

# Trust in God helps us to achieve goals

It was last year at this time that I boldly announced to you my intention to upgrade my computer skills. I was commenting on my need and desire to take on new challenges from time to time. Further, I mentioned that my lack of knowledge of computers leaves me out of some of today's conversations and, if such ignorance continues, will leave me unprepared for possibilities in communications that will become more important for ministry as time goes by.

If I needed any reminder of that, I received it this morning on a visit to St. John the Evangelist School on Ridge Road in Greece. A group of students in the computer lab were making their machines sing at their touch as they communicated with one another using that medium. And just a couple of days ago my niece, Grace, picked up my laptop and was using systems I didn't even know were part of the machine's capacity. Example: When I handed the machine to Grace, I had been entering text on a blue background. When I sat down to use it after her departure, I discovered that the background is now red and I haven't the faintest idea how to change it back to blue.

But in spite of my perduring good intentions and the kinds of reminders I mentioned above, I have to tell you that my progress this year has been very slow. In fact, if I figured in the adjustments called for when the Pastoral Center converted to a new system a few months ago, I've probably have to tell you that I might even have lost a little ground recently.

But that tends to discourage me only at moments when I am writing under a time pressure and find myself stuck in a computer error from which I can't escape. (At this very moment —

## along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

no kidding — I am using a size type so small that I can hardly read it on my screen. I haven't the faintest idea what I did to make it so. Much less do I know how to enlarge it.) When there is more time and less pressure I fiddle around until I discover my error and a way to correct it or I study the manual or I ask someone to help me out. I find it rewarding to keep at it. It can be fun to work at developing a new set of skills. It can be challenging, even exciting, to solve problems. And I think it's not the worst experience in the world to ask your friends for help when you need it.

As I write, I remember my efforts some years ago to quit smoking, to be free from what I truly considered to be an addiction to nicotine. I had no doubt that smoking was bad for my health. I had no doubt that I wanted to quit, nor that I could quit. But the fact is I had many false starts. And, even the time I finally quit for good I was very shaky for the first few days. But quit I finally did and I'll forever be grateful that I could.

Learning a new skill is different from quitting a bad habit. No question about that. Why I associate the two in this column is because both

speaking to me about some issues and values with which most of us deal throughout the course of our adult lives. I mean things like settling on goals we would like to achieve, perseverance when the work we are doing seems more difficult or progresses more slowly than we had anticipated, patience with self and the courage to start again even when we fail.

Whether I become a whiz on the computer hardly matters — to me or anyone else. What matters to me is that I try to achieve a reasonable understanding of this intriguing new technology and a practical working competence in its use for purposes that will enhance my capacity to minister in this day and age. I know it will take a lot more work and that there will be other frustrating moments. Then, unlikely as this may have seemed when I experienced them, I may even be grateful for the times I tried and failed to quit smoking. I guarantee you that I wasn't happy about it then. But the memories help me to put my present failures and false starts in a perspective I find helpful.

If you find yourself wanting very much to achieve something that has eluded you or wish to move away from something that leaves you less free than you would like to be, I hope you'll find the inner resources to combat a tendency to discouragement, which is so natural in such circumstances.

I don't have any magic directions about how to do that. But I do recommend that you commend your desire to the loving care of God, that you trust yourself and that you let your friends help and support you in any way that they can.

Peace to all.

## DIOCESAN MISSIONS SUNDAY

MAY 19, 1996



In the gospel of Ascension Thursday, Jesus addresses his disciples:

**"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS. TEACH THEM TO CARRY OUT EVERYTHING I COMMANDED YOU. AND KNOW THAT I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD."**

- Mt. 28:19-20

This same message is addressed to us today. As the second millennium after Christ's coming draws to an end, the task of spreading the gospel is more crucial than ever. While many know that Christianity exists, they have not been exposed to Christ Jesus alive and present. While many have been fed with bread to satisfy their hunger, they have not received the bread of life.

We encourage your personal commitment of prayers and material resources to our Sisters of St. Joseph in Brazil and the Sisters of Mercy in Chile.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark  
Father Robert C. Bradler

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