

With gratitude to Syracuse's bishop-elect

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

I want to begin this column by offering my congratulations, prayers and support to Monsignor James M. Moynihan, priest of the Diocese of Rochester, on his appointment as bishop of the Diocese of Syracuse. Those who are acquainted with Jim know well that our good neighbors to the east will be welcoming a new bishop who has served with great distinction in a wide variety of ministries over the 38 years of his priestly life.

The page 1 story in this week's issue of the *Catholic Courier* will review Jim's record of pastoral service as a priest of our diocese and will update you on all that is currently known about plans for his ordination as bishop. What I would like to do here is to share with you some memories I have of Jim that speak to me about his good heart and generous spirit.

The first memory relates to a visit I made to Saint Joseph Parish, Penfield, in the very early days of my ministry as bishop, to participate in an open forum with that parish community. I do not remember the evening in any great detail. But I do recall that, while the parishioners were unfailingly kind, they had some very thoughtful and challenging questions for their new and inexperienced bishop. I did the best I could with their questions but came away from the evening with a sense that I had much to learn about the community and how best to serve them as their pastoral leader.

What I do recall with clarity about the evening was the support Jim gave to me



A LONG THE WAY

through it all. By presence and word he conveyed an understanding and a sense of companionship that gave me confidence in the support of the community and in my own ability to meet the challenges that lay before me. In the years since I have met many friends from Saint Joseph who have spoken in high praise of Jim's ministry among them. Whenever they do, I remember that night so many years ago and think that Jim supported them through the years just as he did me on that occasion.

Second, I think of the day I asked Jim to take the leadership in our still young Thanks Giving Appeal. Father Jim Marvin had begun that endeavor in strong fashion and we knew it was critical that his replacement be able to build on the good foundation which he had laid. God smiled on the process in two distinct ways. One was the ease in which Jim's name emerged

so clearly and strongly from a pool of candidates we were considering. The second was the ready and gracious way in which he agreed to take up the task. In his term as leader of the TGA, Jim not only advanced the effort in the short term but planted some ideas that have been to the long-term enhancement of our annual giving program.

A third recollection I have of Jim's strong ability and notable generosity is the work he did to revise the Constitution of our Presbyteral Council in light of the Revised Code of Canon Law, which went into effect in 1983. Jim held the chair of the Council at the time. I believe that the revisions he proposed made a significant contribution to our Council's ability over time to do our work in a much more productive and rewarding fashion. When, as I most often do, I find myself looking forward to the next Council meeting, I do so with a silent nod of gratitude to the bishop-elect of Syracuse.

There is much more I could tell you about ministry with Jim Moynihan but there is not room for it here. And there is much more which could be added by Bishops James E. Kearney, Fulton J. Sheen and Joseph L. Hogan, and by the thousands of men and women who knew Jim and served with him long before I came on the scene. I hope it is not presumptuous of me to say on behalf of all that we will miss you dearly as a member of our presbyterate but that we rejoice in your appointment as bishop of Syracuse.

God speed to you Jim.
Peace to all.



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