

Convention a testament to service

I begin with a word of congratulations and gratitude today for all in our local church who worked so hard to host the National Convention of Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA), which met in Rochester over the weekend.

Judging by the comments I have heard, our committees were very successful and deeply appreciated by the 900 persons who attended from all parts of the United States and Canada.

Many delegates I have come to know over the years, and some whom I met this weekend, put themselves out to tell me how impressed they were with the quality of local arrangements and the warmth of the hospitality they experienced.

I was not surprised by those comments because I was aware of the talent and dedication of our local team. Nonetheless, it was good to hear them in affirmation of all who worked so hard to provide a rewarding experience for all.

Among many fond memories I have of the weekend are:

1) The presence and words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Laureate, who offered the keynote address at the convention plenary luncheon on Sunday noon. I was deeply impressed by the clear and deep faith of the archbishop and much touched by his ability to move the hearts of his listeners.

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

Somehow he seems to have taken deep inside himself years of complex, often painful experience in such a way that now he can speak of that experience simply and with such conviction that his listeners can be a part of it. My intuition is that ability is rooted in a prayer life that runs very deep.

2) The powerful witness of faith and love at the service of others offered by the women and men who gathered for the convention.

When we assembled for the Eucharistic Liturgy on Saturday evening, those wonderful people made me deeply aware of our church at its best. I mean a community that recognizes and defends the God-given dignity of every human person, a community committed to stand with and support the poor and vulnerable, a community willing to change structures which are oppressive or unjust.

The hundreds who prayed together that

night represented the thousands of their co-workers who advance that work every day and they, in turn, represented to me the millions of people served by Catholic Charities each year all across our nation.

3) Our Rochester gathering on Saturday. The setting of the national convention provided us with a special perspective from which to view our own local efforts in the work of Catholic Charities. I can tell you that I am deeply proud of and grateful for what we have in place in our diocese. For this we owe thanks to the generous men and women who serve on our diocesan and regional boards of Catholic Charities.

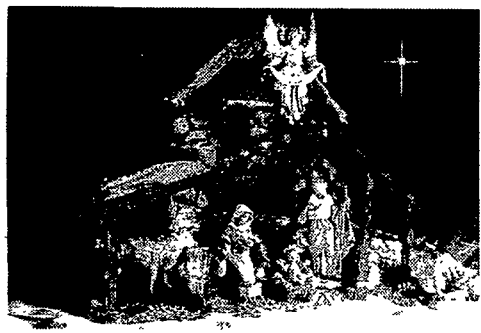
We owe thanks to extraordinary professionals we have heading up and staffing this effort. We are truly blessed in all of them.

A brief health update: I am happy to tell you that for the second time in a row, tests indicate a reduction in the level of inflammation in my system. Levels are not yet where we'd like them to be, but progress is very good. My blood readings are back to normal and my weight is now stabilized.

The darker side of that is that the ice cream therapy I enjoyed so much is a thing of the past. Such is the price of progress!

Peace to all.

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