

## St. Louis Parish rejoices in renovation

On Sunday, I joined Father Jim Schwartz, pastor, and the community of St. Louis Parish, Pittsford, for the rededication of their renovated church. Here I would like to offer a few thoughts about that experience.

1. I was moved and much encouraged by the liturgical celebration. Clearly, the community invested a good deal of time and energy in its preparation. A wide variety of parishioners served as liturgical ministers. All of them — even the very youngest — did so with a level of confidence and competence that comes only as the fruit of careful preparation. The fruit of such care catches the attention of the assembly and draws them to a fuller participation, a greater enjoyment in the mysteries being celebrated. So many elements about the celebration — music, environment, proclamation, dance, silence and gestures of service — said “lift up your hearts.” And the people did that.

2. A strong lasting impression I have of the celebration is that the people of St. Louis were much aware of the deep significance of what they were doing. To be sure, they renovated and expanded their beautiful church for the glory of God and the good of the community. They built classrooms and constructed meeting spaces for the same purpose. But one could not miss

### along the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



the commitment of the people to spiritual renewal symbolized by the beautiful physical work they accomplished. I have the sense that the achievement we celebrated both expresses their faith and challenges them to live that faith ever more fully and generously. If that is so, the physical renewal they now enjoy will continue to shape their faith life and help them grow in the love of the Lord.

3. A comment from a co-worker this morning reminded me of something about St. Louis parish that was not mentioned, by me or by anyone in the parish. It is something that I believe did much to enrich the liturgical celebration. I refer to the spirit of service that characterizes St. Louis Parish. The parish is truly attentive to parishioners in need of support and comfort. It is ready to form relationships with other communities that help all parties to develop as

human beings and persons of faith. What is more, the people do it quietly and without fanfare. I thank them for that — for the good that they do, for the humble spirit in which they do it, for the reminder they were to me of parish communities all over our diocese who share so generously of themselves.

4. There were a great number of young people at the celebration — from babes in arms to college-age students. I always rejoice in their presence and hope that they receive as much from our acts of worship as they bring to them. I was especially aware of their presence — and the parish's love for them — because there is space dedicated to their use in the new facility that we blessed.

A closing note: At the end of the celebration I mentioned that our plans for the renovation of Sacred Heart Cathedral stand now where the plans for St. Louis stood two or three years ago. The people of St. Louis faced and met many challenges in the accomplishment of their work. I am sure the same will be true at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

I asked the people of St. Louis to pray for God's blessing on the Sacred Heart project so that in the future we can celebrate in a beautiful, renewed cathedral church.

Peace to all.



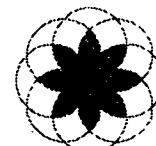
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