

# Treasuring the young and young at heart

I am very grateful for the range of experience offered by this past week. To me it seemed especially rich and exciting in the thought it evoked and the hopes it renewed.

That may be due in part to the prominence of young people and youth concerns that have been a large part of these days.

One of those was a most interesting meeting I had at the Church of the Transfiguration with teams from that parish, St. Louis in Pittsford, St. Patrick's in Macedon, St. John of Rochester and St. Catherine's in Mendon. I was invited there to speak with the young people about the church's pastoral care for gay and lesbian people. The kids had prepared a set of questions for me. I did my best to respond to these questions and then enjoyed a more informal conversation with them about a wider range of issues.

I was much impressed by one young friend. All of their questions were thoughtful and substantial. They were good humored and relaxed, yet they treated a sensitive issue with a great deal of maturity.

It won't surprise you to know that there were protesters present on the grounds. I regretted that very much. They frightened and intimidated some of the young people. Their signs and words implied negative and unfair things about me, the kids

## along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

and their adult leaders.

Later in the week, I flew to Cincinnati for a meeting attended by 1,500 adult youth ministers from all over the country. It was my first meeting since I began a three-year term of service as liaison between the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

It was a joy to be with them, to join them in prayer, to be enriched by the program they had developed for their memberships. A delightful bonus for me was the opportunity to spend some time with a local delegation of 13 youth ministers. Such company reminded me of the beautiful ways in which youth ministry is growing around our nation and in our diocese. It also reaffirms my conviction that few things are more important to the life of the local church than commitment to our young people.

The third and last youth-oriented activi-

ty of the week was a meeting of the trustees of the College of the Holy Cross. It is always a pleasure to visit the campus where I began college 43 years ago. The agendas for our meetings are stimulating and there is usually some time during our stay to meet students or attend one of their activities. On this visit, I had time to watch the first half of a women's basketball game between Holy Cross and Rider College.

Not directly and specifically related to the young, but perhaps the capstone of the week, was the Eucharistic Liturgy at St. Augustine's, Rochester, celebrating that parish's 100th anniversary.

My words could never do justice to the richness of that day or to the love and care which the parish clearly invested in its preparation. There were many young people there. That's for sure. But, there were a few individuals there who had been parishioners there for 80 years and more.

I have only been around for one-fifth of the history of the parish. But I have been here long enough to develop considerable admiration for the ways in which the community has adjusted to changing times. It's a community very much alive. It is vibrant in its worship, active in its neighborhoods, and committed to sisters and brothers in need. My gratitude and congratulations go out to them.

Peace to all.



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