

Child's gift a connection to God

After the liturgy at St. Monica's on Sunday morning, little Emily Corson, age 6, presented me with a picture she had colored — most likely during my homily. The little one did the work with care and attention to detail. She stayed within the lines when using her crayons. She chose colors that, at least by my taste, worked well together. She took pains to print her name clearly in a corner of her picture. She was thoughtful enough to ask her mother to print "Bishop Matthew" in another corner so I would know that the work was from her to me.

Every one of these details was part of the considerable joy of the moment. But no element of the experience brought me greater delight than the look on Emily's face when she extended her hand to offer her gift. It was a look that held a wonderful mixture of shyness, trust, innocence, welcome and care. Her gifts of the picture and her trust added strength to my spirit. I hope that my response let her know that, and did good things for her as well.

When I got home I taped the picture to a shelf on my bookcase, just next to a plant I like very much. Together, they connect me with God who is the source

along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



of all life. They bring me close to the many sisters and brothers I meet every day who inspire me by their generous discipleship to the Lord.

Those friends come in many sizes and shapes, from many races and cultures. They are wealthy and poor, well and in ill health, young and old. They are laypersons, priests, religious and deacons. Their gifts, education, resources and life stories are widely diverse.

Though there is diversity among them, the individuals to whom I refer share a love for God and a commitment to their faith. Their service on behalf of others is quiet, consistent and generous.

They are attached to our faith community and see it as a source of strength for their own journey. For this reason, they have a healthy sense of the com-

mon good. They recognize that they have much to offer to the life of the community, and know that the community has much to offer to them. They give themselves generously to the community enterprise.

And they stick with it without insisting on perfection from themselves or from the rest of us. They have a sense that God has begun something beautiful in us. They are also aware that it has not yet come to completion. Realizing all of this, they make every effort to treat others with charity, respect and patience.

Sunday's Gospel encouraged us to be alert so that we might know the Lord when he comes. When we hear that word in the context of the Eucharist, we know that it calls our attention to the fullness of time when the Lord will come again in glory. We can forget its reference to what has already begun, and therefore be less mindful than we might be of God's loving presence to us in the events of everyday life.

I am grateful to Emily, her mother and dad, and her beautiful sisters for providing such a moment of that awareness for me.

Peace to all.

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says: "As the enrollment has increased every year, our seminarians depend even more on your generosity to provide financial assistance. If it were not for your kindness, these dedicated young men would be unable to complete their seminary training."

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