

## Sessions with ministers add to season's joy

I love the summer. I truly do. In my opinion there is nothing more beautiful than a fair summer day in our region. The lakes, hills, fruits, vegetables, woods, the glorious sky and gentle breezes all touch my spirit and invite it to remember the creator of all of these wonders.

Even the darker, cooler, rainy days have an inviting beauty. I wouldn't choose them, but when they come along I try to remember that they are part of nature's balance, that without the rain we would not have growth or budding or the beauty of flowers or crops ready for harvest.

August offers us much of that fullness. Produce is abundant, and people are able to enjoy nature's bounty at family tables, picnics or other outings. I know that I take special pleasure in the sweet corn of August, and corn doesn't even make my top-five vegetable list.

It is not just nature's gifts that bring August delights. Another joy of the season is the opportunity to spend time with sisters and brothers in pastoral ministry.

During the week, I celebrated Eucharist and shared a picnic meal with a combined group of pastoral ministers: those who serve the Catholic communities at colleges and universities in our diocese and those who serve individuals incarcerated in the jails and prisons of our 12-county region. These ministers are gifted people. They are generous and very loving. It is always a joy

along  
the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

to be with them.

I also participated in a reunion gathering of the residents of Becket Hall, our seminarians who soon will return to school and those lay leaders and priests of our diocese who work with them. Our young candidates are quite impressive, as are their mentors.

It is always good to be with them and to come to know them a little better. I admire them because their road these days is not easy. They do not always enjoy the family and community support we took for granted in our day. And the priesthood to which they aspire, like the church it serves, experiences changes that can be disquieting. Yet these young men keep at it with generous spirit and honest searching. I can only admire that. I have to admit that I am grateful to them as well. Somehow they are saying to us priests who go before them that they see something of value in the ministry we exercise during this time

of challenging transition.

Also during the week, I'll be spending time at Leadership Days at the New York State Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls from Wednesday through Friday. A great number of pastoral ministers from parishes and other faith communities from all parts of our diocese will gather there. We study, pray, celebrate, socialize, sing, share our experiences and hope to emerge from the session closer to the Lord and strengthened to serve in our communities with greater knowledge and more joyful hearts.

It is always enriching to be in that company. There are many reasons for that. Among their qualities that impress me most are their genuine love for the faith, their desire to serve the growth in faith of their sisters and brothers, the sacrifices they make to deepen their knowledge and improve their skills, and the joyful spirit in which they do all of this. I wish you could all be with them to experience firsthand what I am trying to describe.

There are lots of other things going on in August that I won't comment on now. Let me just assure you that you belong to a diocese which is full of life, of good spirit and willing to meet the challenges of the day — even when they are quite difficult. Thank you for being a part of it.

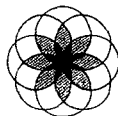
Peace to all.

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