

# Confirmations are renewing events

I arrived home a short while ago from a confirmation at St. Joseph's Church, Wayland, for the communities of the Holy Family Catholic Community. I am tired after a long day. But, as so often happens, the confirmation left me so re-energized that I know I won't sleep right away. So I thought I might settle down by writing for a while.

It really is a joy to confirm our wonderful young people. They come in all sizes and shapes. They manifest a wide range of personalities. Their life experiences are quite different. So are their gifts and talents. Yet, with each one comes a sense of mystery and the realization that our gracious God calls each one of them by name.

When I anoint them on the forehead with the oil of chrism, I have a very real sense of the living Christ present to both of us in this sacramental act of faith. In our exchange of the sign of peace, I experience the presence of another with whom I can share my faith, friendship and support in the years ahead.

The celebration at Wayland this evening impressed me very much. The community was warmly hospitable to those who came from far and near to join the celebration. The church was adorned in a beautifully appropriate

along  
the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

way. The music was wonderfully done and invited the participation of the assembly. And all present seemed connected and attentive to what we were celebrating. On the way home, I found myself in joyful reflection on the impact that our sacred liturgies, well celebrated, have on all of us.

I mentioned above that no two of our candidates are alike. I say the same about our celebrations of confirmation. I have mentioned my experience at Wayland. Two other recent celebrations of confirmation were equally beautiful, yet different from one another and the one at Wayland.

The first I mentioned last week. It gathered six communities from the south side of Rochester at the Church of the Immaculate Conception. The second was two days later at Sacred Heart Cathedral. On that occasion we con-

firmed 100 candidates from 10 parishes. In both instances the liturgies were festive, lively and deeply reverent in tone and spirit. And in both, just as in Wayland, careful preparation and faithful participation characterized the evening. And all of that care and faith seemed to call the attention of all in the assembly to the goodness of the candidates and to an awareness that they are a beautiful gift of God for the strengthening and renewal of our faith community.

I am deeply grateful to God for the experiences I have just mentioned. They bring great joy to my spirit and strengthen my hope. I am also grateful to all who lovingly support our young candidates in preparation for and in celebration of this beautiful sacrament — their parents, godparents, sponsors, pastors, catechists and young ministers. When they nourish the young they give strength to all of us.

As I conclude these comments, let me renew the hope so often expressed here that all our parish communities include these young people in the life of the community according to their gifts, interests, abilities and preparation. When we do so, we contribute mightily to their growth and bring the strength of new life to our parishes.

Peace to all.

PEOPLE WITH  
*disabilities.*

SEE THEIR  
*abilities.*

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