

# Bishop Casey set example for all

Many of you remember Lawrence B. Casey, a distinguished priest and former auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, who died in Patterson, New Jersey, in 1977 during the 12th year of his tenure as bishop of that diocese.

I never had the opportunity to know Bishop Casey personally. But living at Sacred Heart Cathedral as I do — indeed in the very quarters Bishop Casey once occupied — I often hear affectionate references to him by parishioners who were here in his time. And now Father Larry Murphy, former assistant pastor to the bishop, and Father John Mulligan, Sacred Heart's current pastor who grew up there under Bishop Casey, both keep him very much alive through the stories they tell



**Bishop Matthew H. Clark**

Along the Way

about him.

Last week I went to Patterson to participate in a liturgical conference held in honor of Bishop Casey's successor, Bishop Frank Rodimer. This year the bishop observes his 50th anniversary as a priest, his 25th anniversary as a bishop and his 75th birthday. That birthday is the one on

which all bishops must submit a letter of resignation to our Holy Father.

Because of Bishop Rodimer's significant local and national contribution to liturgical renewal, Patterson's Diocesan Liturgical Commission honored him by organizing this conference commemorating the 40th anniversary of Vatican Council II. They asked me, one of four speakers at the conference, to address the theme "The Church at Prayer: Eucharist, Collaboration and Liturgical Ministry."

It was a joy to be with some 250 women and men who devote themselves to the liturgical life of the Patterson Diocese and to be with Bishop Rodimer at this especially important moment in his life. I was especially mindful that he was a tremendous support to Bishop Casey during all of his years in Patterson. Frank was especially helpful in Bishop Casey's early days when he was making the adjustment to his new diocese after having spent all of his priesthood until then in the Diocese of Rochester.

You can be sure that Bishop Casey is remembered with great fondness in our sister diocese in New Jersey. Any number of people at the conference put themselves out to share a fond memory of him, and to say how important to their lives his leadership was in leading liturgical renewal in the diocese and in many other ways during those early post-conciliar years.

A clear theme of their comments was that Bishop Casey truly opened his life to the call of Vatican Council

II and worked tirelessly to be faithful to it. What made their admiration of him the stronger was their intuition, at least as I read it, that the call of the council required our friend to change closely held ideas and practices that were understandably dear to him. That he was willing to do so offered a special quality to his pastoral leadership, one that words alone could not offer.

While in Patterson I was a guest in the bishop's residence. Guess where Bishop Rodimer had me stay. You've got it — in the rooms occupied by Bishop Casey during his tenure in Patterson! In the few waking hours that I spent in his rooms I thought a lot about Bishop Casey and all of the wonderful stories I have heard about him over the years. And I prayed for all of the people who have shared stories about him with me.

But most of all I thanked the Lord for the example of this gifted and generous man. What I have come to admire about him so much was his openness to change even when that required substantial adjustment on his part. He was able to do it, I think, because he was a good steward. He judged his talents and experience to be gifts from God to be used not for the advancement of some personal agenda, but for the building up of the reign of God. In his participation in Vatican Council II, I believe that Lawrence B. Casey experienced a call to a renewed form of pastoral service, a call to which he responded with generosity and humility. Who could ask for anything more? Peace to all.

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