

# Changes challenge us

These days a good number of our priests and pastoral ministers are preparing for new assignments. For most of our priests, the official date of transfer is June 25. There is no standard date for other pastoral ministers. For all of them, priests and other pastoral ministers, however, this is a time for the work of closure of one ministry and reorientation to another.

I have noticed over the years that some pastoral ministers find change to be stimulating and attractive. Their minds turn to fresh challenges, new relationships. The opportunity to discover new things about themselves and others is quite attractive to them. They tend to think about reassignment every five years or so because they judge it to be important for their growth and development.

For some others the prospect of change is quite unattractive. They find change burdensome because it means moving away from a network of treasured relationships. It carries with it, as well, the onus of developing significant relationships with a new community. These individuals tend to hunker down a bit when conversations turn to the possibility of change for them.

Our pastoral ministers are not the only ones coping with the prospect of change this spring. That is clear from my mail. At this time of year it is not unusual to receive letters asking for the reconsideration of a transfer of one of our pastoral ministers.

Some such letters are written in calm, dispassionate style; others require asbestos gloves for safe handling! All take exception to the move because of the loss it will mean to

## along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

the community the person is leaving. While I feel badly that people are upset, I do appreciate the fact that they take time to let me know of their concerns.

Their thoughtfulness affords me the opportunity to acquaint them with the process by which we make such decisions. That process, imperfect as it is, involves a lot of thought and consultation. Our hope is that it will respect the freedom and dignity of our priests and pastoral ministers, and that it will allow us to respond to all our parish communities in a fair and equitable fashion.

You'll understand that in making these comments I'm not talking about good or bad, right or wrong. I am simply noting the different ways in which people relate to the prospect of significant change in their lives. Some of us like it. Some of us do not.

Whether we do or do not, we all have our own ways of dealing with change. And our own timetables. In light of this I pray these days that the changes we experience will mean good growth for all concerned — that through them we'll learn something about ourselves and others we didn't know before.

I should tell you here that I am among those of you who will be affected by transfers this year. Father Paul Tomasso, who has served as my priest secretary and vice chancellor for 10 years, will be moving on to become pastor of four Rochester parishes.

He has been a superb collaborator and friend in that decade-long capacity, not only to me but to people all over our diocese. All of us have benefited from his wisdom, kindness and spirit of service. I know that I shall miss him very much and shall always be grateful for the 10 years of support and encouragement he has offered in the ministry he now leaves.

Father Tim Brown, parochial vicar at St. Mary's, Canandaigua, will be replacing Paul. I think that Tim will find the adjustment challenging. I am also confident that he will continue, even build upon, the work done by Paul and his predecessors.

One final note on my own experience of change this year: Father Mike Brown, brother to Tim, will be leaving his work as parochial vicar at Sacred Heart Cathedral to serve the Roman Catholic Communities of Corning and Painted Post. It has been a joy to live with Mike, and we will miss him around here very much. We will also welcome warmly Father Frank Fusare, one of our two newly ordained priests, who will succeed Mike in service to our cathedral parish.

Please join me in praying that all of us who are in any way dealing with change at this time of year will grow through the process.

Peace to all.

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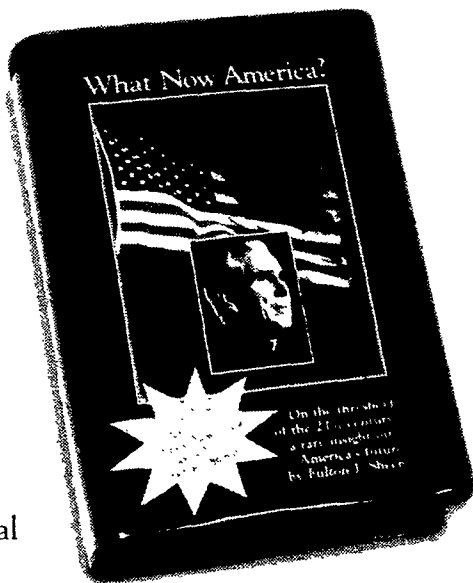
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