

Continuing Education Offers Three Courses

The diocesan Office of Continuing Education will present three programs beginning in March. The programs will be the concluding presentations in its current series.

Beginning Tuesday, March 3 and continuing on the following four Tuesdays, a scripture-based program entitled, "Jesus Speaks the Words of Eternal Life," will be presented in four diocesan locations by four different teachers: Our Lady of Good Counsel in Rochester, by Father Robert Werth; St. Ann

in Hornell, by Sister Mary Augustine Malley, RSM; St. Stephen in Geneva, by Father Paul Tomasso; and Our Lady of Lourdes in Elmira, by Sister Mary George Burns, RSM. The presentations are from 3 to 5 p.m., except in Elmira when they run 3:30-5:30 p.m. The fee is \$10 for the series.

A second program, entitled, "The Effective Use of Counseling Skills in Spiritual Direction," will be given by Father George Hill, adjunct assistant professor at St. Bernard's Institute and

director of Pastoral Formation at the American College, Louvain, Belgium. This is a three-part program to be held 2-4:30 p.m. on consecutive Wednesdays, beginning March 14. Father Hill will use the text, "Christo-Therapy II," by Bernard J. Tyrrell (Paulist Press). The book may be bought from the Colgate Rochester Divinity School library. The fee is \$5 per lecture or \$12 for the series.

Lastly, a presentation on "Aspects of the New Code of Canon Law" will be given 7:30-9:30 p.m., on intermittent dates, March 28, May 9

and June 6, by Father Donald Curtiss at St. John the Evangelist on Humboldt Street and Father Douglas Hoffman at St. Mary in Corning. The topics to be addressed are: the ministry of the Church through all its people; the role of the catechist with emphasis on sacramental preparation; and divine worship, parish liturgy, and administrative aspects of Church life. The fee is \$4 per lecture or \$10 for the series.

Further information is available at the Office of Continuing Education, (716

271-1320, ext. 21. Checks are made payable to the Diocese

of Rochester. Early registration is requested.

Concert Honors Sesqui Churches

A special Rochester Philharmonia concert will honor the three Rochester churches celebrating the sesquicentennial of their foundation, 8 p.m., Friday, March 2 at the Eastman Theatre.

The churches being honored are Old St. Mary's, the Baptist Temple and the First Baptist Church.

The concert will feature the three winners of the concerto competition at the Eastman School of Music: Brian Dumm, cello; Brian Pezzone, piano; and Michael Torke, piano.

The concert is open to the public; no tickets will be required, but admission will be on a first come, first seated basis.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

A Time To Ponder Judgment

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 7/21-27. (R1) Dt. 11/18, 26-28. (R2) Rom. 3/21-25, 28.

On the brink of Lent, the liturgy calls us to reform our lives. The first reading presents us with a choice: "A blessing and a curse." We can choose to live a religious life of externals: keeping only a few outward observances, with no heart at all in them - a curse. Or we can choose a blessing: actions as an expression of a deep faith in Jesus. Two thoughts undergird the gospel.

First, the test of sincerity is practice, not words. Remember Eliza Doolittle's song to Freddie in "My Fair Lady" - "Show Me." "Words! Words! Words! I'm so sick of words!... Don't talk of stars/Burning above;/ If you're in love./ Show me! / Sing me no song! / Read me no rhyme! / Don't waste my time./ Show me! / Don't talk of June! / Don't talk of fall! / Don't talk at all! / Show me!" In effect Eliza was saying, Words, Words, talk, talk, talk - is that all you blighters can do? So our Lord said, "None of those who cry out, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of God but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."

We must not only listen to Jesus but do as He says. No point going to a doctor unless we are prepared to do as he says. Sunday's gospel concludes our Lord's Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 5,6,7). Following these words of Jesus, Matthew narrates the deeds of Jesus: seven miracles in Chapter 8, as if to give us an example that words must be followed by deeds, faith by practice.

Our Lord knew what He was talking about when He spoke of building houses. He was a master craftsman in this field. He knew a builder must think ahead. In Palestine in summer many a gully has a pleasant sandy hollow - actually these can be dried-up river beds. A short-sighted man might build there. When winter comes the torrents would

sweep away any building there. So, knowledge not followed by action is foolish like building on a river-bed. So many hear the word of God each Sunday and stop there. "A man who listens to God's word but does not put it into practice," wrote St. James, "is like a man who looks into a mirror at the face he was born with; he looks at himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like" (1/23).

Secondly, permeating the gospel is the idea of Judgment - "when that day comes..." The human mind tends to recoil from judgment. It was the thought of Judgment that stayed Hamlet's hand from self-slaughter. "To die, to sleep;/ To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;/ For in that sleep of death what dreams may come/ When we have shuffled off this mortal coil; must give us pause / ... Who would... grunt and sweat under a weary life;/ But that the dread of something after death... puzzles the will/ And makes us rather bear those ills we have/ Than to fly to others that we know not of.../ Judgment is an essential element in the teachings of Jesus: the parables of the Talents, of Dives and Lazarus; and the Last Judgment in Matthew 25/31-46. The idea of Judgment runs all through the Letters of St. Paul.

There has to be a judgment for two reasons: (1) as people gifted by God with intelligence and free will, we are accountable for our actions; and (2) we live in a world filled with injustices so that God in His justice must in another world set matters right. If there were no life to come, all rewards and punishments would have to come in this world; but this does not happen. So often the wicked prosper and the good suffer.

St. John in his gospel sees the Judgment as a continuous process. It is not postponed to some distant time but takes place every day in every choice we make regarding Jesus. We are on trial now for our eternal lives; the Judgment is merely the passing of the sentence. That is why Lent is so important. It is a time to choose Christ and His way - a blessing, not a curse.

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