

# Faithful of all ages encourage others

I went to St. Ann's Home on Friday evening to celebrate with them the 125th anniversary of their foundation.

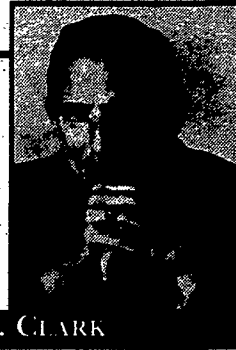
Gathered at Portland Avenue for the Eucharistic Liturgy were residents, volunteers, board members, administrators and staff, friends of guests and supporters of the institution. The music was joyful. A wonderful brass quartet played for the occasion.

Residents and friends formed a choir of voice and instrument. As always, it was a boost to the spirit to be with that community. That boost comes, I think, because the community of St. Ann's is so faithful and so caring. They may not be able to move around with the vigor of their earlier days (who can?).

Yet, whenever I visit there, I leave impressed by the awareness of the community and their interest in what's going on in the church. No less am I encouraged by the support they so generously communicate. That encouragement means a great deal to me. It comes from individuals who have seen a lot of life. They would never say it but they have been faithful through the years, often at great cost and much personal sacrifice. They remain faithful.

Now they encourage others. To me they offer a remarkable example of fidelity, courage and perseverance. I find it quite inspiring.

## along the way



By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

Speaking of inspiration, when Betty Mullen, the new president and chief executive officer of St. Ann's, introduced the celebration I thought of our Sisters of St. Joseph. Betty, so experienced, gifted and committed to the work of St. Ann's, is the first lay person to hold her position there. To the best of my knowledge every earlier head of St. Ann's was a Sister of St. Joseph. It was the sisters who, at the request of Bernard J. McQuaid, first bishop of Rochester, founded the House of Industry in 1873. That soon became the Home of Industry; and, later, St. Ann's. After St. Ann's moved from its site on Lake Avenue they added The Heritage and, most recently, Chapel Oaks.

The sisters are quiet about such things but the records indicate that it was their incredible spirit of sacrifice that gave life to the initial enterprise and sustained it through the years. Their courage and

strong witness to the faith inspired the Catholics of the day to come to the fairs and bake sales and suppers by which the sisters financed this work. The people knew that the sisters often went hungry so that those in their care might have food.

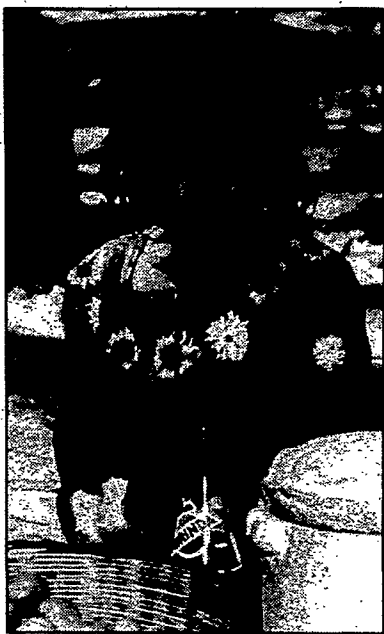
Celebrations like the one at St. Ann's are great blessings. They put us in touch with our mothers and fathers in the faith. They afford us a privileged glimpse into the lives of persons who are truly holy. They are the unsung heroes who gave or still give their lives for others. People like that remind us of the contribution made to us by those who have gone before us. Ultimately, they remind us that the God who made us is the first giver. We never do it on our own. Not one of us. Ever.

On a more personal note, the people at St. Ann's help me to put in perspective the fact that I am not getting any younger. What they say to me is that a life of faith at any age is very much worth living. They also inspire me to be aware that every tomorrow is a day of new life and grace because every day belongs to God.

My thanks this evening go to Betty Mullen and all at St. Ann's, to Sister Rosemary St. Peter and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester.

Peace to all.

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