

Diversity helps to make life interesting

Some notes jotted down at the end of a busy Monday:

1. Can it possibly be October already? It seems impossible but this typically brilliant and beautiful month is back with us. I love its glory and relish the opportunity to enjoy it as I travel around our 12 counties at this time of year.

Over the years I have come to enjoy time alone in my car as an inviting time for prayer. And, I find in God's gift of the beauty of autumn a special invitation to be still, to be open and receptive to God's presence to us in so many ways.

That awareness never stops with nature. It inevitably folds into a joyful awareness of the people I'm soon to be seeing or, on the way home, into a sense of gratitude for what I have experienced among you.

I just opened my calendar to refresh my memory of the places and communities I'll be visiting during the coming month, at least as that calendar is arranged now. I'll be going to Penn Yan and Dundee, Ithaca, Lyons, Elmira, Southern Cayuga County, Canandaigua, Shortsville, Watkins Glen, Geneseo, Brockport, Spencerport, Hornell and Geneva. Please do not take the impression from

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

this that God speaks to me only when I am driving outside of Greater Rochester. It's just that, by virtue of the location of my residence and office, I enjoy the beauty of Rochester almost every day.

2. I want to say a word a gratitude and appreciation to two parish communities that celebrated 150th anniversaries since last I wrote. They are St. Mary's in Corning and Our Lady of Victory/St. Joseph's in Rochester. It was a pleasure to be with each of them, to be touched by their deep sense of gratitude for blessings received, to be strengthened by the joyful hope with which they face the future. As I write tonight I think of the faith they have held in common for the last century and a half. I reflect also on their respective histories and distinctive personalities. When I think of parishes in that way, as I often do at the end of a

day, I think of an analogy with family. I love it that my five nieces hold so many deep and good things in common. I also love it that the differences among them make life very interesting, indeed.

3. My last stop today was a meeting at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, where I met with the Pastoral Planning Group, which includes St. Catherine's, Mendon; St. Louis Parish and Church of the Transfiguration, Pittsford; and the Nazareth College Community. Tonight's was the ninth such meeting I have attended since the spring.

Without exception, these meetings demonstrate to me in fresh and new ways what I came to know years ago. That is that we are blessed with the faith, generosity and creativity of great numbers of people in our diocese.

I mentioned at the beginning of these comments that this was a busy day. It also contained its fair share of difficulty and challenge. But people like the ones to whom I just referred were a special blessing at the end of the day's activities. They allow me to make my own the spirit and words of Pope John XXIII who, at the end of a full day loved to say, "It's your church, dear God: I'm going to bed."

Peace to all.

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