

## Listen to life's quiet moments

Quiet. Silence. Stillness.

Rest with these ideas for a few moments. What do they mean to you? Are they attractive concepts, ones that you like a great deal and are able to enjoy from time to time?

Or are they rather forbidding realities, the experience of which leaves you feeling uncomfortable?

The question interests me in light of two recent experiences. Both, in different ways, got me thinking about what silence and peace and stillness might mean to us.

The first experience was being in the presence of a young mother who was busily engaged in the care of her two very young children.

I was with them for only a matter of hours, but even in that very short time, became aware of just how demanding those two beautiful children could be of their mother.

The children were not misbehaving at all. They were just full of energy and in constant motion. As I observed this young family I admired the energy, patience and affectionate care the mother lavished on the two little ones.

And I wondered if this very active parent ever longed for quiet, private moments. And if she does, how does she ever manage to enjoy them?

A second experience I think of was a most enjoyable celebration of confirmation at which I presided recently. Because of the large number of candi-

### along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

dates for the sacrament, I knew that the ceremony would take some time.

For that reason I encouraged the great number of individuals in the congregation to enjoy the sights and sounds of the evening.

I also suggested some questions and themes for prayer that I thought might help them to cope with the heat of the evening and to enter into the spirit of the celebration.

They most certainly entered into the spirit of the evening. No doubt about that. The people sang and prayed with fervor. Their love and support of the candidates was obvious.

What was also notable to me was how quickly the peaceful and prayerful quiet to which I had tried to call them gave way to widespread conversation.

While it was mildly distracting to me, I did not judge the conversation to be disrespectful to the occasion or irreverent. I understood it, in part, to be a way in which the folks coped with the heat of the evening and the length of the celebration.

But I also wondered if the general shift to conversation among those present was a sign that moments of silence, quiet and stillness are less and less a part of our lives. And, if we do experience such moments only rarely, is that good, bad or of little importance one way or another?

My opinion — perhaps a reflection of my own needs and personality — is that we are the poorer when we lose a taste for silence, quiet and stillness.

I say that because I think it is important in our complex, fast-moving, often noisy world to have moments of peace and quiet. Moments when we stop and listen and rest. Times when we reflect on what is happening in our lives and on what it all means. Occasions when we relate all of that to our great goals and the dreams of our hearts.

What is your thought about such things? Do you value moments of quiet and silence and stillness in your life?

Why? Do you have sufficient opportunity to meet your need for this value?

If you do, how do you manage it? If you do not, what would identify as external factors that make it difficult for you? How might you make the changes that would allow you to enjoy such opportunities?

If such themes are of interest to you, I hope that the weeks of summer allow you some special opportunities to reflect on them.

Peace to all.

## "WHAT KIND OF WORLD AM I LEAVING YOU?"

Will it be cold and unforgiving?  
Or compassionate and caring?  
You have the power to decide.

### WILLPOWER™

Use your will to decide what kind of world you want your children — your children's children — to have. Because your will is *power*.

### YOU DECIDE™

Use your *WILLpower™* to take care of your loved ones. And to care for causes that reflect your values and affect your world.

Maybe it's the arts — to bring beauty into the world.  
A charity — to take care of the world. Or the sciences — to change the world.

By setting up your gift through planned giving, you'll always be a caring presence in many lives for many lifetimes.

To learn more, call (716) 238-3000 for your free copy of "WILLpower™" or write to 55 St. Paul Street, Rochester, NY 14604. Or talk to your attorney or financial advisor.

**WILL  
POWER™  
YOU DECIDE™**

Rochester  
Grantmakers  
Forum



Congratulations to Courier graphic artist Zoe Woodruff and Jeff Maves on their marriage June 14, 1997.

## NOW RENTING

### Apartments for Independent Seniors

Featuring 1 & 2 Bedroom Apartments  
with Priority Access to Adjoining  
Health Care



**River Edge Manor**  
at EPISCOPAL CHURCH HOME

535 MOUNT HOPE AVENUE • ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Call 716 232-3130