

Last days of August filled with celebrations

Last week I sent a column to the *Catholic Courier* by fax transmission from Phoenix, where I was attending a meeting. The transmission was unsuccessful. Below is the column I wrote last week — until you come to the “real time” section.

A few comments on the rapidly passing days of August:

1) First, I express a word of thanks to the Sisters of St. Joseph for kindly including me in the cornerstone celebration for their new motherhouse. It was a delightful experience — prayerful, educational and lots of fun.

As is usually the case in such rituals, this event connected us with our past, and provided a common and healthy orientation toward the future. I very much admire the sisters for the vision, courage and hope for the future they have brought to this challenging and complex moment in their history. And, the day left me very eager to visit their new motherhouse when it is completed.

2) Next, another word of gratitude to Father Ed Palumbos and all of the people of Our Lady of the Assumption Parish, Fairport, for all they have achieved in the enhancement and expansion of their parish facilities. Among their accomplishments: a new baptismal font and ambry, additional classroom space and impressive new multi-purpose space for parish gatherings.

My evening with them renewed my appreciation for three distinct qualities I have always noted at Assumption — their care for and involvement of the young, their sense of hospitality and their commitment to liturgy. I continue to wish them well as they begin

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

to enjoy the fruits of the work we celebrated last week.

3) I write these words while in Phoenix, Arizona, for a board meeting of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. I am not a member of the group, but serve as their liaison to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

This is a lively group and one that impresses me deeply because its members love our young people very much and devote themselves, often with much personal sacrifice, to their growth and well being.

Being with these men and women from all sections of the United States puts me in mind of their counterparts in our own diocese. We, too, are blessed by these generous servants of the Gospel.

4) This Saturday descendants of my maternal grandparents, Nelson and Helen Bills, will gather at the Saratoga State Park for our annual family reunion.

Nelson and Helen had 13 children, 10 of whom grew to adulthood. Of the 10, nine married and raised families, some of them quite large.

I am mindful that with the death of Ann Bills, widow of my Uncle Joe, my mother's generation is all now with God. My generation will be the senior group present this year — a sobering thought to say the least.

If the death of Ann will remind us of our own mortality when we gather, the young life among us will remind us of God's faithful presence and of how important every day of life is, no matter how old we may be.

My niece, Margaret McMahan, will be a special reminder of the gift of life that day. She and Doug are expecting their second child about a month from now. I am very happy for them and pray daily for the good health of mother and child. Boy? Girl? I do not know. If the baby's parents know, they have been kind enough not to tell me. They know I prefer to wait until it all happens. I am betting the child is a girl, but will let you know when the time comes. In the meantime, please keep the McMahans and all other expectant couples in your prayers.

It's this week again! The reunion was a marvelous experience. We had heavy rains all day, but there seemed to be a vibrant spirit among the hundred or so people who gathered for it. I very much enjoy seeing the family gathered, and take special delight in the kids. They are absolutely spectacular.

I hope that you and your loved ones enjoy a peaceful Labor Day weekend, and that the weather those days will be brighter than it was in Saratoga last Saturday.

Once again, I wish you peace and many blessings.

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