

Hope appears throughout diocese

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

In these days following the meeting in La Jolla, Calif., of our National Conference of Catholic Bishops, I have thought a good deal about the principal theme of that meeting, Shepherding a Future of Hope.

We were told that eventually we would be receiving texts of all of the talks given at the meeting. I look forward to the opportunity to reviewing them and spending some time with the portions of them that meant most to me.

In the meantime, an idea expressed by one of our speakers has been on my mind quite a bit. I do not have an exact quote of his words, but the sense of them was this: Hope does not pretend that problems and difficulties do not exist or that everything is perfect. Rather, hope is the capacity to identify and celebrate the good and the life-giving, even as we deal with our problems and our difficulties.

That idea caught my fancy, not because I think our community of faith is heavily burdened with problems and difficulties — although we certainly have a share of those sufficient to keep us on our toes and working hard. What I have found so attractive about the thought is that it has helped me in these days just before a summer break to think back on this year with a special alertness to signs of hope among us.

Among the exciting signs that have come to mind are the following:

- Our community's continuing commitment to our Synod, now in its implementation stage. As we prepare parish and diocesan responses to the priorities we have chosen, I am mightily



LONG THE WAY

impressed by the quality of the work and am excited about the possibilities that work will open for us.

- The willingness of people all over our diocese to give of their precious time and energy to strengthen our church and foster its mission.

- The upswing we are experiencing in ministry with and for the young people of our local church. World Youth Day with Pope John Paul II and our Synod both have had much to do with that. But we owe thanks as well to key leaders among our young people and to adults who support that leadership,

- The ability and willingness of our community to deal with the real issues facing us, especially when those issues are complex and even when they are painful.

- The high quality of our pastoral ministers. We have and always have had excellent priests in the Diocese of Rochester. That tradition has been

paralleled and extended in these post-conciliar years by the emergence of a remarkable body of laymen, laywomen and permanent deacons who offer us high-quality service in a variety of pastoral ministries,

- A concern for life and justice issues among the people of our diocese. This, too, has been a characteristic of our local church throughout its 125 years of our history. It is a joy to note its continued vigor,

- The openness of our community to one another and the ability so many have to speak and to listen to one another in a respectful fashion. That ability seems to me to be a special and good quality of our diocese, because it allows us to reflect on our life and faith together, to grow and to change. This wonderful attribute of our community was especially evident in the Synod process, but it did not begin there nor will it cease after it, and I am very happy about that.

These are some of the signs of hope I see in our local church. I could list many more without any difficulty at all.

How about you? Are you hopeful? About life? About our church and its mission? If so, what leads you to be hopeful? I'd like to invite you to think about these questions during these weeks of summer and, if you're inclined to do so, to drop a line to tell me what leads you to be hopeful. I'll be happy to share with you the responses I receive in my next column, which will appear in the August 4 edition of the *Catholic Courier*.

In the meantime, I'll be enjoying some vacation.

Peace to all.

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THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

SUGGESTED PRAYERS AND SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR PRIESTS

V. Lord, open our lips.
R. And we shall praise Your name.
V. O God, come to our aid.
R. O Lord, make haste to help us.

Scripture Reading:
One of the following may be used:
Matt. 9:35-38 Mark 10:28-30
Luke 5:1-11 Luke 14:25-33
Jn. 1:35-52 Jn. 15:9-17
2 Cor. 5:14-20 Heb. 5:1-10
Gen. 12:14 Exod. 3:1-6:9-12
1 Sam. 3:1-10 Jer. 1:6-8.

A Litany of Saints:
St. Michael and St. Vincent de Paul
St. Raphael St. John Eudes
St. Joseph St. Margaret Clitherow
St. Peter and St. Paul St. John Vianney
St. Patrick St. Therese of Lisieux
St. Francis St. Maximilian Kolbe
St. Dominic St. Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila
St. Catherine of Sienna R. Pray for our bishops and priests

Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him on behalf of His Priest

JULY, 1994

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