

# CROSSROADS TO LIFE

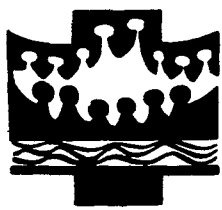


## Bishop Visits Tioga County

Bishop Matthew H. Clark traveled to the Southern Tier last Friday, March 18, to see the work of the Tioga County Rural Ministry, led by Mercy Sisters Sheila Geraghty and Nancy O'Brien, and met with some of the area's impoverished. Joined by Father Albert Cason, Tompkins-Tioga regional coordinator and co-pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Owego, the group visited the homes of some of the people the Sisters work with every day. Above, Father Cason stands over Bishop Clark, seated at the kitchen table of Elizabeth, left, and Clint Head, who live in Owego. The couple will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary next year. The bishop also met John and Mary LaPoma, who live on the southeast side of Owego. Right, Sister Nancy gets an emotion-filled hug from Mary LaPoma as the group readies to leave.



### Insights In Liturgy



By Sister Nancy Burkin, SSJ

## Crossroads To Chrism

Often the most obvious captures the least attention. With a crossroad, no one gives much notice to the fact that this is a common place, a point of intersection, to which people come and from which people depart. People from all directions converge on this common ground and share space before departing in just as many directions. As the crossroad is approached we remember to stop at a stop sign and to proceed with caution; however, little or no thought is given to the actual experience.

Our Lenten experience as a diocese, Crossroads to Life, is an opportunity to reflect on the ordinary crossroad experience in our lives. It allows us to take that experience and give it its full symbolic significance, a significance that speaks to all of us in varying ways, a significance that we never bothered to notice before and one that moves us beyond the ordinary to an experience of faith.

This reflection may lead us to see our sacramental life as a crossroad experience. Life, after all, is a journey from past through present

and into an eternal future. In our sacramental celebrations all of us coming from here and there, culturally and economically as well as geographically, reach a common point where we together festively celebrate the presence of God in that journey we call life. That sacramental experience gathers us, the Church, from diverse paths and allows us to share common ground as we move into the future where all of us in our way lives what we celebrate: the Paschal Mystery of the Lord Jesus.

Next Tuesday, March 29, the Church of this diocese will gather at a particular celebration of this crossroad experience. On this date many of us, from many directions and places, will share common ground — the common ground of what it is to be a diocesan Church — and, we will celebrate the Chrism Mass.

The Chrism Mass focuses on that which has placed us on the roads which lead to that common ground. At this Mass the Chrism which has anointed us as a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a prophetic people is consecrated for those who will be fully initiated into the Church during the coming year. This consecration

gathers our past and the future experience of Church celebrating initiation into a present moment, a commonality of time in which we reflect on who we are and who we are called to be.

We cannot, however, only rest secure in a celebration of our dignity as the baptized, without committing ourselves once again to the life of ministry that is essential to a life of faith. And so, at this celebration, opportunity is given for all who minister in the Church to publicly recommit themselves to being Church.

This focus on Chrism, our baptismal dignity and responsibilities, is culminated in another experience of commonality — the eating of one bread and the drinking of one cup.

This eating and drinking is our proclamation that indeed we are Church, the Body of Christ, anointed to be for others.

Coming from various directions, sharing the common ground of place, time and meal, we will continue on our diverse paths back to our parishes where we will celebrate the Sacred Triduum together. And, though we are separated parish by parish, we are gathered into the celebration of the redemptive act of Jesus Christ that has made his life, death and resurrection common to us all. The Chrism Mass should help to bring home to each of us the common ground on which we all stand as we, separated geographically, celebrate this together.

## The Bishop's Journey

### Sixth Week of Lent

March 27, 11 a.m.	Sacred Heart Cathedral	Blessing/Distribution of Palm Passion Sunday Mass
March 29, 7:30 p.m.	Sacred Heart Cathedral	Diocesan Chrism Mass
March 31, 7:30 p.m.	Sacred Heart Cathedral	Mass of the Lord's Supper
April 1	Hispanic Good Friday Procession	
April 2, 11 p.m.	Sacred Heart Cathedral	Easter Vigil Celebration: Initiation of Catechumens
April 3, 11 a.m.	Sacred Heart Cathedral	Concelebrated Mass of the Resurrection

### "Holy Week"

**Readings:** Luke 19:28-40. Isaiah 50:4-7. Philippians 2:6-11. Luke 22:14 through 23:56.

**Activity:** Bringing the Lenten experience of CROSSROADS TO LIFE with him, the bishop returns to Sacred Heart Cathedral for the celebration of Holy Week. On Tuesday, March 29, at 7:30 p.m., he invites the people of the diocese to journey to the cathedral to share in the Chrism Mass celebration. The oils which will be blessed remind us of the mission of the Church: to make holy, to enlighten, to comfort/heal. Within the celebration priests will renew their promises, the bishop will renew his promise, and all gathered will be asked to renew their baptismal commitment of service to others. It will be a joyful celebration of the diocesan Church.

Later in the week, on Good Friday, the bishop will journey to the Hispanic community of Rochester and their Good Friday celebration. Holy Saturday will find the vigil fires, paschal candles, and joyful catechumenate with spirits ignited and burning bright — it is the Resurrection of the Lord!

**Response:** Parishes also join in the Holy Week celebrations which make this time of year special. All communities are urged to maintain the spirit of service and renewal explored during the Lenten CROSSROADS experience. The "crossroads" of each person's life (and, indeed, the life of our community) comes to its core in this Resurrection event. In truth the journey does not end, but continues as we rejoice, flooded with Easter joy into the "Great Fifty Days" of Eastertime.