

# on the MOVE

# Bishop Clark: still a teen at heart

Story by Mike Latona • Photographs by Matthew Scott

At one point during the Diocesan Youth Convention, Becky Peterson noticed a tall adult taking a seat behind her among all the teenagers. Although his summer attire didn't initially surprise Becky, she did a big double-take once she saw his name tag.

The person was Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

"I didn't expect him to be in shorts and T-shirt. It was like a whole other side of him," said Becky, 16, a parishioner at St. Patrick's Church in Seneca Falls.

Such attire is typical for Bishop Clark when he participates each summer at the convention. While he might not pass for a teenager, the bishop does place a high priority on identifying with today's teens.

"It just does my heart good to be around these people. I just receive tremendous life and energy," Bishop Clark remarked. "If you can communicate a sense that you like to be with them, and that it's not an onus or burden, it means a whole lot to folks."

"I happen to like relating to young people. And even if I didn't, I would certainly want to try it," the bishop added.

Bishop Clark related with the young conventioners not only through his choice of clothing, but also through cele-

brating a Mass and holding two open forums during the weekend. The convention took place Aug. 1-3 at SUNY College at Geneseo.

During one forum, Bishop Clark reminisced about his teen years and noted that young people then did not enjoy such casual relationships with their bishop; instead, they addressed the bishop as "Your Excellency." Bishop Clark then knelt down and kissed a teen's ring, vividly portraying the expected form of reverence for a bishop.

"It was a very, very formal, ritualistic experience," Bishop Clark said.

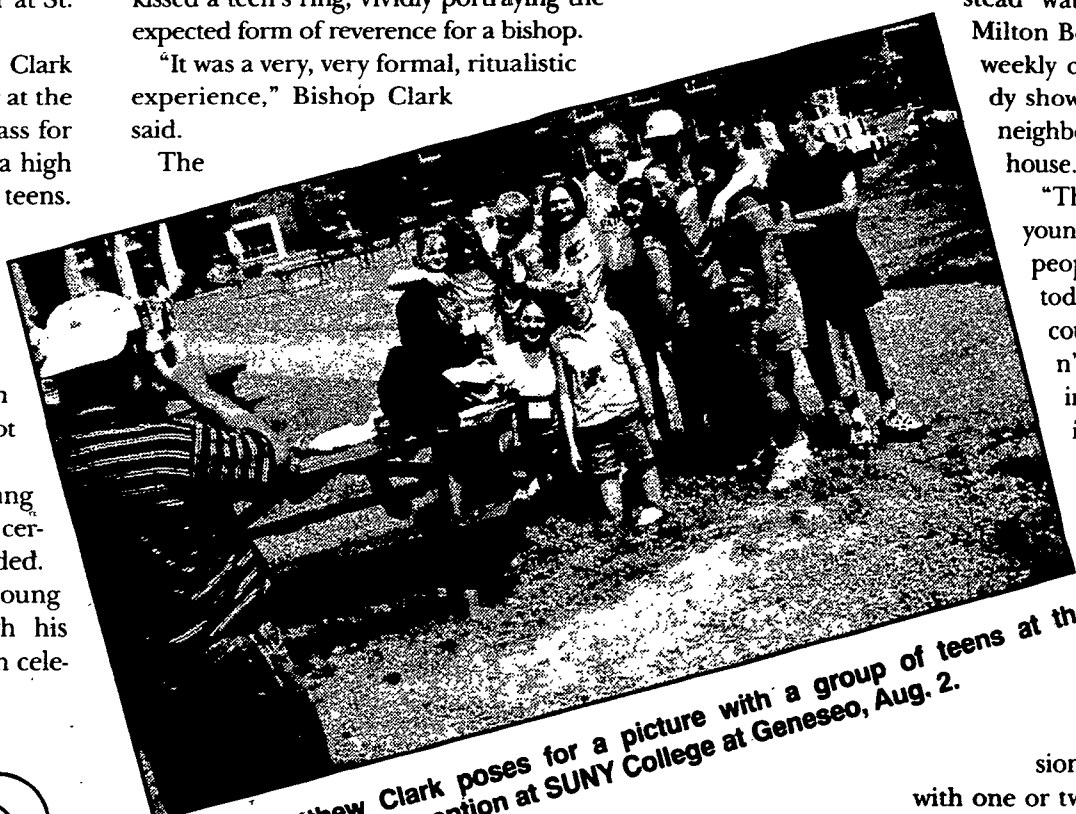
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memory of church and culture was that there was a strong emphasis on discipline and uniformity," said Bishop Clark, who turned 60 on July 15. "Our lives were defined more by laws and rules than by relationships."

Options for leisure time were also different in the 1950s, he added. For instance, Bishop Clark's family did not own a television set and in-

stead watched Milton Berle's weekly comedy show at a neighbor's house.

"These young people today couldn't imagine television



Bishop Matthew Clark poses for a picture with a group of teens at the Diocesan Youth Convention at SUNY College at Geneseo, Aug. 2.

with one or two or three channels, tops—in black-and-white, and with much smaller screens," Bishop Clark remarked.

Along with TV, rock-and-roll music was another emerging part of American culture when Bishop Clark was a teen. The bishop said he was fond of such pioneering rock artists as Bill Haley and Buddy Holly.

bishop noted that such actions in the Catholic Church, as well as society, were more prevalent in the early 1950s.

"Life was much more structured. My

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