

Thank you for the many blessings shared

As I indicated to you last week, this will be the last "Along the Way" to appear in the *Catholic Courier* until the edition published Aug. 5. The July hiatus in this column extends a practice that goes back to the very early 1980s, when I began to write "Along the Way" on a regular basis.

In the columns I have written since last July — they are about 40-plus in number, I think — I have tried to keep you in touch with some of my activities and events of significance in our local church. And, in keeping with the practice of years, I have tried to reflect on the meaning of life's ordinary events and tried to link them to life's greater meaning.

I thank you for your responses to what I have written and for your encouragement to keep at this task on a frequent basis. I have said to many of you in response to your kindness, "Thank you for your encouraging word. I have to go home now to write another column, and your kind word will keep me at it."

Over time, I have used this final column in the year's series to express my thanks to you for the strong faith and vital activity of our local church. You have provided ample reason to do the same again this year for you continually amaze me and strengthen my faith in the ways in which you pray and work to build up the kingdom of God.

Among your works that come to the fore of my mind just now are the following:

1) Your generous, thoughtful and faith-centered response to Pastoral Planning for the New Millennium. I am always touched by the ways in which individuals and parish communities are able to work together for the common good even when that may require that they put aside a pet project or accustomed ways of doing things, or when it calls them to work hard to establish a whole new set of working relationships. Such things are not easy, but you have taken up the task with great courage and vision, and I am grateful to you. It seems clear that such adjustment will be a part of our lives for years to come. You make me confident that we can do it well, and even grow stronger through the doing.

2) The priests of our diocese have always

along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



been a source of strength and encouragement to me. I mention two realities that renewed that awareness in me this year and lead me to express thanks to them here:

• Our priests have been asked more and more to be flexible and adaptable in supplying for one another when illness or accident or need for retreat or vacation finds them in need of help. To those needs they have responded with great generosity and good spirit. They often do this on very short notice and rarely without some element of significant personal sacrifice. It is my hope that the generous sense of service about which I now comment is not being missed by gifted young men who wish to serve others in the name of Christ. The simple truth is that we priests are fewer in number than we once were. And — I hate to say it! — we are growing older.

• A second reason for my particular gratitude to our priests is the understanding, support and good counsel they have offered all through the very painful experience of a group from Corpus Christi Parish rejecting their bonds of communion with us and establishing an independent church.

At each of our monthly Priests' Council meetings through the year we spent considerable time on that complex issue. In every instance, our priests were considerate and thoughtful in their counsel and deeply solicitous for the unity of the body that is our church. I know that they feel the pain of this wound as much as any of us. I also know that they will do all in their power to work for healing and reconciliation.

3) Whenever I begin to thank you I run out of space very quickly. Here I mention some other events and trends that are very important to our local church. They all

lead me to give thanks for blessings received and strengthen my hope for the future:

• The work of St. Bernard's Institute in response to adults all over our diocese who yearn to grow in their knowledge and love of Christ. The growing partnership between SBI and our parishes is a wonderful development.

• The success of our Thanks Giving Appeal. We experienced a good deal of controversy this year and our new staff joined us in mid-stream. But they worked very hard, and you responded beautifully, so we are an inch from being at our goal. (A reminder: It's never too late, you know!)

• Father Joe Hart's willingness to become moderator of the Pastoral Center and his excellent leadership in a year that would test anyone's mettle.

• The people who honor our youths in service — and our young people who so enrich our lives.

• All those — professional and volunteer, part-time and full-time — who help us to worship and sing, celebrate and serve, learn and grow for our own development and the glory of God.

4) Twenty years ago this Saturday, June 26, I was installed as your bishop in a ceremony held at Rochester's War Memorial auditorium. In your warm welcome to me, you demonstrated a faith, a maturity and capacity to love that inspired me that night and has both challenged and consoled me ever since.

I want you to know that I am deeply grateful to you for all that you have shown to me and given to me in these 20 years. You make me want to learn and to grow. You teach me generosity and patience and the art of forgiveness. You have sparked my desire for celebration and expanded my vision of service.

You have blessed me with entry into your joys and sorrows, and have had the kindness to be a part of my own.

You have given me much more, but I do not have words for all of it. Be assured that in my prayer, where words are not necessary, I continually thank God for you.

Peace to all.



PACKAGE INCLUDES:

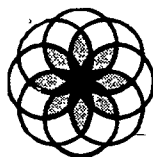
- 24 hour nursing service
- Two delicious meals
- Modern apartments
- Housekeeping service
- Cable TV
- Social & recreational activities

THE HERITAGE

More than the comforts of home.

At The Heritage, you'll enjoy living in a friendly, caring community of physicians, nurses, and friends. Plus a range of services including our on-site full-time physicians and medical staff, therapists, our pharmacy, hair salon, country store, chapel with interfaith services, and recreation all under one roof! The Heritage offers many more comforts along with the freedom to plan your own days. So call (716) 342-1700 today for a tour and consultation. We'll be happy to explain how we can accommodate your schedule, financial situation, and the services you desire.

**\$102
A DAY**



ST. ANN'S
THE HERITAGE
Full of Life

1450 PORTLAND AVENUE, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14621
(716) 342-1700 ext. 276 Eileen Ryan-Maruke
Web Home Page · <http://www.stannsrochester.org>

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580) Vol. 110 No. 38, June 24, 1999 Published weekly except the last Thursday in December. Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. 716/328-4340. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, N.Y. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

DISCOVER ITALY

and its enchanting
and heady mix
of history, art,
culture, style and
supreme elegance
Best price
- Right season

OCTOBER 2-15

Escorted from Rochester
Includes Rome, Florence,
Lake Como, Venice,
Assisi, Sorrento
Air, Hotels, Meals,
Sightseeings

\$1,699 P.P.
D.O.

EMPIRE TRAVEL est. 1903
482-2800 185 Empire Blvd.
Outside Monroe County 1-800-836-2435