

The gifts of youths enrich our communities

He made everyone wait an eight extra days, but the delay only deepened the anticipation and doubled the joy his arrival brought to all of us. I refer to Liam James McMahan, son of Douglas McMahan and my niece, Margaret Early McMahan. He was born late in the afternoon at St. Joseph's Hospital, Syracuse, on Tuesday, May 30, and weighted in at eight pounds. Liam is doing very well and, I am happy to tell you, the same is true of his mother.

I have not seen the newest member of our family yet, but hope to get to his home in North Syracuse sometime on Thursday. While I have not yet seen him, I did hear him over the phone today. As I spoke with Margaret, I heard Liam roaring in protest at my sister, Helen, who was changing his diaper when Liam would have preferred immediate access to his next meal. This little one has wonderful lungs!

The arrival of this dear child was a very special Easter gift, and a particular reminder of the ways in which God continually renews our lives. But he is not the only gift I received this week.

Just this morning at Ss. Peter and Paul, Elmira, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the parish. We remembered and gave thanks for the blessings of all of those years. In a particular way, we were mindful of our mothers and fathers in

along the way

By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



faith who established the parish and who, by word and example, passed on the gift of faith to those who came after them.

At the same time, the inclusion of young people in the celebration was a clear signal of the commitment today's community makes to its members of tender years.

In similar fashion, so many celebrations of the sacrament of confirmation in our parish communities are enriched by the active participation of young people in liturgical ministries. We have worked hard to encourage such participation by young people in our liturgical life, and I think the effort has been very much worthwhile.

It has been my experience at liturgy that, when our young friends are interested in and well prepared for such participation, they have a great positive effect on the assembly. For example, at Ss. Peter and Paul on Sunday morning and at confirmation at St. Louis, Pittsford, on Friday,

young men and women were among those who proclaimed the readings. They did it superbly. And believe me when I say that both assemblies gave them their reverent attention.

If such gifts of life in family and parish were not enough to spark awareness of God's enduring and loving presence, I can also anticipate, as I write, our annual Diocesan Junior High Rally to be held Saturday at the Chiropractic College at Seneca Falls. That is always a spectacular affair made so by the obvious faith, enthusiasm, joy, talents and generosity brought to it by 12-, 13- and 14-year-olds from all parts of our 12-county diocese.

They are full of life for our church today and special reminders to us adults to stay young in the Lord. I can't think of a better way of doing that than by connecting with the youths of our communities. They have great gifts and are eager to share them with us. All they ask is occasional help and continuing encouragement.

The arrival of Liam got me off on all of this. But it is a joy to welcome him and to dream about his future. All of us who love him want to give him all that is best in our faith and our family. I know you want to do the same for your beloved young ones. Pray God, we'll all be worthy of such good gifts.

Peace to all.

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it helps to have
a little guidance.**

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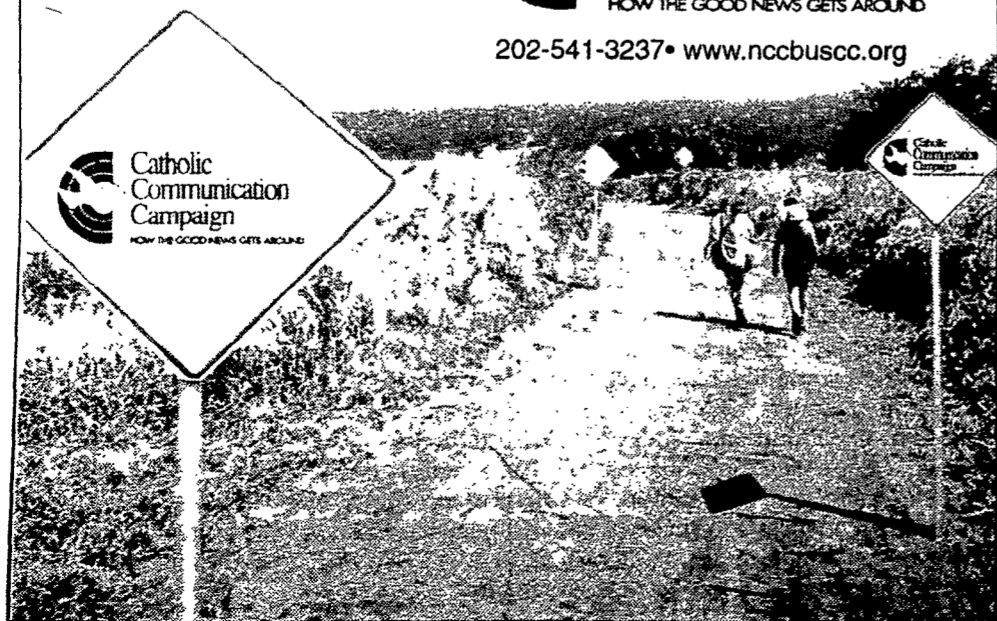
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