

Spring's early signs warm the spirit

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

The first words I heard this morning were spoken by the meteorologist on a local radio station. He announced that today's high temperature would be above 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

It did my heart good to hear that news, as it has these past few days to note that snow piles in the area are slowly surrendering to rising temperatures.

I do not mean to complain about the winter soon coming to a close. Compared to the last two it seemed reasonably mild. It's just that I always look forward to the first signs of spring and welcome them with joyful embrace when they first appear.

I saw one such sign recently as I took a run along the canal. Great wedge-shaped flights of geese made their way south in the clear morning air. As they passed they honked in chorus as if to say they hoped we were enjoying the incipient change of season as much as they were.

It will be a joy these next few weeks to watch for other signs taking deeper root among us. It will be good to see little children heading for school without the need to wear clothes that weigh more than they do. It will be fun to have them playing outdoors more during recess and after school. And, won't it be a joy for



A LONG THE WAY

everyone to follow the blossoming of this region's trees and shrubs?

Last Saturday, after a celebration of the feast of St. Patrick at St. Mary's Church, Rochester, I responded to spring's lure by participating in the annual Run for the Shamrocks. Although I run very regularly, I had not participated in that race or any other for many years. It was a wonderful experience to join some 700 people that morning on a run which took us from the heart of the city south along the Genesee River to the University of Rochester and back. It was as though being with so many upbeat, enthusiastic people increased one's capacity to absorb and be warmed by the spring.

An added bonus for me was the opportunity to run with Mary Jane Brennan, a friend whom I first met when she was a student at Cardinal Mooney High School. Mary Jane is the current school principal at St. Joseph's Villa. Running along with her provided an opportunity for reunion, which I appreciated very much. She also helped me forget, at least for a while, that I was running five miles — a distance I rarely do — at a speed I rarely achieve. (To put things in perspective about that speed, let me tell you this: Sunday's paper listed the top 100 men finishers. My time was 12 minutes slower than the 100th male finisher!)

I saw many other friends along the way that day. Among them were Sister Rosemary Sherman, RSM, a noted area marathon runner; and Father Jim Schwartz, pastor of St. Louis, Pittsford, who over the years has logged a good many miles in area races.

If the patterns of years past are any indicator, we have not seen the last sign of winter. But it has been a joy to welcome early signs of spring. They're good for the spirit and speak strongly to many of the themes of our preparation for the Easter feast. I hope you have enjoyed them as much as I have.

Peace to all.

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