

CROSSROADS '87

By Father Thomas P. Mull
Director,
Office of Liturgy

"Repent and believe in the Good News" is a universal message of Ash Wednesday. Another familiar Lenten phrase is "Remember, man, that you are dust and to dust you shall return." Ministers of the Church use both of these sayings as they put ashes on the foreheads of Christians. These messages express a biblical call to believe — a call for every believer to enter the deeply sacred season of Lent with a heart and mind open to grow in awareness of Jesus' challenge to be truly Christian.

The *Crossroads* Program began on Ash Wednesday and continues through Pentecost Sunday. Bishop Matthew H. Clark began this year's *Crossroads* by visiting the Newman Community of Brockport. At noon, he summoned the Christian community to the table of the Lord. There, he broke open God's word — broke the bread of life — and invited the community, by the sign of ashes, to reflect on the meaning of this activity throughout the 40 days of Lent. The bishop concluded Ash Wednesday by leading night prayer at Sacred Heart Cathedral, where he again challenged participants to enter into the spirit of this sacred season.

The meaning of Lenten ashes does not disappear when the black cross is washed from the Christian's forehead. Ashes, created by burning the blessed palm from Palm Sunday of the previous year, are an ancient tradition in the Church. Before the Church formally established the sacrament of penance as we know it, Christians celebrated penance only twice in their lifetimes. The penitential process was long — sometimes lasting years. Sackcloth was the symbol of humility for the penitents; ashes symbolized their humanness. As the Christian donned sackcloth and received the mark of ashes, he or she publicly professed his or her sinfulness and need for the prayers of the community.

Ashes are used today to recall our humanity, our need to continually grow into the person of Christ. They also invite us to see the dignity of our baptism, enabling us to be reconciled and to reconcile others.

Sunday's readings offer material for reflection in this holy season. In the first reading (Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7), we learn of our first parents' temptation in the Garden of Eden, where the reality of sin overwhelmed the human participants. The gospel account of Jesus' temptation in the desert (Matthew 4:1-11) closely parallels the



story of Adam and Eve. Yet in the gospel, Jesus counters the reality of temptation with a testimony of faith.

In Sunday's second reading (Romans 5:12-19), St. Paul explains the way in which Jesus vindicated us. "Just as through one man's disobedience all become sinners, so through one man's obedience all shall become just," St. Paul wrote.

The *Crossroads* journey invites us to see that vindication and to renew the grace of reconciliation, which was given to us in baptism and renewed in the Eucharist, penance and other sacramental encounters.

The coming week of Lent is the time to "get back to basics." It is a time when discussion could center on the power of temptation, which still exists in the world; the reality of sin; and the grace of the sacraments, which helps us to counter evil with good.

On Sunday, Bishop Clark will celebrate the first of four Rites of Election. During these 40 days of Lent, the community is asked to pray for those who are becoming new members of the Church. For them, this period is a time of enlightenment, intense with prayer. It is a time when they scrutinize their minds and are scrutinized by the community. It is a time of mutual growth. Sunday's liturgy will focus on catechumens and candidates, as they are "sent" to the Rite of Election by a community already supporting them through prayer.

In light of the international synod Pope John Paul II called for this fall, the diocese has scheduled three forums on the laity, which will take place during the Lenten period. These forums — set for March 18, 25 and 28 — will offer an opportunity for the diocese to gather information on the current situation of the laity in the Church and the visions lay people have for their futures. It will also offer an opportunity for members of the diocese to reflect on and share their feelings on the role of the laity. Deacon Claude Lester, director of the Department of Parish Services, is coordinating these forums on the laity. In the *Crossroads* column of next week's *Courier-Journal*, he will discuss the synod and plans for the upcoming forums.

As this holy season begins, let us rejoice in the faith that enables us to be reminded of our dependence on God, and on the prayer and support of our community of faith. We must recall that the dignity of our baptism invites us to become active representatives of Christ ever-present in our world.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

Between my writing and your reading of these words, I shall have traveled to Santa Barbara, California, and back. The purpose of the trip is to attend a three-day meeting of the committee that is drafting the Pastoral Letter on the Concerns of Women for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

On this Wednesday evening before my departure, I am mindful that Lent will have arrived before this newspaper comes into your home. I hope that you will know in a renewed way the tenderness of God's love for you.

Before I leave, I want to share with you at least briefly some of the pastoral concerns that will be much a part of my prayer and thought during Lent. Some will be there by virtue of specific tasks I'll be engaged in during the weeks ahead. Others I mention because they are of an ongoing concern and interest. I hope that you will join me in prayer for these intentions and that they might encourage you to name for the Lord the special intentions of your own heart.

