

Youths emulate diocesan goal of diversity

Some follow up notes on last week's "Along the Way":

I enjoyed very much reading the *Catholic Courier's* coverage of our Diocesan Youth Convention, which was held in Rochester on April 6-8.

You may remember that, because of other commitments, I could stay with the participants only for their opening session. What especially pleased me about the *Courier* story was its account of groups of our kids from all over our diocese visiting a number of city parishes for supper.

I am always happy when our young people get to spend time together. When that happens, they strengthen one another in faith. And something special happens when they are with their peers who represent different racial, cultural and spiritual traditions.

In this activity at the youth convention they modeled something we try to encourage across the board in our community of faith. I refer to our efforts to bring together people of diverse backgrounds and different economic levels in ways that allow development of relationships between individuals and parish communities.

We all know that there are serious divisions in our society along economic and racial lines. When people do not know

along the way

By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



one another, negative stereotypes easily develop and the divisions become deeper. But when people come face to face and have the opportunity to know one another and their respective cultures better, then all kinds of good things happen.

I am truly grateful to all associated with the youth convention for that wonderful feature of the program.

Yesterday (Sunday) I attended a party honoring Father Kevin McKenna on the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. I had a wonderful time at that feast, which gathered Kevin's family, many of his brother priests, several women and men who have been his colleagues in ministry and a large number of people whom Kevin has served over the years. To be sure, there was a strong delegation from St. Cecilia Parish, Irondequoit, where our friend now

serves as pastor.

Sunday's beautiful celebration to celebrate and give thanks for Kevin's priestly ministry re-connected me with the previous week in two ways.

The first related to Bishop Howard Hubbard's 25th episcopal jubilee on Sunday, April 7. The second was our annual convocation of priests held on the next three days.

I will not go into detail about either event. I only want to say that, like Kevin's celebration, both of them brought a calming to my spirit amid the painful issue of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy. My memories of Howard's and Kevin's service over the years, and the presence of the solid, loving priests and pastoral ministers who gathered for the convocation, re-affirmed me in my faith and my love for priesthood.

There are yet wounds to be bound up and healing to be effected. There is much to be learned through this experience, especially when this intense period gives way to a calmer time.

In the meantime, I ask for the prayers of the entire community that anyone ever injured in this way will come to healing and wholeness, and that all of us will experience a spiritual renewal as we emerge from these dark days.

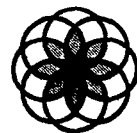
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