

God embraces us with love and acceptance

In many of the parishes of our diocese, the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy includes a special Liturgy of the Word prepared for children.

The usual format calls for the children to gather in church with the community for the opening rites. Then after the opening prayer the children are invited to go to a separate room where both the readings of the day and a homily are shared with them in language appropriate to their age. When that is finished they re-join the community for the preparation of the gifts and the remainder of the celebration.

I always enjoy the departure and return of our little friends. They're so lively and full of color. Some walk. Some run. Others skip. Each has his own flair and style.

At St. Mary's, Scottsville, this morning the gait of one little guy especially caught my eye because it was so unusual. When I looked more closely, I discovered why he moved in such a notable fashion. It was for a very good reason: The laces of his two shoes were tied together. They weren't that way when he left for the children's liturgy.

I confess to you that I wondered how it happened. Did the boy just want to see how it would work? Or was he the innocent victim of foul play? I didn't ask. Wise bishops, like good attorneys, never ask a

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

question unless they know the answer!

While I enjoyed the beauty of the children this morning and the special charm of the little boy trying to walk down the aisle with his shoes tied together, the moment had an even deeper meaning for me. That's because the warm, visible — almost palpable — affection in which the children were held by all of us at that moment became a symbol for me of the affection with which God was embracing all of us at the very same time.

In my homily, I had touched on themes of how we are called to grow in our knowledge and love of Christ, and how we experience that growth at different stages of our lives.

The children who brought us such joy this morning experience and respond to God's love in their lives as children respond to such gifts. The same can be said of the beautiful candidates for confirma-

tion, most of them in their teens, who were part of the assembly. And of all of us adults who were present.

Our faith calls us — living, loving people — to a relationship with the living God. It follows that our appreciation of our faith and the way in which we express it in our lives will vary as the successive chapters of our lives unfold. "When I was a child I thought like a child. ..."

As we come close to Holy Week, it is my hope that all of us will be as alive as we possibly can be to the ways in which the God who loves us so much may be calling us to deeper life. That is God's gift of course, not something in our control.

But, if we keep in mind the promises of Christ, we can be sure that it never hurts to spend a quiet moment in prayer, to consume according to our needs and not according to our wants, to share what we have with someone whose need is greater than our own.

And, even if we feel that our spiritual shoe laces are tied together, it's good to remember that God loves us through it all and wants us to turn back to the precious gift of divine love.

Please don't forget to hold in affectionate prayer all those who are preparing to be baptized or to be received into our community of faith at the Easter Vigil.

Happy Holy Week. Peace to all.

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PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Eternal Father, I offer You the Precious Blood of Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in satisfaction for my sins and for the release of the priest most neglected in Purgatory.

Oh, Holy Soul, obtain for me the intention I so earnestly ask if it be the Holy Will of God. (Say 15 times for 30 days and offer Mass and Communion on three consecutive Sundays.)

My Lord and God, through the intercession of Mary and all the angels, do not allow priests to die today without Your love, Your grace and Your unbounded mercy. Amen.



APRIL, 1996

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Reverend Fathers	1 Nicholas P. Alletto	2 Robert C. Bradier	3 John P. Carriero, SJ	4 Francis M. Feeney	5 Roman Golemba	6 James J. Marvin
7 Richard C. O'Connell	8 Vincent P. Panepinto	9 Jerome F. Schifferli	10 Lawrence W. Sansom	11 William V. Spilly	12 Edward B. Zenkel	13 John O'Hare, OFM Cap
14 Thomas B. Loftus, CSsR	15 John S. Whalen	16 John J. Philippe	17 Daniel F. Holland	18 Bernard L. Carges	19 Charles Adams	20 Lawrence Searies, SJ
21 Msgr. Leslie G. Whalen	22 Paul Geraghty, OSB	23 Joseph P. Brennan	24 James E. Hewes	25 David N. Gramke	26 John A. Morgan	27 Robert A. Meng
28 Paul J. Ryan	29 Frederick G. Betti, SJ	30 Dr. Austin J. Budnick, OFM	Look for the May MPRP Calendar in the April 25th Catholic Courier.			