

Parishioners offer strength through grief

Yesterday, I welcomed the opportunity to visit the community at Epiphany Parish in Sodus. The visit offered me the opportunity to spend some time with the people and to express my sincere sympathy to them regarding the recent death of their beloved pastor, Father David Faraone. It also allowed me to thank them for their goodness to David — whether he was well or ill — and for the strength of their faith all through this difficult time.

I came away from the morning's experience much impressed by the people of the parish. There is no doubt that they are still dealing with loss and that their grief is very real.

But I had the impression all through the morning that they are going through this in a spirit of faith and with lively confidence that new life will spring up for them even from the pain of this severe loss.

A second stream of thought stimulated by the morning's experience related to the beauty and power of our Eucharistic liturgy. Through the course of Sunday morning's three celebrations, I was mindful that all present were dealing with the loss of David from their midst.

Beyond that, I had a strong impression

along
the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

that those who gathered for the Eucharist were bringing strength to one another, not so much by their words as by their faith, their openness to God and their respectful presence to one another.

One had the sense that all who gathered were beneficiaries of a dual gift — strength offered by the community gathered to help bear the grief, and freedom for each to grieve according to her or his own circumstances, personality and experience.

As I write on this Monday morning, my imagination leads me to be with the people of the parish in the many places they are today. How are they doing? What's on their minds? Where are they finding strength? In what ways do they wish they had more?

I met a gentleman yesterday who joined Epiphany's Parish Pastoral Council

because David encouraged him to do so. David was stricken shortly after the gentleman attended his first meeting of the Pastoral Council. Now this man copes with loss. I know that he will be fine, but I know he has a lot on his mind right now.

I met a teenager who was much encouraged by David's understanding and ready acceptance of her. His kindness to her allowed her to see things she had not appreciated before. Because of that, she has experienced a new depth of happiness in her life. Now this girl struggles with loss. I know that she, too, will be fine, but I know that she also has a lot on her mind just now.

The stories of the Pastoral Council member and the teenager are two examples of the many stories that could be told of the people at Sodus yesterday — indeed, that could be told of faithful people in all of the parishes of our diocese. I refer to the stories of generous, loving people who try everyday to live their faith no matter what happens in their lives.

I hope that you can identify such heroes in your own life and that they give you strength just as the people of Epiphany strengthened me yesterday. Peace to all.

MISSION NEWS

"In gratitude...Father Jonathan Nweke, graduate of Bigard Memorial Seminary in Enugu, Nigeria writes: "We thank you for your sacrifices and we still pray you to continue to support our seminary for we still need more laborers in the vineyard as the harvest is plenty. Be assured of our prayers and may God bless you all."



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Thoughts to Consider



EDWIN SULEWSKI
Funeral Director

How can I help someone who is grieving?

You can help in a number of special ways. Through reaching out and offering support in the form of listening and presence you will help a great deal. Ask your friend how they are doing. Mention the deceased by name and allow the bereaved to continue discussion about the deceased if they wish. Many bereaved report feeling isolated. You can help by including them in your social groups. Contact with the grieving is most important during the period right after the death and in the three or four months following when the bereaved feel especially isolated. Reach out and make your presence felt.

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