

Joyful visits with priests, women religious

Some brief thoughts and updates for your consideration this week:

1. I hope that this has been a blessed season for you and your loved ones, that you have had opportunity for prayer and good works, and that you have been especially mindful of our catechumens and candidates as they prepare for the Sacrament of Initiation at the Easter vigil.

If, as many of us do, you find yourself wishing that you had been a bit more attentive or more generous, please do not be discouraged. Rather, remember that God does great things with even our tiniest gifts. Remember as well that we are never too late in our desire to open our hearts to the Light of Christ.

2. One of the joys of this week was the opportunity to join other alumni of St. Bernard's Seminary in honoring Monsignor William Shannon.

The event was sponsored by St. Bernard's Institute which presented Bill with its President's Award in recognition of this lifetime of distinguished theological work and his generous pastoral service to the church.

For almost all of his priesthood Bill has served at Nazareth College and the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph. His service to those communities has touched the lives of thousands of people over the years. I can only imagine the positive influence they in turn have had

along the way



By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

on countless others.

For many, myself included, Bill is a reminder that the passage of years need not diminish our love for life, our sense of inquiry or our desire for growth. It was a pleasure this week to celebrate the continuing growth and contributions of a dear friend.

3. Speaking of good friends, I want you to know that I am looking forward to a quick trip to Boston on Monday of this week to visit Father John Mulligan. John has been enjoying a richly deserved time of sabbatical study at the Jesuit-run Weston School of Theology at Cambridge.

Thus far, John has had a wonderful time at Weston. The resources and community there have allowed him not only to explore theological and pastoral issues of interest to him, but also to engage in conversation with other students — something from which, I am sure, all have

derived great benefit.

John tells me that in addition to such pursuits, he has also relished opportunities to give special time to prayer, his interest in gardening and his commitment to physical conditioning.

In addition to the pleasure of reunion with John, I look forward to the opportunity to spend an extended lunch with interested students and faculty of Weston exploring the theme "Ministry of the Bishop."

This will be the fourth and last in a series. Earlier topics were priestly ministry, lay ministry and religious life.

The part I like best is that I need to speak for only five minutes and then can enjoy the always enriching experience of conversation with a community of theological inquiry.

On the way home on Tuesday, I'll be stopping at Stella Maris Retreat House in Skaneateles for a late afternoon liturgy and supper with the Leadership Council of Women Religious from the eight dioceses of New York state.

I have always enjoyed my association with this group of faithful and gifted women and am especially happy to join them this year at the invitation of the chairperson, Sister Janice Morgan, SSJ, president of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester.

Peace to all.



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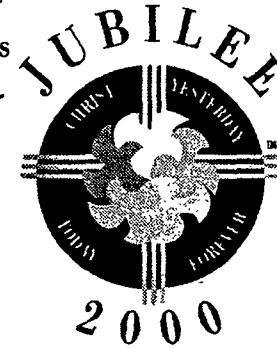
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To relieve their burdens, Bishop Matthew H. Clark has established a Jubilee Debt-Forgiveness Fund that will be used for the forgiveness of debt. In this Lenten season of renewal and new beginnings, please consider joining the Diocese, parishes and schools in contributing to this fund as a sign of unconditional hope for the new millennium.



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