

## **Traveling Companion: Something to Celebrate**

### **Fr. Michael Tracey**

So, our diocese is twenty-five years old. Then again, our church is over two-thousand years old. A drop in the ocean of life is a reason to celebrate in perspective.

What do we celebrate? A milestone? An achievement? A tradition? A beginning? Probably all! Then again, how do we measure what we celebrate? Do we measure it in terms of milestones or millions raised? In terms of members gained or members lost? In terms of dreams shared or dreams lost? In terms of buildings built or buildings torn down? In terms of hurts inflicted or hurts healed? In terms of dates celebrated or dates hopefully forgotten? In terms of control within or control without? In terms of icons built or icons destroyed? In terms of institutions that are self-perpetuating or selfless? In terms of control or conciliation?

What do we celebrate? Do we list a series of achievements, backed by dates and data? The trouble with such lists is that we tend to take credit for them with our ego-baiting mentality. We tend to concretize what is tangible while, at the same time, failing to realize we are in the intangible business.

How do we measure what we celebrate? We don't measure. We just celebrate the intangible. Thomas Merton, in his *Asian Journal* said, that "our real journey in life is interior: it is a matter of growth, deepening, and of an ever greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts."

Life has its own tapestry. We create that tapestry according to the design concept of the great Craftsman, God. The landscape of that tapestry is constantly changing before our yearning-to-control eyes. It is a tapestry that demands our letting go of control and embracing a willingness to be part of the Creator's web of newness, of life, of love and of hope.

That tapestry demands that we acknowledge and affirm that others are thread-weavers in the creation of this tapestry. We must acknowledge their God-given right to work on this tapestry, recognize their gifts, affirm their contributions, and continually call them to realize their true potential as weavers.

Milestones and markers are signposts that remind us of the "rest" of the journey, rather than resting places to adjust our halos. Buildings built are ghost temples unless they are filled with harmony, hospitality, wisdom to listen rather than dictate; where hearts are mended and lives transformed.

Ultimately anniversaries are about people: people lost and found; people shunned and welcomed; families bonded or beached. Anniversaries are about people's chaos and creativity; people's expectations and expiations; people's hopes dashed and hopes met.

Ultimately, anniversaries are about visions shaped and never really realized; about plans made in a moment of madness but never materialized; about great expectations and dashed hopes; about pristine beginnings and discouraged endings.

Ultimately, anniversaries are about chaos in the form of problems with unfinished business that reminds one that problems are not obstacles but opportunities to open up new ways to perceive and understand reality.

Ultimately, anniversaries allow us the opportunity to touch the chaos and integrate it which, in turn, leads to newness if we have the courage to accept that chaos is part of the fiber of life, as it provides rich potential for growth, new meaning, new experiences, new direction.

So, as a diocese, we are twenty-five years old. Maybe we have "something" to celebrate.