

# Lent calls us to search for deeper life

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

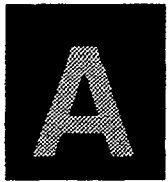
You'll be reading these words in the early days of Lent. I hope that you are confident in God's love for you, and that you enter this time of special renewal with a thirst for deeper life and a willingness to open your heart to that gift.

In my travels among you — in parish visits, meetings with pastoral leaders and in all of the chance encounters that are a part of each day — I become more and more aware both of your goodness and of your search for deeper life. You express them in different words, but they are very much present. And both are great blessings.

A healthy appreciation of our goodness is foundational for personal growth and for the establishment of the kinds of relationships that give significance and purpose to life. If I cannot appreciate my own goodness, how can I make an offering of myself in friendship and love to other persons? If I cannot appreciate my own goodness, where and from whom do I seek that sense of well-being, purpose and fruitfulness that is the desire of every human heart?

The Lenten season gives us special opportunity to be in touch with these fundamental questions. It invites us in gracious and gentle ways to be in touch with our own hearts and to be attentive to our relationship with the God who creates, redeems and sustains us.

And, you know, the wonderful part of it all is that we don't have to leave the planet or



## LONG THE WAY

jump through an esoteric series of hoops to enter deeply into these questions. Indeed, the fundamental encouragement of the church is that with the help of God we become more deeply and intentionally aware of the presence and love of God in daily living.

For that reason, we join in the prayer, fasting and almsgiving to which the church calls us. And we do those things not to test our endurance or the strength of our wills. We do them that they might remind us of our call to a more intimate relationship with our God, and to personal relationships that are marked by mutuality, respect and fruitfulness.

What about our common thirst for deeper life — for something better? Isn't such a desire also a blessing? I believe that it most

certainly is — if "the more" is truly life giving and if "the more" leaves us freer than we were before we had it. Don't both of those "ifs" call us to a careful and honest exploration of the relative value of a whole range of things, possessions and qualities we call good?

Just to make the point, let me offer you a few forced choice examples: If you could choose only one, which would you choose?

- a) good health or b) much wealth
- a) a great job or b) strong family life
- a) peace of heart or b) high achievement

I know these may not be the most useful examples. But I offer them to invite you to review in a spirit of Lenten prayer the choices you are facing in your own life.

Whether you choose my examples or your own, I hope you'll find in them a couple of truths we all bump into with some frequency: 1) We really can't have everything in this life and 2) most things that truly satisfy the human heart can't be purchased, but rather grow slowly, and, in God's providence, usually involve a large measure of self gift.

Please continue your prayer for God's blessing on our Synod. And, if you can do so, please participate in the parish Synod gatherings conducted during the first three weeks of Lent.

Thanks for your goodness and for your thirst for deeper life. I am so glad that our community will be joined in the prayer of this season.

Peace to all.

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### Kids' Chronicle Answer Key

1. Isaiah
2. Lamb of God
3. Elizabeth
4. Gabriel
5. Annas and Caiaphas
6. Holy Spirit
7. King Herod

A new monthly calendar will appear in the Catholic Courier on the last Thursday of each month.

## PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

The following prayer was dictated by Our Lord to Sister Josefa Menendez at Poitiers, France, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 3, 1921, with the instruction: "Josefa! Repeat these words every day."

### JESUS PRAYER FOR HIS PRIESTS

O Jesus, by Thy most loving Heart, I implore Thee to inflame with zeal for Thy love and glory all the priests of the world, all missionaries and those whose office it is to preach Thy word, that on fire with holy zeal, they may snatch souls from the devil and lead them into the shelter of Thy Heart; where for ever they may glorify Thee.

Imprimatur: E. Morrogh Bernard, Vic. Gen. Westmonasterii, May 5, 1953

Mass  
Rosary  
Fasting  
Day Offering  
Offering of Sufferings  
Eucharistic Adoration  
Divine Mercy Chaplet

Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him on behalf of His Priests.

## MARCH, 1993

DIocese OF ROCHESTER, NY

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

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Look for next month's MPRP CALENDAR in the Catholic Courier's March 25th issue.

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