

Back problem elicits generous responses

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

If things had worked out as planned this evening, Monday, Nov. 8, I would be at St. Joseph's, Penfield confirming their 79 candidates. Instead, I am home pecking away at this column while Bishop Dennis Hickey generously fills in for me at the parish.

The reason for the change is that I am dealing with a back problem that will best be treated if I operate on a much reduced schedule for the next few days. It seems that I have a herniated disc. At the present time the rest to which I just referred and some medication are part of the program to calm things down. In a couple of days I will be seeing the doctor again, and he will recommend a more long-range course of therapy.

I am happy to tell you that my doctor is confident that this concern can be dealt with in a very constructive fashion. You can be sure that I will take his advice very seriously and, to the very best of my ability, do everything he wants me to do to promote the healing process. And I promise to keep you informed from time to time about how things are going.

To be honest with you, I held a minor debate with myself about whether or not to refer to the problem in this way. But because my gait may reflect the problem in the days ahead and because I may need to



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LONG THE WAY

ask for some further scheduling adjustments, I thought it the more realistic and respectful course to be upfront with you and let you know what's going on. Moreover, I do count on your prayers and wish to ask for them during this healing process.

Even in the few days that this has been a part of my experience, I have been touched by the understanding and concern of those of whom I have had to request some adjustments. I already mentioned the community at St. Joseph's, Penfield.

I would like to add a word of thanks to the folks at St. Christopher's, North Chili. They observed the 25th anniversary of the foundation of their parish this past weekend. That celebration began with the 5 p.m. liturgy on Saturday followed by a

banquet and, for me, was to continue through all of the Masses on Sunday morning.

In order to comply with treatment I had to ask to be excused after the liturgy on Saturday night. Father Bernie Dollen and the community could not have been more gracious about it. For that kindness and for the joy of the beautiful celebration that evening, I am most grateful.

I would like to add a word of gratitude to the members of the health-care community who have helped me. In this instance and in every other experience I have had with them over my years in Rochester, I have been impressed by their competence, professionalism and dedication. The experience has served to heighten my awareness of and make me more attentive to the debate about health-care reform now being carried on in our nation.

A final note: Notwithstanding the kindnesses I have experienced from so many in dealing with this concern, I have discovered that it is at least mildly difficult for me in the practical order to say no; to ask for help; to sacrifice for important, long-range values when immediate — and often beautiful activities — would diminish my capacity to do that.

Thanks for your kind understanding and for your prayers.
Peace to all.

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“The first consequence of prayer is forgetfulness of self.”

St. Teresa of Avila



more help for families, a family ministry consultant, Karen Rinefield, has been retained to offer parish workshops.

Christ's Ministry Continues Through Karen, Yolanda, and Bradley

Among those at a Southern Tier workshop conducted by Karen (left) were Yolanda Garza, a volunteer catechist at St. Catherine's in Ithaca, and Bradley Nicholson of St. Charles Borromeo, Elmira.

To continue bishop's ministries such as the Synod, please respond to this year's appeal with a generous pledge.

The Synodal process, made possible by your Thanks Giving Appeal donations, will lead to a new long-range pastoral plan for the diocese. The Synod is part of bishop's ministries, which are totally funded by the Appeal.

Already the seeds planted by the Synod are sprouting. For example, in response to requests for



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