

# Date stirs thoughts of special memories

April 29, the day of this writing, is the Feast of St. Catherine of Siena and the day of two special memories for me:

1.) The first memory is that of Bishop John E. McCafferty, Auxiliary Bishop of Rochester, who died on this date in 1980. I had known the bishop only since May of 1979 and he had been struggling since November of that year with the illness that finally claimed his life.

In the earlier months of our acquaintance, when he was feeling well, John McCafferty was a good friend and guide. He realized that I had much to learn. In his kindness, he was ready with advice whenever I asked for it and supportive of decisions I made.

As I remember him today, on the 16th anniversary of his death, I am aware that the greatest gifts John gave to me were the stories he told about the people he knew and the experiences through which he lived during his years in our community. I think of one night in particular as exemplary of that legacy. My mother was visiting and I thought it would be fun to go out for dinner. So I invited Bishop McCafferty, Bishop Dennis Hickey, Father Chuck Latus and Chuck's mother, Marie Latus, to join Mom and me for a night out. To this day I wish I had carried a tape recorder to the table that

## along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



evening. Why? Because for close to two hours, Dennis and John traded stories about life in our diocese. I remember much laughter because the stories were filled with fun. I remember learning a lot because the stories conveyed a loving sense for people and a real reverence for them.

It's quite possible that you never knew Bishop John McCafferty. But I hope that there have been story tellers in your life. Stories help us make connections with those who have gone before us and with one another. They help put things in perspective and keep them in proportion. They stimulate thought and laughter. Stories keep values and dreams alive when the pressures of the daily grind dull our awareness of them.

2.) I always remember on this date that on April 29, 1982, we published "Fire in

the Thornbush," our pastoral letter on the dignity of women and their place in the church and society. I renew my thanks to Sister Mary Sullivan, RSM, who led that effort and the many others whose experience and wisdom gave shape to a document that has been so helpful in our diocese and around the country.

We know that our Synod reaffirmed our need and our commitment to keep working on that theme. In light of Synod recommendations, we have re-formed our Women's Commission. As a matter of fact, that group met for the first time in an organizational, orientation session this weekend at Notre Dame Spiritual Life Center in Canandaigua. I am looking forward to hearing all about the meeting when I arrive at the office this morning.

I look forward to this date next year when it will be fun to comment on the fruits of the first year of thinking and activity by our new Women's Commission. Given the experience and commitment of commission members and our continuing work on our Synod priorities, I think it will be a gratifying report. In the meantime, please pray for them and for their work on our behalf.

Peace to all.

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