

# Continue prayers for priests, vocations

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

This is one of my favorite weeks. That's because I'll be spending a good part of it in Corning, where the priests of our diocese will be gathering for our annual Convocation.

This year we'll continue our reflection on ministry, with particular emphases on our needs to work closely with other pastoral ministers and to be ready ourselves to adjust to changing pastoral circumstances.

I have been spending this Sunday evening preparing for the convocation. Earlier I read two articles about ministry I had been wanting to get to for some time. Then Paul Tomasso brought me some material we always develop for this event: the names of those ordained since our last Convocation (Lee Chase, Brian Cool and Lance Gonyo); and the names of our brother priests who have died since then (Tom Florack, Dan Hogan, Chet Klocek, Paul Murley, Howard Geck, Bernard Newcomb, Alex Stec and Francis Burns.)

In the same packet of material, Paul listed the names and assignments of our seminarians who are doing their pastoral years in the parishes of our diocese: John Bell at St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls; Kip Corriveau, St. Mary's, Elmira; Doug Della Pietra, Corning-Painted Post Catholic Community; Frank Fusare, St. Ann's, Rochester; and Mickey McGrath, Holy Ghost, Gates.

You have read about these men and



## A LONG THE WAY

their pastoral program in the *Catholic Courier* during the year. I just want to say here that I am proud to have them studying for the priesthood in our diocese and am delighted that they will be joining us for the convocation. They will add much to the experience and, I am sure, draw some benefit from it themselves.

Paul normally would have included the names of those to be ordained to the priesthood this spring, but this year there are none. That means that we will have to continue to make adjustments in order to supply a suitable level of priestly ministry to all of our faith communities.

To date, both our priests and our communities have been remarkably generous in making these adjustments, and I have little doubt that such a generous spirit will continue.

But I am also aware that we need to pray and work hard to do all that we can to encourage our wonderful young men to consider a vocation to ordained priestly ministry. Those who have stepped forward to pursue studies for priesthood are high-quality individuals. We would be happy to welcome many more.

I have an interesting task at this year's convocation. The planning committee asked me to give the closing presentation. Their invitation is not so much to review or process the material offered by our earlier speakers as to offer suggestions and directions for the future, based on what those speakers have to say and on my own sense of the future.

I have framed some preliminary comments for the event and look forward to hearing the input of our speakers and the opportunity to offer some thoughts about our future ministry to our brother priests.

Whatever the final shape of my remarks, I want to tell our priests that you and I love them very much and are deeply grateful for the loving, quiet, generous service they offer day in and day out to our local church.

Let me repeat a request I have made of you several times in the past at this time of the year. The request is that you pray for our priests, that you encourage and support them in their life and ministry in any way that you are able to do that. It means a lot when you do.

Peace to all.

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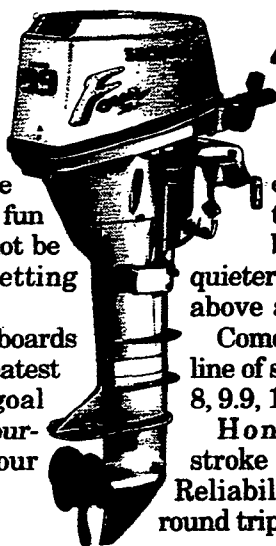
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