

A week filled with good memories

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

The weeks of Lent seem always to fly by, none it seems more quickly than this past week. It went so quickly, I'm sure, because it was a week that found me in several places, involved in a variety of activities. Let me tell you a bit about the week by naming the places, the activity that took place at each site and sharing a reflection I took away from each experience.

Monday, March 22 — St. Margaret Mary's, Apalachin: I visited the parish community to participate in an evening of prayer and reflection on what it means to be a eucharistic community. Father Dave Simon and his committee invited me to have supper, visit briefly with their candidates for confirmation, share in evening prayer and give a talk on the theme of the evening. Rather than go there with a formal talk that would take up all of our time together I brought some ideas and some questions. I found the group open to the ideas and responsive to the questions. We reflected on and shared our experience in our own journeys of faith. In the doing I think we helped one another, and together enjoyed an occasion of learning and celebration.

Tuesday, March 23 — St. Dominic's, Shortsville: Our Priests' Council met at St. Dominic's today. Priests' Councils in their present form are relatively new in the church. They're less than 30 years old, having developed out the work of Vatican Council II. I'm happy with the work of our council, and find their support and good counsel to be of tremendous value. As our experience in the work grows, I think we're maturing in our capacity to identify the issues that should claim our time and energy, in our ability to hear one another, and in our ability to make decisions based on the evidence before us. Such progress is



A LONG THE WAY

a fruit of our priests' commitment and hard work, and I'm very grateful for that. I'm learning that the earlier the consultation occurs, and the more relevant the information provided about it, the richer the results are likely to be.

Friday, March 26 — Washington, D.C.: We had the first meeting of our newly formed conference Committee on Women in the Church and Society. I served as chairman of that committee for three years ending in November of 1992. Bishop John Snyder, the new chairman asked me to serve as a member of the committee during his three-year term, and I gladly agreed to do so. We spent this first meeting shaping the agenda for our term of service. We'll devote most of our time to advancing some sections of the fourth draft of the pastoral letter on the concerns of women, which failed to received sufficient support for passage at last November's meeting. While the draft did not pass, the bishops wanted very much to keep

working on some of the issues it addressed. It is with these issues that we'll be engaged.

Saturday, March 27 — St. Joseph's College, Hartford, Connecticut: As part of their celebration of the college's 60th anniversary, St. Joseph's College sponsored a symposium on "The Future of Women in the Church." They very kindly invited Sidney Callahan and me to give keynote addresses to start the day. It was the first time since November that I had participated in such a program. I was glad I did because it provided an opportunity to reflect on the experience of drafting the pastoral letter. The "keynote" I chose to address was the reasons the church offers in support of its practice of ordaining only men and the unanswered questions raised by those reasons. It's always stimulating to gather one's thoughts, offer them to others and receive their reactions.

Sunday, March 28 — St. Mary's, Auburn: Since Father Pat Sullivan's funeral liturgy was celebrated at St. Patrick's in Victor, I missed the opportunity to express my sympathy to and celebrate his ministry with the people of St. Mary's, among whom Pat served for the last five years of his life. On Sunday I was able to preach at the liturgies, enjoy a brief visit with their catechumens and candidates, and have lunch with the parish staff. Their grief is deep because their love for Pat was deep. But they carry on in wonderful ways. An example: I had the honor of presenting to Alanna Gaylo a Catholic Youth Organization award named in honor of Father Patrick Sullivan. His name will live on in many ways. Of that I had no doubt.

You'll understand me, I think, when I say that as I look back over the week, many more memories emerge than I can write in this space. Thanks for allowing me to do so. It does me good.

Peace to all.

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