

Healing, however slow, can start any time

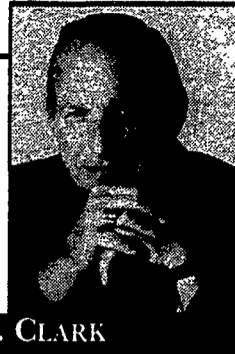
A recent writer to Rochester's *Democrat and Chronicle* expressed anger about the paper's choice for its banner headline on Thursday, Sept. 13, the second day after the disasters on Tuesday of that week. On Wednesday, the paper had run the banner "TERROR." On Thursday, it followed with "THE HEALING BEGINS." The letter writer held the strong opinion that the second headline was totally premature, and insensitive to the profound suffering of many people.

When I read the letter I remembered a brief conversation I had on the day of the headline about healing. It occurred at the conclusion of a forum at Nazareth College in which I participated. I was saying good-bye to other participants and wishing them well in the challenges that lay ahead of us all. Karen Magnuson, editor of the *Democrat and Chronicle*, whom I had not met before, was among the group. I took the occasion to tell her that I thought that the paper had nailed the Tuesday event with "TERROR." I also told her that I thought that the Thursday headline was exactly right.

As I read the headline, I sensed no backtracking from the reality of terror or any disregard for the pain of countless thousands. Rather, I thought that it caught something very important. I read it as saying that the healing began with the first act of bravery, the first word of consolation, the first offer of hospitality that occurred after the brutal raids.

along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



In other words, I thought the headline suggested two ideas I believe are important for us to remember during these days of recovery: 1) Healing from such a trauma is a process — and it can be a very slow one. 2) The process has no required waiting period and it can begin in small, quiet ways. When one of us begins to heal, the very knowledge of the possibility of healing can begin the process in us all.

I should tell you that, when I expressed my opinion about the headlines, Ms. Magnuson smiled, thanked me for the comment and told me that the paper had received several comments like the ones made by the gentleman whose letter I referred to above.

How are you coming along after all of this pain and confusion? Has healing started for you? How have you experienced it thus far? What have been its sources? Who and what have fostered the process in you? Is it any faster or slower than you thought it might be? Several people I have spoken with during the past few days mentioned

that they experience a certain heaviness of spirit. A pervasive kind of sadness finds them needing more energy, more will-power than usual to carry on the normal activities of life. Even activities they enjoy very much require an added push. Some express the concern that they still feel a deep anger. Others worry about the future and what life will be like for our children.

My own experience includes all of the above to some degree or another, especially the heaviness of spirit. I have been aware of ambivalence about returning to normal daily routine.

In my opinion, it is essential for our healing that we carry on with the reality of daily life in a spirit of hope and confidence in the Lord and one another. Nevertheless, I can lose my perspective about such activity. My emotions lead me to feel that, since my daily concerns pale in comparison to what we have experienced, those concerns have no importance at all. At the same time, my brain tells me — quite correctly, I am sure — that routine, ordinary life is more important now than ever and will be one of the primary sources of our recovery.

I hope that you and those whom you love are doing well as the healing process continues. We have all been through an intense, soul-shaking experience. It will take time and patience and, above all, faith in the God who leads us from death to life.

Peace to all.



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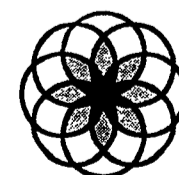
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