

Travels reveal health of the diocese

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

As I look back on the past five or six weeks it seems that I have driven around our diocese more than in any other similar time period in all my years of ministry here. I think of drives to and from Auburn (three times), Geneseo, Bath, Rexville, Shortsville, Horseheads, Elmira (two times), Corning and Painted Post, Chili, Pittsford, Penfield, Canandaigua, Perinton, Naples, Mendon and Fairport and to multiple sites in Rochester.

Memories of those recent travels are very pleasant. One reason is that our region, always beautiful, was radiant with sunlight and the brilliant colors of autumn. I don't ever remember enjoying more the splendor of the foliage.

A second reason is that the travels provided a special reminder of something of which I try always to be aware. I refer to the wonderful vitality and energy of Catholic life around our 12-county diocese. I have seen that energy and vitality in the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy, in bubbling youth activity, in the quiet generosity of lay leaders, in the dedicated competence of our clergy, in the array of gifted women and men who engage in full-time pastoral ministry.



A LONG THE WAY

My ministry allows me a privileged perspective from which to observe that richness. Visits to parishes offer a wonderful opportunity to know the energy and commitment people bring to Catholic life in their local communities. The opportunity to convene groups of pastoral ministers and/or lay leaders provides another life-giving experience of the good gifts God has lavished on us.

A third reason for my pleasure at the memory of these activities is that I have found in the people I have met a strong confirmation of what was yielded by our Synod process, that is, a deep desire among the people of this diocese for more nourishment of mind, heart, soul and spirit from the

richness of our Catholic faith tradition. I judge that thirst to be a strong sign of hope and encouragement, and am delighted that we are doing so much work to respond to it.

I could easily continue the list and probably will return to the theme in the weeks ahead. I write about it now because I think it's important to frequently mention the good things that daily happen among us. Otherwise, I think we can all so focus on our problems and shortcomings that we miss the good things and the joy that comes from sharing and celebrating them.

As the years go by, I come to appreciate more and more the expansive, inclusive, participatory nature of Catholic life. The travels of these weeks, the many meetings, celebrations and conversations I have had with you indicate to me that there is much health in the community, much about which we can be hopeful, and much to celebrate.

At the beginning of that time period, I knew the weeks would be full and rich. I didn't realize, at least as much as I realize it now, what a wonderful preparation for Thanksgiving those days would be. I thank you for the gift.

Peace to all.


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