

# Musings about what matters in life

I write this column late in the evening of Thursday, Jan. 11, aware that in about 40 hours I will be on my way to Chile and that by the time you read these words I will be a day or two away from my flight home from Brazil.

As I mentioned to you in *Along the Way* two weeks ago, I am going to visit our Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of St. Joseph serving in Chile and Brazil respectively. I will try in next week's column to convey to you at least some sense of the experience of that journey.

In the meantime, a few brief notes, musings and comments on the passing scene I have been wanting to share with you:

1. Though I have not said it frequently in this forum, I am daily grateful for the presence and ministry in this diocese of Bishops Joseph Hogan and Dennis Hickey. The longer I am here, the more deeply I am aware of the debt all of us owe to Bishop Hogan for his courage in laying the foundations for our response to the renewal of Vatican Council II. We benefit every day from the fruits of his vision and courage. I would add that, when I retire, I would like to be as good to my successor as Bishop Hogan has been to me.

Bishop Hickey has my respect and affection for more reasons than I can cite here for want of time and space. But let me try to summarize

## along the way



By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

those reasons by saying that he continually teaches me about ministry by his undying thirst for knowledge, his generous spirit of service and his long-standing love and care for the priests of this diocese. I cite also his support of this newspaper, to which he has made a contribution of inestimable value.

2. Several times in *Along the Way* in recent months I have asked you to participate as best you can in the prayer and conversation about the Eucharistic life taking place in our diocese. My thanks to all who have responded so generously to that request — especially to our pastors, all parish pastoral staffs, pastoral councils and liturgy committees. The hard work that so many people have done has been extremely helpful. Among other things, it has helped us better to name our common opportunities and concerns,

encouraged us to develop a framework to approach them and a greater sense of the relative importance of the challenges that lie before us. Much remains to be done, but I am much encouraged by what has been accomplished thus far.

3. Mindful that I call upon many people to do all kinds of things, and aware that I must include myself in the question, I ask: Are we living a life that is so fast and so pressured that we spend too little time thinking about its meaning, about our relationship with God, one another and the earth; expressing our care for one another; doing such things as telling stories, reading poetry, listening to music, conversing with family members and friends about things that really matter to us? If we are, are there ways in which we can help one another find friendlier patterns of life? It seems to me that our spiritual heritage has much to say about such issues. I'd be curious to know how you look at them and what suggestions you would make to the rest of us.

I'll be in touch with you again when I return from Chile and Brazil. In the meantime, I hope that the winter will be kind to you and that you find great strength in the love of family and friends.

Peace to all.

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