

'Fourth niece' takes up the challenge

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Those of you who read this column with regularity know that occasionally I make reference to my five nieces. For example, I have written about their driving habits, their love for shopping and their zany schedules. Recently, I wrote about Margaret's driving on the occasion of a family trek to a photographer's studio.

You know also that they sometimes take exception to my written accounts of my adventures with them, claiming that I don't always tell it "exactly like it is." My response to them when they make that claim is — as I have told you — that I may not always get the facts straight, but I always tell the truth.

It was in the midst of one such conversation over the holiday season that the five of them raised an issue of fairness with me, the issue "When do we get to tell our side of the story? Can we write a column about you?"

In a weak moment I agreed that I would incorporate in unaltered, unexpurgated form, anything they sent me along that line. I thought surely that they raised the issue in a moment of fun and would forget it as soon as they resumed their post-holiday activities. Silly me!

Margaret took me up on the offer. What follows is her point of view. I leave it to you, kind reader, to determine whether or not she is a credible witness:

I am Margaret, the fourth niece, 17-years-old, the God-daughter. Yes, it is true, my uncle stretches the truth and leaves part of the story out.

I'll start with the shopping saga. He seems to have explained how much he doesn't like it, but has he ever mentioned

how he does it? No! When we go shopping with Uncle Matt, here are the rules:

- Uncle Matt is the boss.
- Five minutes in every store.
- Uncle Matt is the boss.
- No fighting.
- Uncle Matt is the boss.
- Everyone stays together.

These rules applied when we were all very young. Now we go shopping with new rules:

- Uncle Matt is the boss in the car.
- Split up at the mall and shop as fast as you can.
- If you aren't back to the meeting place on time, we leave without you. (He never has.)

The car, a big part of our shopping trip, is a whole other story. Sure he has had his moments with us driving his car a little on the reckless side, but he never says anything about the way he drives. My uncle is probably the most relaxed driver I

have ever ridden with. He sits back with one hand on the arm rest or holding the hand of the niece who is sitting in the passenger's side, while the other hand is resting on the top of the wheel. If there is music, he taps his fingers to the beat of the music on the dashboard. No matter what the weather or road conditions, you will always find him driving just like that, and driving my grandmother crazy. She likes both hands on the wheel!

My uncle is one of the most loving people I know. Sometimes he over does it just a touch! For example, he insists on giving us kisses when he sees us for the first time of the day, which I love, but when it is one of those days when I show up as soon as he comes in from a mile or two of jogging, it can be really gross. Like the wonderful niece he describes me to be, I let him kiss and hug me, but it is really gross considering he is dripping with sweat. Yuck!

But seriously, my uncle and I have our



faults, but we don't care because we understand each other, and as long as we have each other, we won't let anyone else get us down! So he says, and I love him for it.

Peace to all.

Rochester mayor proclaims Jan. 27-Feb. 2 Catholic Schools Week

ROCHESTER — In a joint proclamation on behalf of the City of Rochester and Monroe County, Mayor Thomas P. Ryan Jr. designated the week of Jan. 27-Feb. 2 as Catholic Schools Week.

The proclamation was issued Jan. 25 during ceremonies in the mayor's conference room at City Hall, 30 Church St. Attending the ceremony were Bishop Matthew H. Clark; Sister Mary Ann Binsack, RSM, diocesan director of the Division of Education; Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, superintendent of schools; and members of the Catholic School Office.

Paul Haney, director of finance for Monroe County, represented County Ex-

ecutive Thomas Frey at the ceremony.

This year's theme for Catholic Schools Week is "Catholic Schools: A Kaleidoscope of People." Catholic schools throughout the diocese have scheduled Masses, open houses and other events to observe the week.

"Catholic Schools Week is a time to

celebrate the beautiful vision of Catholic education, which is rich in Christian values," Bishop Clark said. "Catholic schools have an excellent reputation for fostering their students' intellectual abilities; their social, emotional and physical growth; their moral purpose and sense of service to others."

CDA in Brockport sponsor essay contest for youths

BROCKPORT — The Catholic Daughters of Americas Court # 931 of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Brockport is sponsoring an essay contest for Rochester-area students in grades 4-12.

The contest themes are "Protect our Environment — God's Creation" or "Mary Our Mother — Patroness of the Americas." Entries should not exceed 500

words and must be received by Feb. 15.

Three prizes will be awarded in each of three divisions, based upon grade level. The winning area entries in each division will compete in the CDA state contest. Winning entries also will be entered in the national contest.

Details of the contest are provided on entry forms available at the following locations: Nativity School, Newman Oratory, Lift Bridge Book Shop, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, the rectory of Church of the Nativity, or by calling 716/637-0037 or 637-6408.

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CENACLE OFFERS SPECIAL EVENTS

Feb. 8-10 Married Couples Weekend A celebration and commitment of your marriage - given by Rosemarie & Don Schaeffer and Sr. Margie Mayk, r.c.

Feb. 8-10 Claiming the Power in My Life The shape of Christian power. Reclaiming personal power. Effective use of power given by Sr. Annette Mattle, r.c.

Feb 15-17. A DeMello Retreat A weekend retreat in which James Dolan, S.J. will present insights in DeMello's Wake-Up Spirituality; one which helps people realize that they have the power to take responsibility for their lives by believing in God and in themselves. Program arranged so people may attend all or part of retreat.

SPECIAL SERIES

Feb. 21, 28 & March 7 "I Will Place a New Heart Within You" Reclaiming the richness of our Lenten Heritage: A contemporary quest for prayer, self-denial, fasting, alms giving and penance. What do these traditional practices mean in today's world? Conducted by the Cenacle Sisters.
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