

Jesus dealt with human struggle

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Micah Smyth is an eighth-grader at St. Ambrose School in Rochester. Just an hour ago, he was awarded first prize in the Bishop Clark Oratorical Contest, which was held at Our Lady of Mercy High School on Saturday, March 3. He was one of six finalists, all of whom did an excellent job.

I was very touched by Micah's speech. In less than three minutes, he addressed the theme of change in human life, recognizing both the difficulty and the necessity of change. And he did it in a way that touched mind and heart and imagination.

His good words would have stimulated me at any time. But they did so today in a special manner because they illuminated for me one of my favorite Gospel stories: Jesus' temptation in the desert, which is the selection for Sunday, March 5.

I suppose I love that story because it says so much about the humanity of Jesus and, therefore, about our own humanity. The story takes place after his baptism by John in the Jordan when Jesus so simply identifies himself with our frail human condition.

At the same time, he has such a powerful experience of being especially beloved by the God he calls his father. How he will respond to the love of his God, how he will

express in his humanity, his thanks for being held beloved by his God — these are the questions he wrestles with in the Gospel story. He moves away from prestige, power, dominance and the spectacular.

The loving response for him will be to root himself in the Word of God, and to help his neighbors to understand that they, too, are numbered among God's beloved. His response is beautifully expressed in the Gospel story that follows when Jesus proclaims the Scripture in the synagogue and declares that his life and mission will be lived in solidarity with the prisoner, the poor, and the brokenhearted.

My probing here, stimulated by Micah's thoughts, is not so much into the way of life chosen by Jesus, but into the desert struggle in which he engaged and from which his chosen direction came to greater clarity. I want to understand more deeply what it meant to him. I realize that the Gospel stories are not biographies, nor are they psychological profiles. But they do teach us about the humanity of Jesus, and I find strong encouragement in that reality.

It seems that Jesus came to a deeper sense of his true mission by wrestling with the somehow attractive, but finally unacceptable directions held up before him by the evil one. Jesus coped with humanity's dark side and gave evidence of his knowledge that the struggle of the human to live in right relation to God and neighbors is not a decision made once and then forgotten. Rather, it is a fundamental commitment to be renewed each day in the small or large decisions by which that commitment is honored.

A person who makes a marriage commitment to a spouse cannot rightly expect that his or her spouse will never change or that their relationship will be mutually understood and expressed in exactly the same way for all of the years of their life. Rather, they can anticipate that their love will endure only if they renew their commitment each day, often enough by the small or large personal sacrifices with which they pay honor to the other person.

In recent days, I have been trying to write an article on celibacy. I have found it a fascinating experience to think back to



the day almost 28 years ago when my classmates and I made a public and solemn promise to live a celibate life.

We made that promise on my 25th birthday. Celibacy, which is both gift and offering, means something different to me now than it did 25 years ago. I am struggling to put on paper what it means to me today, and find the writing process a difficult challenge. The years of experience, the successes and failures, the changing life of the church, greater maturity, new circumstances and relationships — all have changed me. They have, therefore changed and I hope deepened my own person and the way I express myself. If I ever do finish writing that piece, I will let you know.

In the meantime, you may be interested during the Lenten season in reflecting on your journey through life. Some of you may wish to think about how your personal maturing has cast new light on a relationship that has lasted through years. Others may care to spend time thinking about how a particular relationship has helped them come to maturity and deeper personhood.

Whatever you do, I encourage you to reflect on your life with a lively sense of the humanity of the Gospel Jesus. Think of his disposition toward the weak and vulnerable, toward those who humbly seek deeper truth. Remember his understanding and great compassion. And rejoice in those good gifts.

Peace to all.

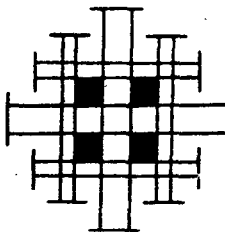
Listen to Lenten liturgy's sounds

By Virginia Miller
Diocesan Liturgical Commission

Like the seasons of the year — spring, summer, fall and winter — the cycle of the church year progresses from Advent to Christmas to Epiphany, then through a bit of Ordinary Time, and into the season of Lent, Easter and Pentecost, which we began last week.

