

Preaching workshop deserves thought

This has been a blessed and beautiful week at Notre Dame Retreat Center in Canandaigua. Recent storms have given the appearance of a winter desert to the terrain around the center. But that winter barrenness has served to highlight the warmth and vigor of the group of pastoral ministers here to participate in a retreat/workshop experience on the theme "Preaching the Just Word."

In that enterprise we have enjoyed the wisdom and guidance of men and women who came from other places to be with us: Sister Sarah Sharkey, OP, from San Antonio, Texas; John Carr, director of World Peace and Social Development for the United States Catholic Conference in Washington, D.C.; Father Ray Kemp of the Archdiocese of Washington; Father Leo Murray, SJ, of Philadelphia; and Father Walter Burghardt, SJ, who is a member of the Jesuit Woodstock Community in Washington and the founding father of this rewarding program.

Joining them from our own community were Roslyn Karaban of St. Bernard's Institute; Kay Heverin, SSJ, pastoral associate at Sacred Heart Cathedral; Donna Ecker, director of Bethany House, Rochester; Nancy De Rycke, SSJ, pastoral administrator at St. Helen's, Gates; Gloria Ulterino, pas-

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

toral associate at St. William's, Conesus; and Jack Balinsky, our diocesan director of Catholic Charities.

With the help of these men and women, we studied the concept of biblical justice-fidelity to covenant relationships with God, neighbor and the earth, and ways in which we can consistently and fruitfully be faithful to the richness of that tradition in our preaching of the Gospel.

I won't even try to give you the details of the program. That would take too long. And, to be honest with you, I need some time to think about it and let it settle in my own spirit. In a reflection session just concluded, the other participants also expressed deep satisfaction with the program and acknowledged that they, too, would welcome the opportunity in the days ahead to think it through as they resume the rhythms of daily ministry.

What I can tell you is that St.

Bernard's Institute brought the program here in response to your voice, which stated loudly and clearly in our Synod that preaching is very important in the life of the church and that those engaged in the ministry of preaching should be committed to doing it as well as they possibly can. I would add that those of us who attended did so, at least in part, because we recognize and accept the importance of our Synod priority to grow in the understanding and practice of our faith all the days of our lives.

You might be interested to know that 32 people attended the program. Among them were six lay women, six women religious, three lay men, one permanent deacon, 15 diocesan priests (13 from our diocese, and two from the Diocese of Albany) and one bishop. For me one of the graces of the retreat has been the opportunity to hear the participants' love for the church and thirst for a deeper sense of biblical justice, and to appreciate the ways in which God has blessed every one of them for pastoral service in our faith community.

Their presence would have been gift enough, but I also have been aware these days that they are but a sampling of the dedicated men and women who enrich us with their ministry.

Peace to all.

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Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)
Vol. 107 No. 16 January 18, 1996

Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.

Subscription rates: single copy, 75c; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340. Second-Class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

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