

# College students enrich our diocese

I just returned home from an exhilarating evening with our Catholic community at the University of Rochester. They were kind enough to invite me to deliver this year's John Henry Newman Lecture on Faith and Reason.

I enjoyed the opportunity to speak to them on the pastoral exercise of authority, a topic I think about quite a lot and about which I had recently written an article for *New Theology Review*.

The lecture format is not my favorite one, but the people who were present made the experience a stimulating and rewarding one for me. Their questions were interesting; their comments, thoughtful and constructive.

Prior to the formal part of the evening, I had dinner with parish Pastoral Council members and friends of the community. We had time for a leisurely meal and the advantage of round tables, both of which allowed for a conversation I enjoyed very much. I am always fascinated by the talents, enthusiasm and the generous faith I find in the young members of our college and university campuses.

The very positive experience I had tonight is but one of several I have had or will be having this month. Last week I had a wonderful time with our campus community at the State University of New York at Brockport.

We gathered for a pasta dinner on that occasion. There was a variety of pastas

## along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



available, good bread, salad and a range of elegant desserts.

Succulent as the food was, the great nourishment I received that evening was the interchange I was privileged to have with the members of the community. This night the format did not include a lecture. Rather, we had a more informal conversation. We were able to share observations and questions with one another in a way I found quite thought provoking.

I had a connection with the Cornell Catholic Community last week at a seminar on vocations held at St. Bernard's Institute. Cornell chaplains Sister Margaret Brogden and Father Mike Mahler led one part of the day by sharing their effort to encourage vocations on their campus and inviting other participants to reflect on ways to strengthen that ministry. On the last Sunday of March, I will be spending an evening at Cornell. We'll be together for Eucharist, supper and, I am quite sure, some more informal

conversation.

Reflecting on the events I mentioned above reminded me of a conversation held during our recent visit to Rome that I do not think I mentioned earlier. That was our conversation with officials of the Congregation for Catholic Education and, specifically, parts of that. The first notable aspect of that conversation was the encouragement offered by Cardinal Laghi, Prefect of the Congregation, to add to our efforts to offer excellent pastoral care for parish campuses and a similar effort to help students learn more of the rich intellectual tradition of the Church.

The second comment I remember was made by one of the cardinal's staff. He noted quite accurately that for a diocese of our size, we have a very large population of college and university students. For example, in a diocese of 12 counties we have 12 four-year colleges and universities.

Such a presence brings a richness to our local church. Think of all of the good gifts that these wonderful young people bring to our community. Think, too, of the responsibility we have to and for them so long as they are with us.

I assume you would want us to support and encourage them as much as we would want other local churches to support our young people who attend colleges and universities in their localities. More later on this theme. In the meantime ...

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