Most of us experience these changes in the liturgical year primarily through our parish's Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. Well, we say, another Lent has begun. Perhaps it would be helpful for us to reflect on what we experienced last week in our churches and what we might experience in the coming weeks. How is Lent

From
Repentance
to Rebirth



different? How do we sound different during Lent?

Lent is a time apart, a kind of retreat time for all of us when we are invited to look inward and open ourselves to the Lord. Silence is an important and

Continued on page 14

\$3.00 OFF
YOUR TOTAL GUEST CHECK WITH THIS COUPON. OFFER VALID ON DINNERS ONLY. CANNOT BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER COUPONS. EXPIRES 3/25/90.

FRESH HADDOCK WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS
Home cooked specials, Italian-American Cuisine
Seafood - Steak - Pasta Dishes

Open 7 days a week for Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner
730 ELMGROVE RD. (in Gates) 247-2190

Neptune's
SEAFOOD FAMILY RESTAURANT
"Where the Food's Out of This World"

Lent Special:
Fish Fry, Tues.-Sat.
\$5.95

Alaskan Snow Crab
All You Can Eat, Weds. and Sat.
\$9.95

CHILDREN'S \$1.49 MENU
EARLY BIRD MENU 4 to 6 p.m. Tues.-Fri. \$4.99

10% SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOUNT
4653 LAKE AVE.
Charlotte 865-4315

Dresses, Veils,
& Accessories
available for
First Communion

Pollinogs and Pigtails, Inc.
Children's Shop • Pittsford • 586-7338

LENTEN SPECIAL
served every evening
FISH FRY
\$5.25
served with french fries and cole slaw
60 N. Main St., Pittsford • 586-1644

CARROLL'S RESTAURANT
Featuring Our Famous
Corned Beef & Cabbage
Lunch and Dinners
SATURDAY, MARCH 17th
We also serve Fish Frys every Friday
For Lunch and Dinner
11:30 - 2:00 & 5:00 - 9:00
288-9631
1768 E. Main Street

CENTER OF RENEWAL

Spring programs including two week Center Special, May 11-27, with Directed Retreat, Weekend Programs, Sight-seeing around Niagara Falls and much more!
Send for our Spring/Summer Brochure.

Center of Renewal
Stella Niagara, N.Y. 14144
716/754-7376
(10 miles north of Niagara Falls, N.Y.)

BRAIDED Rugs

SALE
SAVE TO 40%

Our collection of braided rugs from Cape, Colonial Mills and Thorndike come in 100% wool and wool blends, flat braids, precushioned braids, ovals & rounds, with a selection of 35 distinct designs plus custom sizes and colors.

TOPPING & CO.
2842 W. RIDGE RD. 227-2300

UKRAINIAN PYSANKY
(Hand Decorated Egg)

Learn to Decorate Easter Eggs the Ancient Ukrainian Way Into Beautiful Masterpieces that can be Preserved for Years.

Kit includes: Dyes, writing pen, (Kiska wax and instructions)
\$11.00-shipping included.

Hanusey Music & Gifts
244 West Girard Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19123
(215)627-3093

Ready-made eggs and Icon Eggs also available.
Write for 1990 order form which has many new items.

BARTOLOMEO FUNERAL HOME, INC.

Peter W. Giullari, Jr. Philip P. Perotto Michael P. Perotto
Personalized service in the community since 1922.
1425 Lexington Avenue Rochester, NY 14606
conveniently located near 390
(715) 254-5400

LENTEN SPECIALS
ORDER NOW **ST. JOSEPH'S BREAD**

- SFINGI - ZEPPOLE - HONEY SFINGI

BREAD WEEKEND SPECIAL FRI. - SAT. - SUN. Loaf 69¢ Your Choice
• FRENCH • ITALIAN • SLICED

Sawoia
PASTRY SHOPPE
2267 CLIFFORD AVE. Near Culver
482-1130 SERVING YOU SINCE 1929
Open Mon.-Sat. 9a.m.-7p.m., Sun. 9a.m.-2p.m.