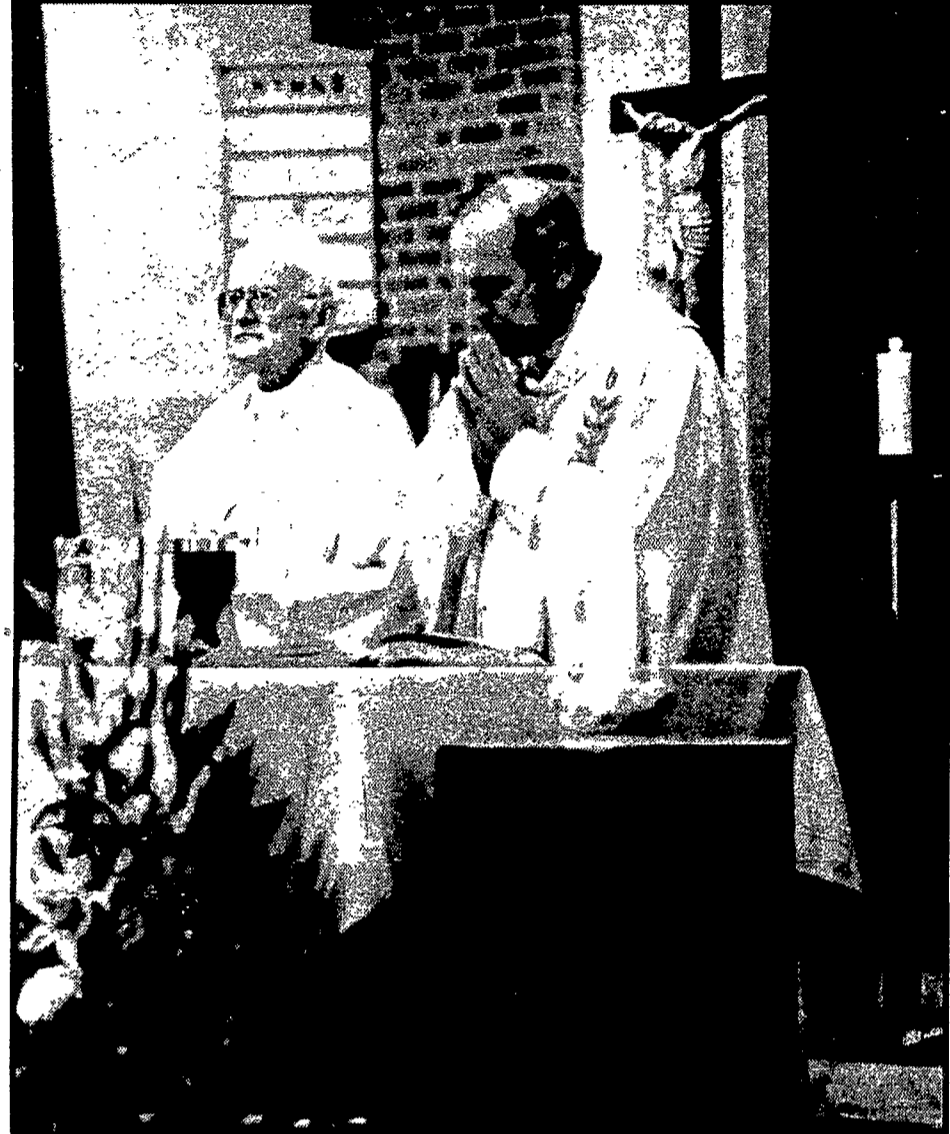


Along the Way

Bishop Matthew H. Clark



Bishop Clark greets Bishop Hickey at the Mass marking the auxiliary bishop's 50th jubilee of priestly ordination. Bishop Joseph L. Hogan looks on.



Bishops Clark and Hickey at a November 1997 liturgy.

Impressions & memories

On this beautiful Columbus Day holiday, we gathered at Sacred Heart Cathedral to celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial for our beloved brother and friend, Bishop Dennis W. Hickey.

That event is well reported in this week's *Catholic Courier*. I will not repeat that work here. But I do want very much to share a few impressions of the day and some fond memories of this wonderful man:

1. We were blessed that we could celebrate this event on a Monday holiday. I say that because the relative freedom of this day allowed our priests to gather in great numbers to honor a brother whom they dearly loved and who loved them in return.

It was without doubt a day that included sadness and mourning for them at the loss of a dear friend. But I shall long keep the memory of their good spirit and sense of joy as we waited outside the Cathedral for the procession to begin. To me it made visible their lively hope that one day we'll be with our brother again.

2. The continuing challenge to liturgical renewal is not always an easy one to meet. It takes continued prayer and study and tons of committed work. It always will. But every now and then there are special moments of grace when one has a deep experience of the power and beauty of our sacred rites.

Today was such a moment for me. For that I thank all who worked so hard to make it so. Those who prepared the worship space, ministers of hospitality, ushers, proclaimers of the word, musicians, choir, cantor, servers, Eucharistic ministers. Most of all, I thank the women and men, boys and girls in the assembly for their faithful presence and lively participation.

I know that they made the experience one from which I shall long draw strength and encouragement. I have a strong sense that many who participated today are thinking the same thing this evening.

3. Dennis leaves many happy personal memories. I think of his ability to make meals — even simple lunches — special occasions for everyone. Nothing formal. It was more about good stories, current reading, how are you doing.

One thing all of us noticed over the years was that Dennis had the uncanny abil-

ity to corral the check before anyone was aware that it was available. His slight-of-hand ability was phenomenal! But even when we caught him at it, he would devise some reason to treat — some stock broke well for him the day before or someone that very morning just happened to give him a gift certificate to the very restaurant we were patronizing at noon!

Speaking of the table, I must mention the delight he took at the Friday-night dinners he shared for so many years with the priests with whom he was ordained.

4. Since the bishop's death on Oct. 6, I have been in conversation with many people about this wonderful man. In those conversations, people have told me stories of Dennis' quiet kindness and, often enough, of his remarkable generosity. I was not surprised by them. I knew of many myself and had a sense that there were countless others I had never heard. I expect that no one, save God, knows every story and rejoices in all of them.

5. All who knew our friend were aware that he took much delight in sipping a Manhattan cocktail before the evening meal. It was a moment of relaxation for Dennis and, because that was so, his friends were always careful to have the necessary ingredients available when he was coming.

I probably should not tell the rest but I'll rely on an expired statute of limitations and your understanding.

Dennis treated me as a friend from the moment I arrived in Rochester. But I think the friendship was cemented forever during a stay in the hospital he had in 1980. I went to see him one afternoon. As I was leaving I asked if there was anything I could do for him. He smiled and said, "I'd love a Manhattan."

So ... I went home, found a small, empty pickle jar, and filled it with Dennis' favorite adult beverage and brought it back to him that evening. Friends for life! Peace to all.

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