

Celebrations bring moments of joy

After two straight very long entries in this "Along the Way" series, I want to share just a few brief notes with you this week.

I express my gratitude to Karen Franz for sending Kathleen Schwar and Greg Francis to cover our Interfaith Leadership Journey to Israel. It was a major investment by the *Catholic Courier*. I hope you agree that the coverage offered by Kathleen and Greg more than justified the cost.

My guess is that their reporting and my own notes left you with little doubt that our schedule was a very hectic one or that we came face-to-face with a range of very complicated issues during our stay there.

I can tell you honestly that I am still trying to absorb and integrate what we saw and heard, and to think through how best to share that intense experience with the community.

Every now and then, I speak of special parish celebrations in which I am privileged to participate. In joyful memory of my time with them I mention St. Mary's, Elmira. Last weekend they celebrated in prayerful and joyful fashion their 125th anniversary.

I loved every minute I spent with them, and left their company buoyed in

along the way

By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



spirit by the faith, warmth and generous commitment of the parishioners of St. Mary's.

On the drive home I was thinking about earlier visits to the parish. Two themes stayed with me:

1) How each of the four pastors — John Leary, Jim Boyle, Bill Donnelly and Rich Farrell — who have served at St. Mary's since I've been around has left a positive imprint on parish life; and

2) How much the men and women, boys and girls of St. Mary's have nourished and strengthened our brother priests over the years.

An added thought: We are blessed to have in our diocese a great number of faithful and productive parishes. I have often expressed here — and do so again! — the wish that all in our diocese experience that richness more fully and per-

sonally.

I just came home on this warm Monday night from the opening of this year's Family Mission for our Hispanic Community.

We met in the parking lot of St. Francis Xavier on Bay Street where we enjoyed the powerful preaching of Brother José Sanabria who came to us from Puerto Rico. I must confess that I was not able to absorb as much of his Spanish as I had hoped I would. But, I can tell you that it was clear from the congregation's reaction that Brother José quickly engaged the attention of all who gathered to enjoy the evening with him. There was laughter, song, attentive quiet, and much enthusiastic response to his words.

Tomorrow noon at Becket Hall on Gregory Street we'll be having a reunion and picnic celebration with the young men studying for diocesan priesthood.

I always enjoy their company and look forward to being with them once again. The event reminds me to ask you please to pray for them and to continue your prayers that other fine young men will be inspired to pursue the same wonderful vocation.

Peace to all.

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