

# Warm praise for a good friend

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Among the blessings I have experienced in my years as Bishop of Rochester, few rank with the association I have been privileged to have with my brother bishop, Dennis W. Hickey. He has been a strong and good friend since I first met him in 1979, and I have learned much from him.

I think of him with special fondness these days because he is about to celebrate a distinctive milestone in his life. On Friday, October 28, Bishop Hickey will celebrate his 80th birthday. A proud native of Dansville, this gentle, wise man was ordained a priest of our diocese in 1941 and a bishop in 1968.

In those long years of service, the bishop has been assigned to a variety of ministries and has distinguished himself in every one of them. But my purpose in the column is not to review the variety of his ministries or his distinguished service in each. Rather, my purpose is to say a word about this man who has meant so much to so many of us for so long.

As I reflect on my years of association with Dennis Hickey, I think of the three qualities of his I admire most deeply.

The first is his considerable intellectual curiosity and openness to the ideas of other people. I have often wondered how Dennis does all that he does and still manages to read so much in theology, history and politics. But read much he does.

In his commitment to reading, as I see it, is rooted his capacity continually to grow



## A LONG THE WAY

through passing years and changing circumstances. I have never seen Dennis throw up his arms in despair at what's happening in our church or our culture. He's much more likely to extend his arms to embrace the real and try to coax out of it all the good that's there.

I also cherish the bishop's sense of perspective. His long pastoral experience, his expansive reading and varied interests are all part of Dennis' ability to see things as they are and to see the pieces of even complex issues in relationship to one another.

He remains calm in difficult circumstances. That calmness allows him to reach deep into his life experience, to harvest and share the wisdom to which that experience has given birth. And, even when he has no better solution to the

dilemma at hand than the rest of us do, he shares the precious gift of his humor. And when he does so, he offers the loving reminder that when you're laughing it's difficult to blow things out of proportion or to take yourself too seriously.

A third quality of Dennis Hickey's that has meant a great deal to me since the day I first met him is his deep and genuine love for the church. I have seen that in such a wide variety of ways that I find it difficult to capture it in just a few words.

The best I can do is to say that I think Dennis is a realist about the church. By that I mean that he has a deep, discerning spirit that allows him to perceive and to celebrate all that is good and beautiful within and among our community of faith. That same spirit endows him with the capacity to be in touch with our faults, our failings and our never-ending need for reform. It's wonderful to have a colleague and friend who brings such gifts to any discussion and always shares those gifts in a way that leaves others feeling honored and encouraged.

For all of the good gifts Dennis Hickey has shared with us I express deep, personal thanks. And, as I wish him a happy birthday, I express the hope that we will all enjoy his friendship for many more happy, healthy years.

Bishop Hickey will be pleased if you wish him a happy birthday in the days ahead. And I guarantee that he'll be positively ecstatic if you tell him you read about it in the Catholic Courier!

Peace to all.

"At the evening of our life, we shall be judged on our love."

- St. John of the Cross

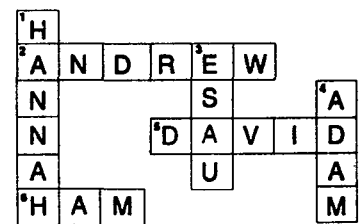
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### THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?  
A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Lord Jesus, you have chosen your priests from among us and sent them out to proclaim your word and to act in your name. For so great a gift to your Church, we give you praise and thanksgiving. We ask you to fill them with the fire of your love, that their ministry may reveal your presence in the Church. Since they are earthen vessels, we pray that your power shine out through their weakness. In their afflictions let them never be crushed; in their doubts never despair; in temptation never be destroyed; in persecution never abandoned. Inspire them through prayer to live each day the mystery of your dying and rising. In times of weakness send them your Spirit, and help them to praise your heavenly Father and pray for poor sinners. By the same Holy Spirit put your word on their lips and your love in their hearts, to bring good news to the poor and healing to the broken-hearted. And may the gift of Mary your mother, to the disciple whom you loved, be your gift to every priest. Grant that she who formed you in her human image, may form them in your divine image, by the power of your Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. Amen

O Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to you. (3X)  
With permission of Most Rev. Felix S. Zafra, D.D., Bishop of Tagbilaran (Bohol, Philippines)

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

## NOVEMBER, 1994

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