

High school reunion brings back memories

It was a moving experience last weekend to gather with classmates to celebrate the 45th anniversary of our graduation from Catholic Central High School (CCHS), Troy. Two principal events highlighted the reunion. On Friday night we celebrated the Eucharistic Liturgy in remembrance of our departed members. On Saturday, members of the class, their spouses and companions, administration and friends of the school gathered for a dinner at a local party house. It was a great delight to join former classmates at this gathering. I was sorry that Sunday commitments here did not allow for participation on Saturday evening.

There were 298 of us who graduated from CCHS in 1955. In the years since, as best we know, 29 of our members have been called from this life to the next. I am not sure where that places us in the actuarial tables but I can tell you that the number surprised me. And it got me thinking. The thoughts certainly touched on death. They included the reality of death for the 29 and the certainty of death for the rest of us on some unnumbered days in the future. But, although — perhaps because — we prayed in faith for our departed members, our attention was on life that night. Many of us had not seen many others for 45 years but that did not seem to hamper conversation. We shared a lot of common memories and updated one another on what had been happening in our lives in the years since we last met.

along
the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

It was fun to be there. I found myself much strengthened by the faith, good spirit and peaceful presence of men and women with whom I had spent some very important time early in my life. People were genuinely happy to see one another and seemed much at ease (I should add here, however, that we all confessed a certain level of apprehension about going to the reunion. Would we have much in common after so many years? Would we recognize people we should recognize? And vice versa?)

Among the highlights of the reunion were the memories it elicited in all of us of the teachers we had at CCHS. In our day our faculty was made up of Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of St. Joseph and priests of the Diocese of Albany. Laypersons Mary Miller and Bill Carley taught music and coached our sports teams respectively. They were giants to us then. What became apparent on reunion night was that they still are. In adulthood we may realize, as we did not then, that those men and women had human challenges just

as we all do. But what they gave us were gifts of great importance. They taught us values that last a lifetime. They respected us as distinct and loveable individuals. They pushed us to believe in ourselves to make the best of our God-given abilities. They lived what they taught in ways I shall always remember and for which I shall always be grateful. Some of those wonderful teachers have gone to God too but several are still with us.

A final note: I went to the reunion with a particular, clear memory from high school days, wondering how I would incorporate that memory into the experience of the evening. The memory was of working on an article for a CCHS publication. Although I do not remember its details, the article had to do with a recently held class reunion at the school. There was a photo accompanying the article. I remember wondering at 16 or 17 years of age why people of such advanced years would ever be interested in such an event; and, I suppose, how they ever got there in the first place. I don't think I was being smart or fresh or had any attitude like that. It was just an honest, youthful curiosity about what aging meant, its impact, etc.

Having lived this many years and having experienced that wonderful reunion, I think I understand all of it better than I ever did, but know that I have much more to learn. If you are my age, you will know what I mean. If you are younger, I encourage you not to miss any class reunions. They can teach us a lot. Peace to all.

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