

Priests' varied gifts enrich all our lives

I just returned from St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Greece, and a delightful evening of music composed and performed by Father Doug DellaPietra.

Doug serves as parochial vicar at St. Charles and wanted to share some of his good gifts with parishioners and friends for the benefit of the parish's Prayer Center.

He did so by playing, and in some instances singing, eight pieces he had written over the past several years. Six he did on guitar and two he performed on the piano. Prior to each piece he gave a brief background of how he came to write it — what was going on in his life at the time, what event or reflection triggered the writing or inspired the piece, what that particular composition means to him.

I took great pleasure in the experience. First of all, I enjoyed the music — both the melodies and the lyrics, which had such significance for Doug. Secondly, I admired Doug's willingness to share his good gifts with the people who gathered at St. Charles this evening. It seemed to me that such willingness is really the fruit of a progressive spiritual maturation in this young priest. Most of all, I think I enjoyed those brief moments because they put me in touch in renewed ways with the wonderful talents and generosity of the priests of our diocese.

Not all have the musical talent of Doug DellaPietra, but all are richly blessed and generous in sharing their good gifts. I try to keep myself mindful of that reality in my

along the way

By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



daily prayer for our priests. And, even if I did not try to keep that awareness a part of my daily prayer, you would remind me of it.

In recent weeks you have done that for me in many ways, but two of them stand out in my mind. The first is the genuine and very deep grief so many have expressed to me at the untimely deaths of Father Francis Blighton, himself a parochial vicar at St. Charles; Father Dave Faraone, pastor in Sodus and Sodus Point; and Father Desmond O'Neill, who served our communities in Leicester and Retsof.

All who were in any way familiar with those situations know that the grief experienced by those communities was real and deep. And, it was so because the presence and gifts these men had offered made a very positive difference in the lives of people. They connected people with Christ or helped reconnect them when they wandered. They fostered people coming together with one another and promoting in them a sense of solidarity and belonging with Christ alive in a holy people. They

helped them to use the language of this holy season to interpret all of life in light of the Resurrection.

Another reality that occasions reminders of the goodness of our priests is the round of priest reassignments we are now experiencing. You do it with understanding and in kindly fashion — often with a smile — but you do remind me that I am the villain who transferred your beloved pastor or parochial vicar to another assignment! I really do thank you for your comments because they reflect the great esteem in which you hold our brother priests. And, to know that is always a joy.

Just this week we assigned three excellent men to theological seminaries where they will begin the last phase of their studies toward ordination to the priesthood. By all indications we have, all three possess the kinds of gifts and generous spirits which will make them loving and effective servant leaders of the people of this diocese.

As a final note, let me remind you that we will have the joy of ordaining Patrick Van Durme and Michael "Mickey" McGrath to the ministerial priesthood at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Saturday, June 24.

Please pray for all of our seminarians and priests — that they will continue to grow in ministry that can bring such peace, joy and meaning to the person who lives it and make such a positive impact in the people for whom they offer it.

Peace to all.



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