

Liturgy embraces all of life

Yesterday, at the 5 p.m. Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral, our special focus was on those baptized or received into the full communion in our church at the Easter Vigil.

We have done that for many years. New members of our community come from many parishes for the cathedral celebration. The experience seems to please them; it certainly brings joy to those who regularly attend Mass at Sacred Heart.

I know that I enjoy the gathering. Inevitably, the presence and enthusiasm of new members of our church draw me to a deeper appreciation of my own baptism — the gifts it brings, the responsibilities attaching to it. In yesterday's liturgy the Gospel of John carried the word of Jesus, "I am the vine; you are the branches." The presence of new friends and the power of those words were wonderful invitations to think and pray about the way I live my life in relationship to God and neighbor. Challenging? Certainly. But, it's also the way to freedom and fullness.

In the liturgy yesterday, I found a place to locate and offer to God some of the significant experiences that are part of my awareness in these Easter days:

1) I remembered and prayed for a dear friend and mentor, Martin Q.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

Moll Sr., who died on Saturday.

Marty and I first met at a Burger King in 1979. I remember how impressed I was by his love for his faith, the breadth of his interests and the zest he had for life.

That chance meeting 24 years ago blossomed into a friendship that has meant the world to me.

I remember the contributions he made to his parish, St. Louis, Pittsford; to St. John Fisher College; and to many other organizations. But, today I remember especially his abiding interest and massive contribution to the Catholic press in our community.

Marty loved the *Catholic Courier*. For years as a board member and adviser, he gave his blood, sweat and tears to its well-being. He carried its history in his very bones, and willingly shared his wisdom so

that it would serve the community well.

Among Marty's many loves, his love for Beverly, his beloved spouse, and their beautiful family shone above all. I express my affection and sympathy to them as they mourn Marty's death and pray that the memories he leaves will always console them.

2) Joy finds a home at liturgy, too. I can't think of many more joyful events than the commencement ceremony for St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry, which we celebrated on Friday night. Twenty-nine students received graduate degrees that evening; two were awarded graduate certificates; and 10 were awarded certificates in one of several designated ministries for which SBSTM provides training. Seven women and men were recognized for the successful completion of the training program at the *Instituto de Pastoral Hispano* (Hispanic Pastoral Institute).

There is something special about the spirit of this commencement. I think that is because the larger numbers of graduates are mature adults. Most matriculate at SBSTM because they have engaged in ministry, love it and want to go deeper into it. They want to learn more about their faith, to study theology and hone their ministerial skills. With them, it is not education seeking a purpose. Rather it is experience seeking meaning and deeper roots.

A second element heightens the joy of the night. Most of our graduates achieve their degrees and certificates while meeting other major commitments in their lives — raising families and full-time employment. Their degrees come as the fruit of commitment and sacrifice by them and by their families.

I am deeply grateful to them who are the lifeblood of so many of our parish pastoral teams. I am also grateful to the board of SBSTM, our faculty and all who support the work of this institution, which is so critical to the health and well-being of our diocesan church.

Because it is so important, we have included the new SBSTM, now under construction, in our *Partners in Faith* capital campaign. Your contribution to this campaign will strengthen parish and diocesan faith formation for years to come.

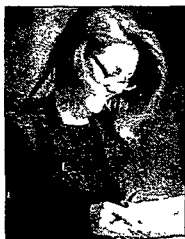
3) At the liturgy on Sunday, my prayers included our priests — religious and diocesan — who serve the people of our diocese with such devotion and generosity.

We'll be gathering at St. Dominic's in Shortsville on May 20 for our annual celebration of jubilees. It is always a pleasure to gather with our priests. It is a special joy to honor and thank those observing special milestones in their lives of priestly service.

It would be difficult to think of a time in the history of the church when the life of the priest has been more exciting, or more challenging, or more painful, or more filled with possibility, or more joyful, or more rewarding, or more frustrating.

I am not trying to be funny. I really think priesthood today is like that. I love it, and so do those who will celebrate on Tuesday.

Our liturgy embraces it all, dear friends — the joys, the sorrows, the frustrations and the possibilities of life. That is why it is important that we gather around the altar table on Sundays. It is the place, the event where we can know healing and connection, where we can rest and be nourished, where we can be re-rooted in love of God and neighbor. Peace to all.



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| Horseheads | Thursday, June 12, 2003, 7:00-8:30 pm St. Mary Our Mother, 816 West Broad Street |
| Syracuse | Wednesday, June 18, 2003, 7:00-8:30 pm The Spiritual Renewal Center, 1118 Court Street |

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|--|-----------------------------|
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