

# Cardinal's birthday reflections renew others

I was in New York City on Saturday and Sunday to join in the celebration of the 80th birthday of Cardinal John O'Connor, archbishop of New York since 1985.

On Saturday evening there was a banquet at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel honoring the cardinal. On Sunday morning at 10:15 we celebrated the Eucharistic liturgy.

Both were upbeat, happy occasions. On Saturday evening, it was announced that the event had raised \$5.2 million dollars to establish the cardinal's legacy, a fund that will be used to support a range of causes, such as Catholic school education for members of the community who need support.

In addition to the announcement of such good news another cause for joy was the obvious good spirit and happiness of the cardinal all through the evening. Notwithstanding the serious health challenges he has recently experienced, the cardinal appeared at ease and comfortable all through the evening.

The beautiful liturgy celebrated at St. Patrick's on Sunday morning was another moving experience. The church was filled with representatives from every one of the over 400 parishes in the archdiocese. They were joined by nearly 50

along  
the way



By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

cardinals, archbishops and bishops who came from many parts of the country to pay their respects to the cardinal, who has been an influential member of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for over 20 years.

If there was an edge of sadness to these events, besides the health problems he has experienced, it was the cardinal's acknowledgment that sooner than later he would be stepping aside as archbishop of New York. He has so loved his years of ministry and so focused his energies on it that the prospect of retirement cannot be one that fills him with elation. He as much as said that to the assembly.

But even that aspect of sadness has brighter sides. One is the cardinal's readiness always to think and move with the church's thinking in such matters. The second is the fact that, although he

may step aside from his present responsibilities, he will generously continue to offer priestly ministry to God's people all the days of his life.

As I participated in this weekend with the cardinal and so many friends, my mind often went back to May 27, 1979, when he and I and 24 others were ordained bishops by Pope John Paul II. Of those 24, three others from the United States were ordained in that ceremony. They were our own Tom Larkin, former bishop of St. Petersburg, Fla., and native of Mt. Morris; Bill Houck, bishop of Jackson, Miss.; and the late Michael Kenny, who was bishop of Juneau, Alaska.

Cardinal O'Connor's reflections on his experience of ministry, his friendship with brother bishops, and his love for the local church in which he serves were quite beautiful because they clearly expressed values that are deeply important to him at this special moment in his life.

I found his reflections quite helpful and would guess that all of the bishops did — because of the helpful way in which they renewed my own appreciation of the privilege it is to minister as a bishop in the church.

Peace to all.

## SHARE A GREAT COMPASSION

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Pope John Paul II



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### Kids' Answers from page 16

1. e, 2. c, 3. a, 4. f, 5. d, 6. b

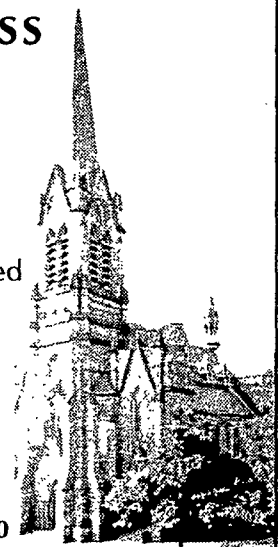
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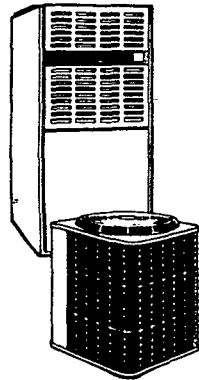
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