



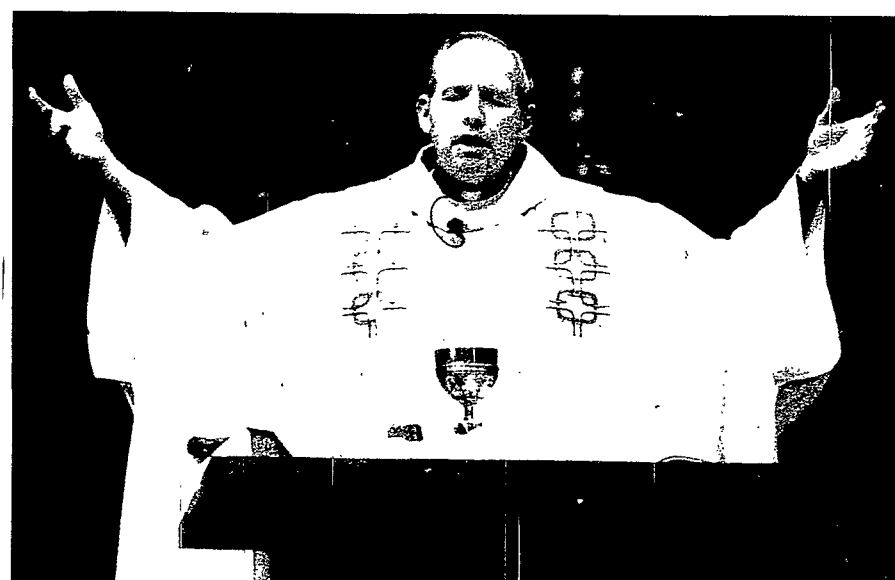
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The imposition of hands by Pope John Paul II takes place during the ordination of Bishop Clark at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome May 27, 1979.

Perhaps the toughest of those times was 1998, when Bishop Clark removed Father James Callan from his position as administrator of Rochester's Corpus Christi Parish because the priest repeatedly had violated church teachings related to same-sex unions, the liturgical roles of the laity and the sharing of Eucharist with unbaptized people. The conflict over Father Callan's removal eventually led to a painful schism, when he and a group of followers formed the breakaway Spiritus Christi Church.

When the bishop discovered irregularities at the parish, he didn't set out on a mission to damage the pastor's reputation, the vicar general added, but rather "very carefully corrected false teachings or false statements." Following the teachings of St. Francis DeSales, Bishop Clark "would only do what was absolutely necessary to prevent the furthering of the schism," Father Hart noted.

The bishop also faced trying times in 1990 with the reorganization of the Monroe County Catholic-school sys-



File photo

Bishop Clark presided over an Oct. 3, 1993, Mass at the General Synod.

tem. In the wake of 20 school closings through 1989, this plan sought to stabilize the system by centralizing parish schools in Monroe County under diocesan administration.

Bishop Clark "is proud of the Monroe County Catholic-school system that, though not perfect, has saved school after school from closing simply because an individual parish could no longer afford it," Father Hart said.

Another challenge has come in the form of the priest shortage, which led the diocese to embark on a pastoral-planning process in 1997. Through this process, neighboring parishes have formed planning groups to look at future options for sharing such resources as priests and Mass schedules. Some of these groups now are sharing resources, and others have combined to form a single parish.

"I don't think you ever accomplish much good postponing dealing with your problems, difficult as it might be. It's part of our responsibility, my responsibility, not to put off to the next generation problems we should be dealing with now," Bishop Clark said.

Protests greeted the bishop in

March 1997, when he presided over an emotional, standing-room-only Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral for gay and lesbian Catholics and their families and friends. A 1997 *Catholic Courier* article reported that Bishop Clark intended the Mass to show the church's love for all people, and he recently told the *Courier* that he still stands by the Mass as an "admirable" effort.

"Some of those moments were tough. I don't like controversy, I don't look for it, but you learn from those

things," Bishop Clark said.

From the fall of 2002 to the summer of 2003, opponents of plans to renovate Sacred Heart Cathedral waged a legal battle against city and diocesan officials. The renovation opponents sought landmark designation for the cathedral, a status that would have required the diocese to seek city approval for certain exterior and interior changes. The renovation opponents eventually lost their battle in court, and the renovations have proceeded.

Throughout these trials, Bishop Clark has remained a kind and spiritual man, Father Hart said.

Diocesan Catholics are lucky to have Bishop Clark as their shepherd, said Father John Mulligan, pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral and the diocese's other vicar general.

"He talks to people ... and he's a listening bishop. He's very collaborative in his approach, and we in Rochester appreciate that a great deal and feel that we're very, very blessed," Father Mulligan said.

Bishop Clark said he has enjoyed his tenure as bishop of the Diocese of Rochester, and is looking forward to continuing his work. He said he's learned from his challenges and accomplishments, and is grateful for the opportunity to serve this diocese.

"I consider it the greatest blessing of my life to be bishop here," Bishop Clark said.

Congratulations

Bishop Clark

on your

25th

Anniversary

as Bishop

of Rochester

"Our Lady of the Hills"

St. Mary's

Church

Honeoye, NY



Congratulations

and

THANK YOU BISHOP CLARK
on your 25th Anniversary
as Bishop of Rochester

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