

Varied contacts help ease burdens

A lot has happened since I wrote last week. Let me share a few of the memories of those days:

1) At the Marriage Jubilee Mass on Sunday afternoon at St. John of Rochester, Fairport, more than 300 couples from all over our diocese celebrated their married lives together.

At the end of the liturgy, we presented a bouquet of flowers to the couple married the longest. Dorothy and León Taylor from Newark received the flowers in recognition of their 68 years together. When I gave the flowers to them they asked, "Would you arrange to send these flowers to Father Joe McDonnell at the Mercy Motherhouse. He's close to 100, you know."

I was quite touched by that kind of openness to others. Dorothy and Leon have thought that such a spirit of generosity is an important foun-



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

dation for such a long and lively marital union.

2) Maura and Bob Slon served as cantors at the Jubilee liturgy and did their usual marvelous job. Their presence took me back to the previous evening and the liturgy in celebration of the 75th anniversary of Our Lady of Mercy High School and the blessing of that community's ex-

panded facility.

Contributing in an impressive way to that celebration were Kathleen Martin and Jessamyn Slon, daughter of Maura and Bob. Both young women are students at the high school. Jessamyn lent elegance to the preparation of the gifts with prayerful movement that drew all of us to a sense of the dignity of what we were about. Kathleen lent her voice in narration and song as she, first, led us in a reflection on the holiness and work of Catherine McAuley, and then served as our guide through the evening. Both young women made a deep impression on all of us.

3) On Thursday in New York City, the bishops of our state met with representation of the priests' councils of our state. Our gathering theme was our common interest in and commitment to the health of our respective presbyterates.

As I write, I remember with great gratitude and admiration of the three priests who represented us at that meeting. Bob Schrader, pastor of St. Mary's in Auburn, began the day's discussion by presenting the state of the question and giving a summary of the extensive work he had done to make the day possible and as fruitful as it was.

Chuck Latus, pastor of St. Rita's in Webster and chair of our presbyteral council, was an active participant. So was Doug DellaPietra, pastor of Good Shepherd Parish, Henrietta. Doug is a member of the board of the National Federation of Priests' Councils, and this week he is at a meeting of that group.

These are all gifted and generous

individuals who remind me that our presbyterate in general is properly described by the same two adjectives.

4) Molly Isabella McDermott may be the most peaceful and contemplative infant I have ever baptized. All through the ceremony — including the moment at which I poured the water on her head — she remained serene and remarkably attentive to everything that was swirling around her.

She brought delight to all of us, most especially to my friends, Margaret and Andy, her loving parents. I am deeply grateful to have been a part of such a powerful moment in their lives.

5) Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank the Board of Trustees of the St. Ann's Community, and their CEO Betty Mullin-DiProsa, for hospitality at their board meeting and dinner on Wednesday.

The evening gave me a fresh insight into the complexities of their ministry, and into the great dedication and considerable skill they bring to their tasks.

Their generous presence also reminded me that God has richly blessed our local church with a great number of women and men who generously pour out their time, talent and treasure for the good of neighbor.

In sum, I deal with problems and headaches in the course of daily living, just as you do. People and experiences such as I mentioned above give strength to deal with the harder moments and, more importantly, help me keep them in perspective.

Peace to all.

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