

Hospital award, youth meeting signs of grace

It is good to be back with you this week through "Along the Way." I thank all of you for your prayerful support during my vacation time. I express my gratitude also to Father John Mulligan, good friend and vicar general, and to all other co-workers who helped make that vacation time so carefree.

I am starting this column at — of all places — the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia. I came here at the invitation of Stuart Putnam, chief executive officer of Rochester's St. Mary's Hospital, to join him and a delegation from St. Mary's as they received the prestigious Foster G. McGaw Award for Community Service.

The McGaw Award is co-sponsored by the American Hospital Association and the Baxter Foundation. One of the prime requisites for the award is that the institutions nominated show concern about access to health care for those most in need in our society.

The award ceremony was quite moving. There was an impressive videotape, which set forth the richness and creativity of St. Mary's vital presence in our community. It cited St. Mary's strong commitment to work with neighborhood groups, human service agencies and local parishes. And, of course, it mentioned St. Mary's intentional, committed decision to serve those most in need in our community.

I hope that many of you will have an opportunity to see the videotape in the months ahead. I know that you would en-

along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



joy it. It will remind you in an attractive way that in St. Mary's we have a powerhouse of witness and service in our community.

In his brief but moving acceptance speech, Stuart recalled the foundation of St. Mary's, Rochester's first hospital, by the Daughters of Charity in 1857. Those great women came to serve in a cholera epidemic and stayed on to serve those wounded in the Civil War.

Ever since, their sisters and other co-workers have continued to meet the needs of the community in a most generous fashion. Typical of Stuart, he gave no attention to the very significant vision and service he has brought to St. Mary's since he became its CEO.

Congratulations and many thanks to all who make St. Mary's such a gift to us all.

Continuing on a note of gratitude, I thank the hundreds of high school students (and adults who accompanied them) who made our Diocesan Youth Convention last weekend the great success it was. I can't tell you what a

delight it was to spend those hours with them.

So many factors made it an exciting time for me: the beauty of the campus at SUNY College at Geneseo and the hospitality of the staff; Kim and Reggie Harris, who served as keynote presenters for the event and sparked us through the days with their music; the work of Mike Theisen and all members of our Diocesan Youth Committee; and the generous youth ministers and chaperons who work so affectionately and respectfully with our young people.

Most of all, the convention was highlighted by the young people themselves, who made the weekend a time of special grace for me. Through the hours of the convention I found them to be playful, energetic, reverent, exuberant, thoughtful, hospitable and generous.

It was just good to be with them because to be with them makes me aware of the good they do each day. And, to be with them strengthens my hope that our future is bright and strong.

Having said all of that, I must confess that my old bones are creaking today from trying to keep up with them during the convention. It's a thoroughly pleasant fatigue, however, and I will be looking forward to more of the same next year at this time.

I hope the summer has been good to you and your loved ones. Thanks again for your kind support.

Peace to all.

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Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580) Vol. 107 No. 45 August 8, 1996

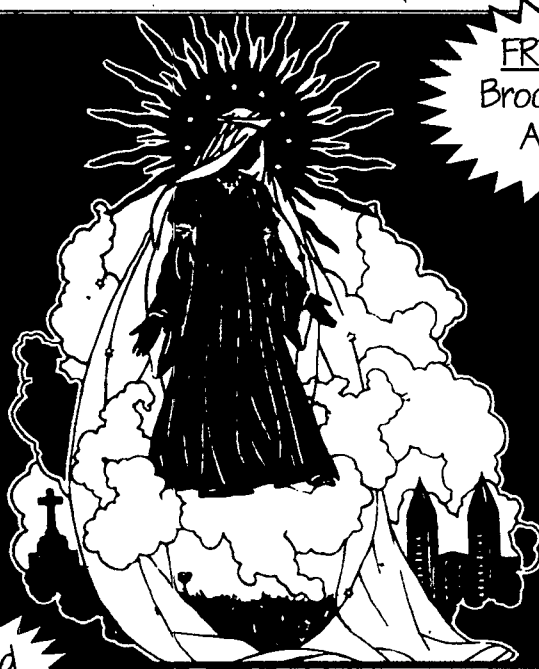
Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.

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

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624-0379

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