

Photos spur memories, gratitude and hope

My pre-Labor Day clean-up was going very well. I was getting to cabinets I have been wanting to put in order for 10 years, to clothing that belongs to someone else because I have not used it in over a year, to sorting out what I need or want to read from what I just do not have time for. I knew what it was like to be on a roll, really to be clicking.

Then came the fall. I was so puffed up by success that when I found the large bag of photographs. I thought I was strong enough to look at just a few. You know. Just to get a sense of the years they covered. To see who was in them. Just to take a break from the routine of cleaning and sorting, filing and tossing out, dusting and stacking.

I can only thank the Lord that I found the photos when I had come near to finishing the project. Because once I started, I could not tear myself away from what turned out to be a wonderful review of the last 25 years or so.

It will not surprise you that there were many family pictures in the collection, nor that they caught my five gorgeous nieces from baptism through their teen years.

On the weekend on which we remember his death 21 years ago, I found pictures of my father and my mother. There

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

was another of Howard Hubbard, Tom Powers and me on the day Tom and I became subdeacons. That happened on my 25th birthday. There was one of Father Stan Kacprzak just before he went off to Rome for his theological studies.

I found another that I looked for some time. It was from Amy Keenan Boniface who was in grammar school at the time. I believe it was the first photo anyone ever sent me after I came to Rochester. Amy enclosed it in a note of welcome that I opened on the day of my Installation.

The shots go back to my days at the North American College in Rome. They brought me back to dear colleagues some of whom I have not seen for years, to the students from whom I learned so much, to friends from Roman days who made those years so rewarding.

What caught my attention most of all were the photos in the collection that

were taken since I came to Rochester.

The great majority of them were kindly given to me by the people of the diocese. Most of them were taken at celebrations or meetings or other events. Most of them were 10 years old or more.

It would be hard to explain to you just how much it meant to me to review those years through the pictures. It is not that I looked at them in the order in which they were taken, nor that I could remember the context of many of the pictures. The joy of it was that they awakened in me an awareness of the experience of those earlier years. They reminded me of things I learned then, of who taught me, of the circumstances in which I learned the lessons.

At the end of the time I spent sitting with those wonderful, evocative pictures, I was left with two lines of thought and prayer. One of those streams ran to gratitude for the blessings in my life because I have had these years in your company.

The second was to the hope that before the summer is over you, too, will have a moment to sit with some old photos. It is a wonderful opportunity to think about the flow of life, to put its many experiences in perspective. It is hard not to pray when you do it.

Peace to all.

MISSION NEWS

"Our priests must be beacons of light in the dark," said Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako, of Khartoum in Sudan. "Their vocation, lived with tenacity, love and dedication is essential for the Church to become a sign of hope." †



Hunger and disease plague many Sudanese refugees but, their faith keeps them strong.

† The priests of whom the archbishop speaks are those who serve the more than two million refugees displaced by a decade-long civil war in Sudan. "It is a comfort to see that the refugees, although so poor, are calm, filled with the peace that comes from faith," said Archbishop

Wako. "This gives me courage and confirms my belief that despite the cruelties of this war, Jesus Christ is truly among us." † Please pray for Archbishop Wako and the Sudanese refugees. And, please, offer your help through the Propagation of the Faith.

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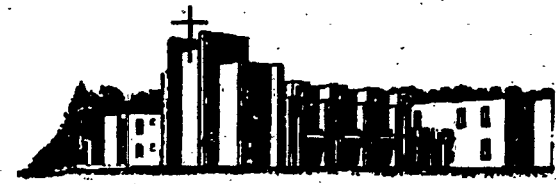
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