

Friends help make beginnings easier

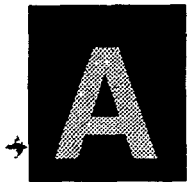
By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Commencement events, one just past and one soon to come, lead me to write today. The past commencement was that of St. Bernard's Institute, held on Friday, May 14. At that joyful event I had the honor, as the Institute's chancellor, to present graduate degrees in theology to 24 men and women and graduate certificates in theology to three others. Of that number seven are from the Albany diocese. They did their work at our extension of St. Bernard's Institute in that city.

The future commencement is that of St. John Fisher College, which will be held on Saturday, May 22. It will be my honor on that occasion to deliver the commencement address and to receive from the president and board of trustees the honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters. And what a joy it will be to share the day with the women and men of Fisher who will celebrate the achievement of the years.

I suppose commencements mean so much because in ritual, symbolic form they help us both to celebrate the past's significant events and to shape our future dreams. Some of the degree recipients at St. Bernard's on Friday were people I know quite well. Most have families to raise and/or full-time jobs. I have no doubt in my mind that they and their loved ones came together on that occasion around a host of shared memories — memories of sacrifice, of moral and financial support, of the rewarding experiences that attach to the experiences of learning.

Equally certain is the fact that at both Fisher and Bernard's the graduates and their loved ones are engaged in thoughts about the future. They'll be anxious to move on to a new stage of life now. Some will move into jobs, others to graduate school. Still others, probably fewer in number, pursued their



LONG THE WAY

studies simply for the enrichment their work would bring to their lives.

In this time between the two commencements, I have mentioned I have thought about beginning — and beginning again. This may come out of my prayer during this Easter season during which I have met so many people from all parts of our diocese. They remind me of something I believe deeply but can sometimes forget: that somehow the growth and deepening to which the Lord calls us is a life-long process. This process begins when we begin. And it never ends. It comes to fullness in life eternal.

Don't think for a moment that I want to gloss over the aging process or illness or weakening that life can hold for us as the years go by. I don't want to do that. All I want to say is no matter what our age or our condition we remain beloved children of God, possessed of immense dignity and gifts to

offer to our sisters and brothers. We are a strong community when, as needed, we make the adjustments necessary for such gifts freely to be exchanged.

One other thought about beginning and beginning again: we should not quit easily the pursuit of good things that we know are truly good for us. We never know fully the power of prayer and the encouragement of others and our own repeated efforts. For 18 years I smoked two packs of cigarettes a day. I wanted desperately to quit for most of those 18 years. In fact, I did quit — about 15 times — only to go back to smoking.

On May 11, 1975, the day the resolve finally took, it did so rather peacefully. There were two or three tough weeks after that but I was quite sure on that May 11 that I had smoked my last cigarette. To this day I am happy that I did not quit trying to escape the bondage in which I felt I was held by nicotine.

An important footnote to this story is the strong support I received from friends in this effort. That support was no better or strongly delivered than it was by Annie Kubizne, a parishioner at St. Ambrose in Latham when I served there. When Annie was 6 or 7 years old she left church after Mass on Sunday and saw me lighting a cigarette. She came to say hello, as she often did. This time she asked, "Could I have your cigarette pack?" "Sure," I said and handed it to her. You might guess that Annie dropped the cigarette pack to the pavement and crushed it with her heel. What you may not guess was that when she crushed the pack she said to me, "I don't want you to die."

I never forgot that. Although it took seven more years and several false starts before I finally quit, I still thank Annie and other friends who helped me to do so. Don't give up. Peace to all.

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)

Vol. 104 No. 33 May 20, 1993

Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.

Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$19.50; Canada and foreign \$19.50 plus postage.

Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340.

Second-class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

Rent-A-Van



1993 Ford Aerostar

Genesee Truck Sales

424-6200

HELP YOURSELF...HELP OTHERS



Ugandan priest serving among refugees in Sudan

By transferring cash or securities to the Propagation of the Faith Pooled Income Fund, you can...

- ✓ Provide yourself with an income for the rest of your life.
- ✓ Avoid capital gains tax on the transfer of appreciated securities.
- ✓ Claim a charitable contribution on your income tax return.

✓ Support the Church's future missionary work.

Please write for more information.

The Society for THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH
...all of us committed to the worldwide mission of Jesus
Bishop William J. McCormack, Propagation of the Faith,
G.P.O. Box 1950, New York, NY 10116 (Dept. C)

Accept my gift of \$ _____ for the current and critical needs of the Missions.

Send me information on the Pooled Income Fund.

Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

ALL INQUIRIES HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE. #344 5/20

Reynolds Shop

Main Street, Wolcott 315-594-2031

Memorial Day Celebration

May 27th to May 31st

Store Hours: Mon.-Wed. 9-5:30;

Thurs., Fri. 9-8:30; Sat. 9-5;

Sun. 11-4; Memorial Day 9-5

SPRING SOPHISTICATES by Pendleton REDUCED 20%

Misses Coordinated Sportswear by Jantzen REDUCED 20%

David Brooks & Robert Scott Sportswear REDUCED 20%

Ladies Soft Spots Shoes & Sandals REDUCED 25%

Hush Puppies Naturalizer Shoes REDUCED 15-50%

Reeboks & Adidas REDUCED 20%



★★ Entire Inventory Reduced 20 to 50% ★★

- David Brooks • Robert Scott • Jantzen • Pendleton
- Leslie Fay • Woolrich • Northern Isles • Susan Bristol
- Sanibel • Eagle's Eye • Marisa Christina • Foxcroft
- Stride Rite • London Fog • Monet • Hush Puppies
- Naturalizer • Life Stride • Dexter • Clinic • Soft Spots
- Red Wing • Keds • Adidas • Reebok