

## Of many things: e-mail, sacrifice and Advent

A few comments on the passing scene:

1. I am not yet totally at peace with e-mail. For one thing, I am not nearly as comfortable with its mechanics as I would like to be one day. More importantly, I still cannot shake the sense that e-mail carries with it a time urgency about response that is not present with hard-copy mail delivered by the U.S. Postal Service.

It is my suspicion — and my hope — that some study and practice will ease the first concern, and that I'll find effective ways to deal with the intimidation factor generated by such technology.

Those challenges notwithstanding, there are times when e-mail messages can be a bright spot in the day. One such message came today from William Skylstad, who is bishop of Spokane, Wash., and a good friend.

Bill and I serve together on the National Conferences of Catholic Bishops' Committee for the American College at Louvain, Belgium. Bill just returned from Louvain, where he ordained a new class of deacons.

He was kind enough to send a message saying how much he enjoyed ordaining Pat Van Durme from our diocese, meeting Patrick's family and friends and the priests from our diocese who were present to share in the celebration.

In an instant, Bill's message connected

### along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

people in Spokane, Rochester and Louvain. There's something about that that makes me think it's worthwhile to engage in some effort to become comfortable with new technology.

2. After a meeting of the trustees of Holy Cross College in Worcester on Friday night, I was on my way to the Hart Recreation Center to watch Holy Cross women's basketball team play Howard.

The Hart Center is on the highest hill on campus and commands a panoramic view of the city.

Just as I was about to enter the arena, a security guard called my attention to the flames and smoke shooting skyward from an abandoned cold-storage warehouse. We chatted for a moment, never realizing what a tragedy would unfold at the scene that night.

Although the building was no longer in use, the firefighters on the scene were aware that homeless persons often sought

shelter there in the cold months. Two of the firefighters entered the building to check out that possibility. They never came out. Four more went after the first two and they, too, were lost.

I mention this tragedy because it reminds me never to take for granted the women and men who daily are willing to place their lives at risk to keep the rest of us safe. It also is a reminder to me that even as we enjoy basketball games or any other simple pleasures — as indeed we should — other sisters and brothers are experiencing suffering and loss.

In my prayer last Friday night, I thanked God for the pleasure of our meeting and the game, but you can be sure that I joined the people of Worcester in their prayer for six heroic firefighters and their loved ones.

3. I'd like to renew the invitation I made to you last week to set aside some time during these Advent days to be aware of God's presence and love in your life. It needn't be a long time. You need not worry about what you are to do. Just take some time to listen, to be attentive, to be available to the initiative of the God who loves you more than you can imagine.

Please don't think that I am nagging you about this. Truth to tell, I am writing as much to myself as to you. Last week I won no prizes for my Advent spirit!

Peace to all.

## MISSION NEWS

*"I will not leave you orphans..."*

John 14:18



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