Kids' Chronicle

Jesus says to love even our enemies

BY JOE SARNICOLA

Jesus was sitting on a hill in order to be seen and heard by the huge crowd which had gathered around him. There men and women with their children, there were the elderly people from the nearby cities, there were the poor, the sick, and the hungry. Each one came to Jesus with a need. And Jesus healed anyone who asked a blessing from him.

He spoke with a voice that was soft, yet strong enough to be heard by everyone. "All of your lives you have heard the teachings of Moses and the prophets. Let me assure you that I have no intention of changing or eliminating their laws. Rather, I will see to it that every word they wrote comes true.

"It is my father's will that his commandments are respected," Jesus continued. "If anyone teaches you it is acceptable to break the laws of God, God will hold those people accountable. They will hold a low position in the kingdom of heaven. And those people who keep the laws of my father will be given a position of honor in the kingdom of heaven. You must be more faithful and sincere than the hypocrites who pretend to be holy and upright."

At this remark by Jesus, some of the people in the crowd laughed. But there were others who became angry and returned to their homes. One old man, who needed a cane to walk and stand, stood with the help of a young man.

"As you say," the man said, "we have heard the commandments of Moses since we were children. What are the most important commandments? Surely it must be possible to serve God without having to remember so many commandments."

"It may have been your practice to love your friends and hate your enemies," Jesus replied. "Even the unbelievers do as much. There is a simpler way. If you follow it, God will look upon you as his Children."

The old man leaned toward Jesus and said, "Tell us what this way is."

"Love your enemies," Jesus said. "When you say your prayers, pray for those who have hurt you or lied about you. This is the perfect way of my father. When you pray, do not draw attention to yourselves, like the braggarts. Do so in the privacy of your room. Speak to God as you would speak to your own father. Respect his name and his authority. He will meet your needs and forgive you of your sins. But you must forgive others. Even those who are not sorry for the hurt they have caused."

READ MORE ABOUT IT: Matthew 5

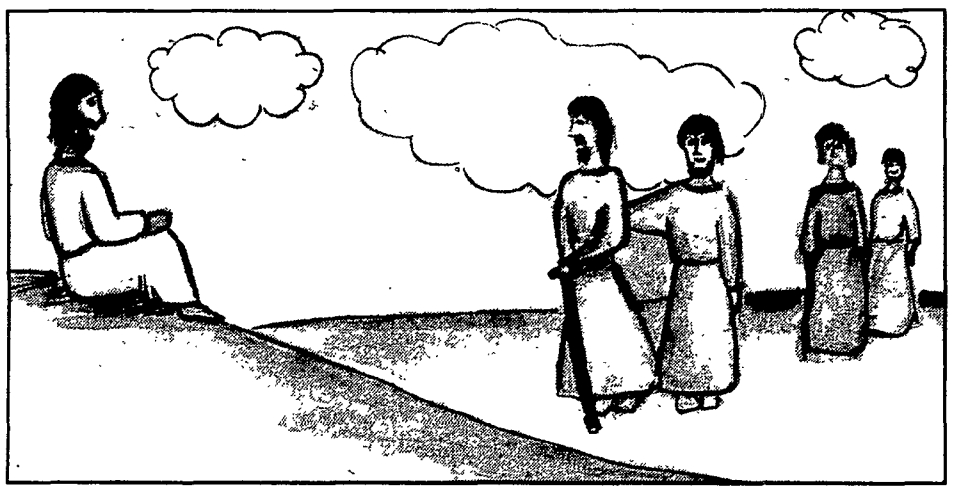

Illustration by Amy Sundstrom

Bible Accent

There are several references to ashes in both the Old and New Testaments. They symbolize penance, humility, or sorrow. At times, the Bible characters anointed themselves with ashes while they fasted and prayed. They wanted to show God that, without him, they were unimportant.

Being anointed with ashes also implies the memory that God made Adam and Eve out to the dirt of the earth.

This year Ash Wednesday falls on Feb. 21, and we will receive the ashes on our foreheads as we enter a new Lenten season. Let us remember the good things God has done for us as we lead our daily lives as Christians.

