

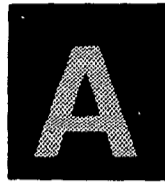
Preparing for World Youth Day

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

On this beautiful Monday morning, I just have finished a meeting with Mike Theisen, our diocesan coordinator of youth ministry, and Father Paul Tomasso, my priest secretary. We got together to review the schedule for International Youth Day to be celebrated in Denver, Colorado, this week. It was an exciting enterprise to discuss the schedule one last time before departure.

As you know, an enormous amount of planning has gone into this event. That planning has taken place on the international, national and local levels. All of it has been done to ensure that the events in Denver will be as rewarding, happy and exciting as they possibly can be for the young people who will gather there this week.

I know that our parish communities have demonstrated great care for their delegates, offering spiritual and financial support and, in some cases, volunteering to go as chaperons. My most recent experience of that kind of community support was at St. Patrick, Owego, yesterday. At the 9:30 liturgy we commissioned their three delegates — Alicia O'Connor, Sean Dolan and Christopher Sauerbrey — and prayed that their experience in Denver would be a blessing for them and for the parish. I am sure that it will be.



LONG THE WAY

As I prepare to go to Denver I have been thinking of the young people of our diocese. In my encounters with them I find them to be gifted, enthusiastic and faithful people. My hope is that their experience of one another on this journey — and their common experience of meeting young friends from all over our nation and the world — will do much to deepen their sense of the scope and variety of our community of faith. And I hope for all of us that our meeting with John Paul II will strengthen the faith of us all.

You read the schedule of events for International Youth Day in last week's *Catholic Courier*. Staff writer Mike Latona will be

traveling to Denver to cover the event for this paper, and I will tell you of my experience there in this space next week.

Between now and then please pray for the safety and happiness of all who will be gathering with our dear brother, John Paul. And please pray too for those of us who are no longer young but are going to Denver anyway. Ask the Lord to grant us the suppleness to go with the flow, the grace to experience and rejoice in the goodness of God's precious young people.

I just mentioned my experience of commissioning the delegates to International Youth Day from St. Patrick in Owego. I'd like to add here that my visit to the parish this weekend was occasioned by the rededication of their newly renovated church. The community did a wonderful job in the renovation and in similar fashion celebrated the rededication in a rich and joyful way. I congratulate them for work well done and thank them for their gracious hospitality to me all through the weekend.

For those of you may not be familiar with Owego, it is a village in Tioga County, the southeastern most county in our diocese. I know the community at St. Patrick's would welcome you warmly should you decide to visit their renovated church.

I hope that these summer days have been blessed ones for you and your loved ones. Peace to all.

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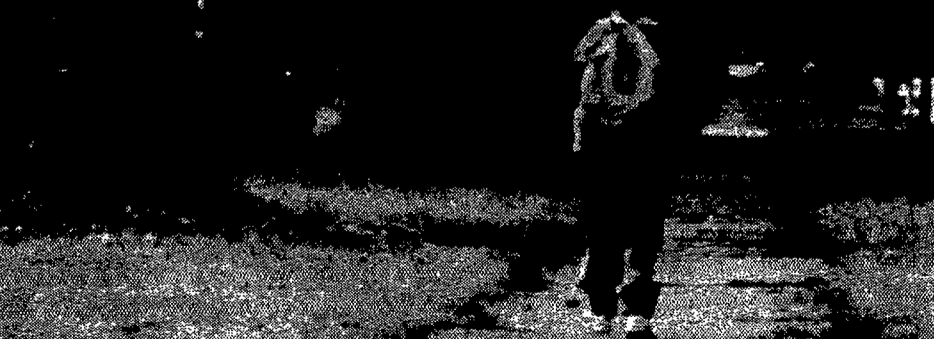
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