My own Lenten petitions will ask for the following graces:

- That our faith community at all levels will continue to search for deeper truth about the dignity of all persons, and will have the courage of heart to speak boldly against abortion and all other forms of disrespect for life in all of its stages.

- That we will continue the long, patient effort to oppose the arms race, which endangers the human family and diverts huge sums of money from social services desperately needed by the poor.

- That at all levels of American society and of the Church we will give

serious consideration to our conference's letter on the economy. We have been asked to make all economic decisions in light of their impact on the poor. My firm conviction is that we will find new life and find it in abundance if we have the heart to struggle with this.

- That we will continue the effort to reflect on our history and present circumstances in the light of our faith and change our Church disciplines and practices that send the message that to be female is to be in an inferior position in our community of faith.

- That all of our parish communities will grow in awareness that they are meant to be centers of hospitality, healing and hope. That they will be communities in which each member is helped by the others to discover and realize the dignity and transforming power of our common baptismal vocation.

- That somehow each of us will be touched by the kind of grace that will lead us to walk in greater peace and freedom towards our loving God as God calls us to conversion of heart.

I have several other intentions that will be in my prayers during the weeks ahead. Some I omit for consideration of space; others I omit at least for now because they are more personal in nature.

But I commit all of these intentions — written here or kept in my heart — to your prayers during this holy season. In turn I promise that in my daily prayer for you I will be asking the Lord to hear and grant the intentions of your heart.

Peace to all.

Community ministry is focus of five-week Lenten course

Four organizations within the diocese will jointly sponsor a five-week Lenten course entitled "Church and Community: The Call to Justice and Charity." The course will be taught by Rebecca Gifford, assistant director for the Diocesan Division of Urban Services, and P. David Finks, consultant to St. Mary's Church downtown.

The course was designed as a community-oriented approach to Lent and the Easter mystery. It will begin on Tuesday, March 10, at St. Anthony's Church, 60 Lorimer Park. Sessions will run from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on consecutive Tuesdays through April 10.

The course will examine various models of

community ministry. Speakers will include the Rev. Jane Baldwin, Cameron Community Ministries; Michael Afflek, St. Joseph's House of Hospitality; Donna DelSanto, Corpus Christi Health Center; Benjamin Douglas and the Rev. Robert Wennerstrom, Job Employment Training (JET) Enterprises; and the Rev. Deborah Mullen, Trinity Emmanuel Presbyterian Church.

Co-sponsors for the course are the Division of Urban Ministry, the diocesan Office of Continuing Education, the Downtown Community Forum of St. Mary's and Genesee Ecumenical Ministries. For information, call Urban Services (716)328-3210.

INCOME TAX SERVICE
254-0872
Reasonable Rates • Computerized Service
CARL PETRALIS
462 Newbury St. • off 800 Ridgeway Ave.

Happy St. Patrick's Day
From the
Eire Connection
BOUTIQUE
ST. PATRICK'S DAY SALE
17% OFF EVERYTHING INCLUDING SALE ITEMS.
Sweater's by Philomena of Ireland
(No two exactly alike)
Exclusively at:
Eire Connection
BOUTIQUE
672 Pittsford-Victor Rd.
Bushnell's Basin - 716-385-7700
(Next to Richardson's Canal House - Above Canal Florist)

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS TOUCH THE FUTURE

PERCENT ABOVE STATEWIDE REFERENCE POINT

100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

Gr 3 Reading Gr 3 Math Gr 5 Writing Gr 6 Reading Gr 6 Math

SPRING 1986

Percentage of students in the Diocese of Rochester scoring above the statewide reference point in the NYS PEP Tests.
— Spring 1986

ROOFING
NEW and REPAIRS
ALL TYPES OF
★ SIDING and TRIM
★ ALUMINUM GUTTERS
★ REPLACEMENT WINDOWS
BOWMAN ROOFING & SIDING CO.
544 COUNTRYSIDE LANE
Established 1912
671-3270

ALMOST EVERYONE YOU KNOW WILL SOON BUY CHOCOLATE EASTER BUNNYS!
YOUR SPECIAL GROUP CAN PROVIDE A WELCOME SERVICE AND EARN A PROPER PROFIT BY SELLING
World's Finest CHOCOLATE, INC.
6 OZ. SOLID MILK CHOCOLATE BUNNY AND EASTER ALMONDS
Len Latta (Mr. Chocolate), Distributor
WORLD'S FINEST CHOCOLATE
P.O. Box 93, Caledonia, N.Y. 14423 (716) 538-4711

"Mr. Chocolate" Len Latta