Saint Paul Micki

Paul Micki was born in Japan in 1562, and was killed at the young age of 35. He was the son of a high ranking Japanese soldier during a time when Christianity was not accepted by some of the Japanese officials.

Paul studied in a Jesuit school run by missionaries and eventually became a Jesuit priest himself. He developed a reputation for being a gifted speaker and compassionate man.

The emperor appointed some of his officials to try to stop the spread of Christianity. Soldiers crucified Paul and more than twenty other priests and Christians to mock the very religion they died for. We honor Paul on February 6.

Q&A

Q: 1. What did Jesus say about hypocrites?

2. What did Jesus say we should do for our enemies?

KID'S CLUB

You can win a $50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question:

Who is your favorite Bible character, other than Jesus, and why?

Send your essay – including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade – to **Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.** Deadline for entries is Feb. 22, 1996. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of *Kids' Chronicle.*

Last month's winner was Lisa Lilly, a sixth-grade student at Our Mother of Sorrows School in Rochester. In response to the question **Jesus was willing to die in order to serve God the father. How has his example of obedience to God been helpful to you?** she wrote:

It has been helpful to me because it opened the gates of heaven to all. Jesus' example of obedience teaches me about the sacrifices that we sometimes make to help others, and do what God wants us to do in our everyday lives. Jesus also taught me that being obedient is being loyal, and by being loyal I will earn my place in heaven, someday.

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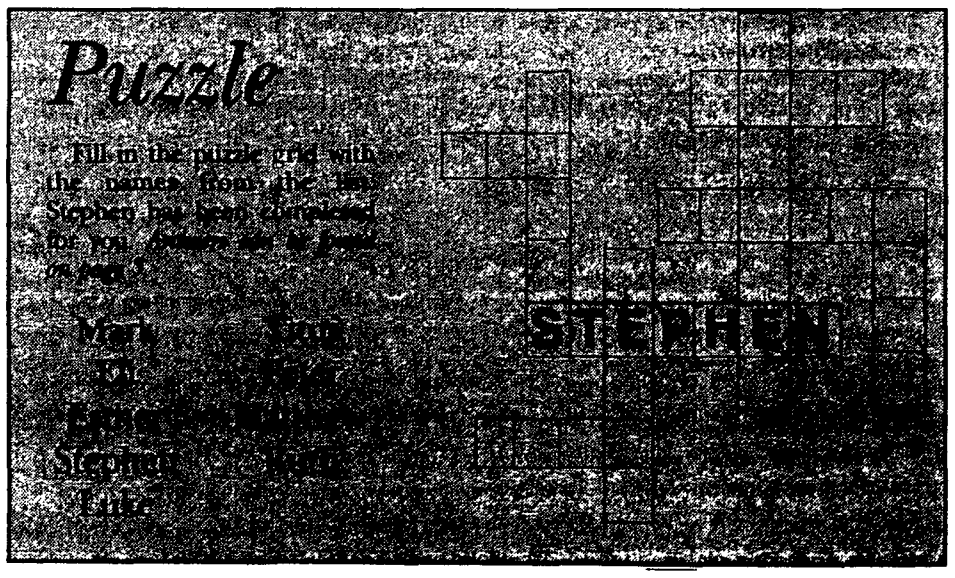
Puzzle

Fill in the puzzle grid with the names from the list. Stephen has been completed for you. Names are in bold on page 3.



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Catholic Press Month 1996

In 1993, our Diocesan Synod identified lifelong religious education as its top priority by an overwhelming majority. Its number one goal: "to form Catholics in beliefs, Catholic morality and spirituality throughout life."

The *Catholic Courier* continues to offer news of the Catholic faith to its readers, with special pages devoted to children, parents, teens, young adults and seniors. It also offers an in-depth view of news from outside the Catholic Church and a church perspective on the issues.

Celebrate Catholic Press Month by feeding your faith: Read a Catholic book or magazine, or read your diocesan newspaper, the *Catholic Courier.*