

Convocation offers time to hear, think, pray

As I write on this Sunday morning, the Second Sunday of Easter, I am mindful that the priests and pastoral administrators of our diocese will gather in convocation at Cornell University from Monday to Wednesday this week.

Our gathering theme will be "Shepherding: Catholic Identities and Community Transitions." This year we will have two guest speakers. Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany will offer the keynote address, "How are we leaders for the future." Father Alexander Santora of the Archdiocese of Newark has chosen the theme, "How do we lead in relationship to those whom we serve?"

I am looking forward to hearing from both of those men. Howard and I have been friends for over 40 years, and I know his thoughts quite well. But he is a brilliant speaker who always manages to get me thinking about lay pastoral issues in fresh and interesting ways.

It has not been my pleasure as yet to meet Alex Santora, although I have read several articles he has written and found them very rewarding.

Besides the enrichment Howard and Alex will offer to us, our convocation affords us the quiet and leisure to absorb what our speakers present and to reflect on it with our sisters and brothers in ministry.

The convocation has been a wonderful

along the way



By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

learning experience to me over the years; I suspect that my friends in ministry would say the same. The key to that kind of learning has been the willingness of participants to share their rich experiences with one another.

Howard and I will team up in an effort to do just that kind of sharing on Tuesday morning after he has addressed the convocation. At that time, we'll be available to interact with participants in an extended conversation about the issues that Howard will raise in his keynote address.

This will be the second time we've done such a thing in recent months. Last fall, celebrating the 10th anniversary of St. Bernard's Institute in Albany, we had a similar conversation with the assembly.

I remember the occasion as a privileged moment for several reasons: the lively, probing faith of the people; the memories of my years in the wonderful

Diocese of Albany, and the joy of reflecting on ministry with an old friend and brother bishop.

Father David Faraone heads the committee that planned our convocation this year. The committee paid careful attention to the evaluations made about last year's gathering and tried to be as responsive as possible to that input.

One request, which came up a lot from participants last year, was the need for a less intense schedule. Our friends want and enjoy substantive input as a part of the convocation's enrichment. But they want time to think and pray about what they hear. They also relish time just to relax and have fun in one another's company. I think that this year's program honors those desires.

Let me conclude these comments by thanking you for the support you so consistently give to those who offer pastoral care to our communities. You inspire those men and women by your lively faith, and lighten the load by your generous participation in the life of the community.

When you meet your priests and pastoral administrators this weekend, I hope that you will greet them with special affection and take the opportunity to say a word of thanks for their ministry among you.

Peace to all.



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