

Thoughts of 9/11 invade peaceful moments

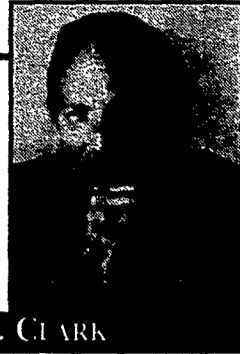
I am enjoying a peaceful Labor Day moment on a bench between Sacred Heart Cathedral and the cathedral rectory, where I have lived for 22 years. It is quieter than usual today. That's because traffic is light on Flower City Park on this holiday afternoon.

Both our cathedral church and the parish house are very much home to me. I have lived at the rectory longer than I have lived at any other place in my life. Our cathedral church is home in another way. In our tradition the cathedral is the bishop's church. Therefore, it is a special place to me and, for that reason, it is home not only to the parish community of Sacred Heart but to all of the people of our 12-county diocese.

I am mindful that this lovely garden area between the cathedral and our rectory will soon be enclosed and transformed into a beautiful and much-needed gathering area and place of celebration for those who gather to participate in the life of our restored and renewed cathedral. Although I'll dearly miss the garden, I anticipate with great joy all that the Great Hall in the Cathedral Commons (what should we call it?) will make possible for us. I have no doubt that the work we will do on the church and this garden area will enhance our lives in many ways.

As the planning process proceeds, Father John Mulligan has been able to share the fruits of the committee's work with the parish community. There have been many

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

questions, of course, but my strong impression is that as the people learn more and more about the renovation plans, the more excited they become. They have never had many questions about upgrading the sound system or the lighting or installing restrooms. Now, as they learn more about the plans they realize that we can and will conform our cathedral to the norms of our church, make it even more beautiful and, at the same time, honor its architectural integrity.

You'll be hearing much more about the cathedral in the months ahead. I just wanted to give you early notice that the planning committee's careful work is progressing nicely and is enjoying a favorable reception from the community.

To another subject: September 11, 2001 — or 9/11 as it is now called — is almost a year behind us. Already we are hearing media outlets and a wide variety of public figures make first anniversary comments on a day that rocked the world.

I think it is important to read and listen

to these points of view. They do help me continually to process events that still challenge my spirit. They help me in my search for answers to the questions that that tragic day raised in my heart: How do we respond to this horror in a Gospel-inspired way? How best can we ensure that such horrors never happen again? What can we learn from those around the world who said they understood — or even approved of — what the terrorists did? Are there changes we can make in military and economic policies that would help ease the tensions and hatreds that divide peoples and nations?

It is clearer than ever that violence yields nothing that helps the human family. It just deepens hatreds and begets more violence. For that reason I am deeply disappointed in the continued references by our president to attacking Iraq. We've done it once, and the situations seem no better than before. Shall we do it again with the same result? And, if we do, what about the children of Iraq who suffer in a way that we could not bear if the same pain should be inflicted on our children?

I wish I had as many answers as I have questions. I'll be looking for them in all that we will hear about 9/11 in the days ahead. My hope is that our prayers, discussions and work will be ordered to a just world order for the human family. If we can achieve that, we'll have much less reason to be concerned about the integrity and security of our nation.

Peace to all.

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