

Church's renovation an occasion of joy, pride

It certainly is a lively time of the year. It's also a very beautiful one. I am grateful for the ways in which God has spoken to my heart through the faith and goodness of people, the beauties of nature and the splendid rituals of our faith tradition.

The people of Christ the King Parish, Irondequoit, gathered yesterday to rededicate their church, which they have renewed with affection, generosity and great care. It is always a pleasure for me to preside at such liturgies. They are rich in the kinds of symbols that put people in touch with God, with one another and with the great moments of their own lives.

That was evident yesterday at Christ the King when families who started the parish 44 years ago joined others who have come along quite recently. I could sense among them — and, therefore, could share with them — a sense of belonging and quiet pride about what they had achieved.

As I have reflected on the experience since, I realize that that sense of belonging did not rest in surface realities. Rather, it had to do with deep faith long held in common and now revitalized through the experience of

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

renewing the community's worship space.

I do not know the full detail of that endeavor as the parish community does. I am sure that on the journey there were hard decisions to be made and some moments of doubt. What I do know is that they have come through it all in wonderful spirit.

One could sense that during the liturgy yesterday. The boys and girls, men and women who gathered there were beaming with joy. What a great joy it was to be with such a confident, hopeful community of people. I am sure that the people of Christ the King will not mind it if I invite you to visit their parish for the eucharistic liturgy some Sunday.

Three other events — two already celebrated, the third to come on Saturday — I also describe as confi-

dent, hopeful and joyful. I refer to our annual Hands of Christ recognition celebrations. At these wonderful events we honor high school seniors who strive to live their faith at home, in school and in the activities of their lives. This year we'll be thanking more than 600, a number that represents the faith commitments of many more of their contemporaries. In the weeks ahead I expect that you will be hearing from some of these young women and men in your home parishes.

I am off to Chicago this morning to spend a couple of days with the executive committee and board of the National Federation of Priests' Councils. I have been invited to give one of three papers that will be given at the session.

My topic is "The Relationship between Bishops and Priests." It has been a pleasure to work on that talk, primarily because it made me more deeply aware of the goodness of the priests of this diocese and their generous response to today's challenging realities. More about that at another time.

If I don't stop now and get moving, I'll miss my plane!
Peace to all.



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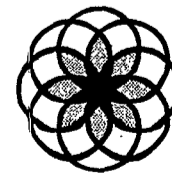
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