

# Penfield student places first in Bishop Clark Oratoricals

Tricia DiMaggio, an eighth-grader at St. Joseph's School in Penfield, won the sixth annual Bishop Matthew H. Clark Oratorical Competition. She was chosen Saturday, December 7, from among 37 students who participated in the competition at Bishop Kearney High School.

Sponsored by the diocesan General Education Department, the oratoricals were open to Catholic school eighth graders from around the diocese. Contestants were asked to memorize and present an original three-minute speech on the topic "Do I Talk to God?"

The students who came to Bishop Kearney were chosen through tryouts at each of their schools. Beginning at noon Saturday, two preliminary rounds of speeches were judged by high school and elementary school educators. Staff members from SUNY Brockport judged the final round of six contestants on subject matter, organization and reasoning, grammar and vocabulary, poise and appearance, conviction and sincerity, volume, enunciation and inflection.

As first place winner, DiMaggio received a \$1,000 scholarship to a Catholic high school. The second place winner, Kathryn Spadoni of St. Ambrose School, received a \$750

scholarship, and Thuy Nguyen from St. Anne's School, who won third place, received \$500. The prizes were donated from pledges Bishop Clark earned in the Catholic Schools Marathon.

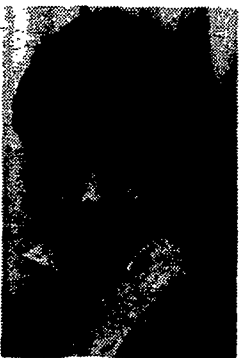
Also finishing in the top six were: Kristine Meyer, St. Agnes School, Avon — fourth; Karen Rajnik, Corning Catholic School South — fifth; and Amy Farstad, St. Patrick Junior High School, Elmira — sixth. All six finalists received trophies and all contestants were awarded certificates.

DiMaggio, 13, cited her experience with the Rochester Association of Performing Arts and encouragement from her English teacher, Terry Lehr, as helpful in preparing her speech. She plans to use her scholarship at Our Lady of Mercy High School next year.

Almost as big a surprise as winning, added DiMaggio, was Bishop Clark's reaction to what she said. Sharing his reflections on their speeches with the six finalists Saturday, the bishop said that he related to DiMaggio's description of life's stress and strain as "totally the pits."

"I thought that bishops were really holy — that they wouldn't understand all that," she said.

## Do I Talk to God?



By Tricia DiMaggio  
Some days are totally the pits. All of a sudden a tornado hits me. My friend has cancer, my niece is being taken away, my life is in shambles. I go out of the house and

explode. All my friends think I'm crazy. There's nothing left to do but to talk to my very special friend — God.

Conversing with God is a significant part of my life. Talking to Him helps me distinguish right from wrong, which makes me a better person. Many people only speak to God when they have problems. They rarely thank Him for His many blessings. God enables me to resolve my problems, because I have faith in Him.

During the day, I'll look out the window and see the beauties of nature that God created. I ask myself: "Why is there pain and suffering on this beautiful earth?" I know some things are beyond comprehension, but I just put my faith in God.

During Mass, through song, I reveal my feelings to God and believe in His presence. During these moments, I feel special and

secure in His love. When people are unkind, I speak to God. He helps me understand and forgive them.

When sickness and death are here, God comforts me and gives me strength. When friends and family have problems, I feel that I have problems also. I then go to a quiet place and talk to God. There may not be an actual voice speaking, but I feel a type of spiritual guidance.

After I've spoken with God, I feel like a different person. I then have the strength to help others and share in His love with them. You can call on God during night or day and you don't have to be perfect. Everybody is special in God's eyes.

God is very important to me. No matter what I do, He'll forgive me, and there will always be the powers of love between us.

God shows me this love in many ways. The doctors discovered my friend's cancer and removed it in time. My friends, although I screamed at them all day, have very patient and forgiving hearts. And my niece, well, I may not see her for a very long time, but God always has reasons for doing things. I guess my days aren't that bad after all. God helps me get through those extra long days.

Thanks God.

### Obituary

#### Mrs. Agatha R. Baker

Mrs. Agatha Riester Baker, widow of Harold R. Baker of 507 La Force Street, Zephyrhills, Fla., died Friday, October 25, 1985, in the East Pasco Medical Center in Zephyrhills. She was 74.

Mrs. Baker was born June 10, 1911, in Auburn, the daughter of William and Margaret Bergin Riester. While residing in Auburn, she was a communicant of St. Mary's Church. She moved to Florida 12 years ago, and became a member of St. Joseph's Church, where she participated in several parish organizations and served as a lector and Eucharistic minister.

Mrs. Baker is survived by five daughters: Sister Beverly of Brockport, Margaret Moulton and Bonita Hudson of Auburn, Joan Clingerman of Miami, and Sharon Hudson of Clark's Green, Pa.; five sons: William of Sennett, N.Y., David of Seneca Falls, John of Auburn, George of Holley-Navarre, Fla., and Gerard of Miami. She also leaves 39 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral services were in Auburn, with burial at St. Joseph's Cemetery, Auburn.

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## Along the Way Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Ever since I left for college in 1955, mail time has been a significant part of daily living. At the College of the Holy Cross, letters from loved ones gave me a sense of rootedness and support in making the adjustments most young people need to make the first time they leave home.

When I went on to Rome for theological studies in 1959, mail from home became even more important, because all of us were away from family and friends for four years. When postal strikes occurred, as they often did, we experienced them as more than just an inconvenience — We had a sense of being cut off from concrete expressions of the loving support we all counted on so deeply.

The circumstances of my life have changed a great deal since then, but I still enjoy attending to daily correspondence. Some of it is so heated that I need oven mitts to handle it. Some is routine and is cared for with relative ease by me or by someone else in the office. Some of it is down-right exciting, because it is obviously good news offered by persons who are kind enough to share it with me.

Let me offer two examples of such correspondence and then offer a suggestion for your pre-Christmas consideration.

1) In front of me, at the moment, I have a picture of Marcia Lynn Hafera and her twin brother Kevin Christopher. They are pictured, sound asleep, wrapped ear-lobe deep in blankets and wearing white stocking caps knotted above the crown. The children were born on October 23 of this year to Mary and Tom Hafera of Webster, who sent the picture.

I had met Mary and Tom at a meeting shortly before the birth of the children, and remember well that all of us at the

meeting prayed for the unborn twins and their parents. At that time, I asked the Haferas to drop me a note when the children were born. Today's mail carried their gracious response to that request.

In addition to the picture, they offered me the gift of writing about the extra dimension of joy the children have brought to their lives, and of how the babies have opened them to a greater trust in the loving providence of God.

2) Six years ago, during an interview for his class newspaper, a sixth-grader asked me: "What advice would you give a person my age?" I quote from a letter from him, which arrived in yesterday's mail and which referred to that interview: "Your exact words were, 'Pray every day. Do something for somebody else every day. Work hard in school and play hard outside school.' This advice I took to heart."

He goes on to share with me some of the ways in which he has tried to pray, study, serve others and play through his four years of high school. His letter reminds me that I need to be true to my own advice. More importantly, it reminds me of how blessed we are in our young people. This young man, who hopes to be a doctor, will do great things for others in his life.

The pre-Christmas suggestion I have is that you spend a little time writing to someone to whom you've been wanting to write for a long time, but haven't gotten around to doing it. Write something that will build up the spirit — a word of thanks or praise, expression of interest in his or her well being, the gift of your support in a difficult moment.

Try to do it from prayer, and with an awareness that we all need to hear good news. You'll do something very good for another person and for yourself.

Peace to all.

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