisters of Mercy; and the sisters who serve as their councilors. They're all friends, and we gathered as friends. There was no formal agenda, although our conversation covered a range of common interests — the shaping of ministry for the church of the future, the challenge and consolation of



LONG THE WAY

leadership, the strength and goodness of our people, the vitality of our local church.

None of us knows the exact shape our lives will take in the future, but I have great confidence that — whatever that shape may be — our sisters will play a major part in it. As we come close to the 125th anniversary of the foundation of our diocese, it's hard to imagine what we'd be like today without our sisters living and serving among us.

10:30 a.m.: Good Shepherd-Guardian Angels School. If you want to have some fun — and learn a lot — visit a group of third graders and read a story for them. That's what I did today. Before and after the Easter story I read for them, we had many questions and answers — and it went both ways. I am always curious about what the kids are studying; what excites them; what they like most about school. They want to know how I became a bishop, what I'd like to do if I weren't a bishop, what I do all day.

After the longer session with the third graders I was able to make brief visits to the other classes. The little ones are so beautiful: "Are you my teacher's grandfather?" "No! But I could be."

12:50 p.m.: I was sitting on the floor with the first graders listening to a story, when I received a message to call Father John Mulligan. John asked me to be at the Cutler Union of the Memorial Art Gallery shortly before 1 p.m. for a conversation with Nyim Kot Ambweky III, reigning king of the Kuba people of central Zaire. I had met the king the day before at a reception in his honor and was happy to honor his request today. We spoke about the health concerns of his people and explored possibilities of helping them.

1:30 p.m.: Transfiguration Parish, Pittsford. Father Jerry Appleby, pastor, kindly hosted one in a series of planning meetings with our priests. I meet often with our priests for one purpose or another, but find no meetings more rewarding than those in which we look to the future together. That may be because their great love for the church becomes more evident than ever. We all have our preferences, particular tastes and dislikes, but when we gather for such purposes our priests are quite ready to look beyond them for the good of the church. It's a great blessing.

7:30 p.m.: Sacred Heart Cathedral. Tonight we had the second of the four Rites of Election we'll celebrate this week. Men and women, boys and girls who are preparing to become members of our church at the Easter Vigil come to be "elected" by the bishop and to begin the final phase of their preparation for Easter.

Fewer experiences in the year are as joyful and life-giving as the rites. There is a high level of excitement, enthusiasm, a wonderful sense of belonging to a larger community and a great level of caring.

Twenty three parishes were represented tonight. I think 37 will be represented tomorrow. Those who were at Watkins Glen on Sunday and who will be at Geneva's St. Frances de Sales on Wednesday will probably bring the total to nearly 100.

It would be hard to describe the joy and strength the people at these gatherings bring to me. They are signs of hope and a gift to us all.

It's a lot to think about. Much to absorb. But it all makes me excited about tomorrow.
Peace to all.

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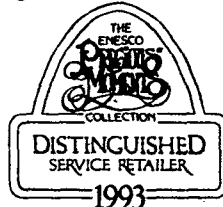
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