

Forging ahead with our lives

I missed doing Along the Way last week because one of those stubborn fall "bugs" got a hold on my respiratory system and laid me low for a couple of days. Some rest and a course of antibiotics leave me feeling much better than I did in the middle of that. I hope the many friends I met this month who were experiencing the same problems are also feeling much better.

As we continue to heal with the rest of our nation, I am impressed by the strong and generous spirit evident in so many people. Even in the midst of pain and uncertainty, they forge ahead with their lives, often with an awareness of the needs of others even deeper than they had before. They respond to those needs with gifts of money, words of encouragement, the strength of prayer and a faith that helps them find new life even amid this sadness.

October's schedule typically finds me with groups of many different types in several parts of our diocese. I think it is fair to say that at every gathering there is an awareness - whether discussed at length or not - of the horrors of September 11 and the aftermath of that unforgettable day.

For example, Sunday morning at Blessed Sacrament Church in Rochester I presided at a Eucharistic liturgy for the law enforcement community of the greater Rochester area. As you might expect, that assembly spoke about and prayed for their sister and brother officers who served so heroically at the World Trade Center. That event has

along the way

By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



brought them great pain. It has also helped them to support one another in their grief, and to appreciate anew that each day they put their lives on the line for the safety and well-being of our community.

In a different, but striking way, the same was true at St. Mary's in Corning last Saturday. There, our high school seniors from Southern Tier parishes gathered to receive the Hands of Christ Award. This award acknowledges their generous service to their parishes, schools and the community at large. To all of us who gathered with them, these beautiful young people were as beacons lighting the darkness of these days. They are wonderful signs of how God continually renews the human family. Through their strength and freshness and courage, they raise the spirits of any of us who can become disheartened by what we experienced last month.

I look forward to invigorating Hands of Christ celebrations two more times this week - on Wednesday evening at St.

Charles Borromeo, Greece, and on Saturday morning at St. Margaret Mary, Irondequoit. I truly mean it when I say that for me there are few experiences more challenging or rewarding than spending time with the gifted young people of our diocese.

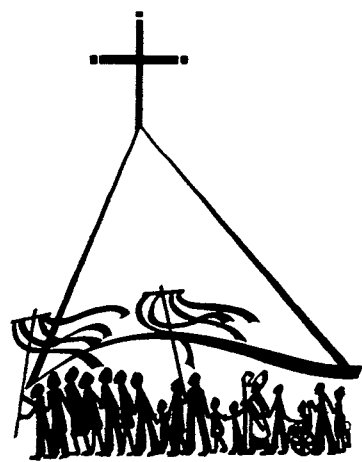
This morning, I went to Good Shepherd School in Henrietta for a press conference highlighting "Works of Love Week" now being celebrated in our 12-county diocese. Catholic Charities in partnership with students in Catholic schools, youth groups and faith-formation programs is engaged in acts of service and support for sisters and brothers of all ages. Our young people will pray and work and reflect on this experience of their faith.

Among my fond hopes for the week are that it will 1) make us all more aware of the extensive work done by Catholic Charities in all parts of our diocese; 2) give our young people an important experience of serving others in the name of Christ; and, 3) help all of us understand more deeply our baptismal vocation to serve others in need and to be a voice for social policies that recognize the dignity of the poor and the vulnerable among us.

As I conclude, let me encourage you once more - gently, I hope, but most sincerely - to support this year's Thanks Giving Appeal if you can possibly do so. We rely on your participation to do many good works. Please help us if you can.

Peace to all.

*"Love one another
as I have loved you"*
(John 15:12)



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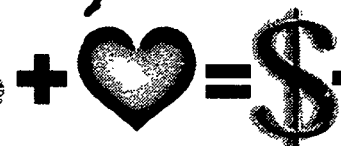
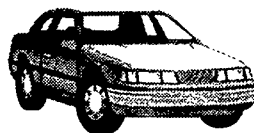
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