

Gospel lessons affect us all, but how?

We had just heard the Gospel proclaimed by Deacon Tom Beck. As I approached the lectern to preach the homily, the Gospel's image of Jesus and the children was very much with me. I have always found Jesus' way of welcoming, loving and respecting children to be deeply appealing. In such moments, he conveyed lessons about human life and growth and the meaning of greatness that speak to the heart and have lasting impact there.

When I arrived at the lectern, the first people who came into my vision were a young mother and her beautiful child, just a few months old. The mother held her little one firmly enough that he would remain safely in her embrace. At the same time she allowed him plenty of leeway to move his arms, look around, stretch and do all of the things by which such little ones develop their bodies and discover the world around them.

The presence of the mother and son were special gifts to me in my own contemplation of the Gospel image. They embodied a great piece of the truth Jesus wanted us to have in the Gospel lesson.

Although I never had a chance after the liturgy to satisfy it, I had a strong curiosity to know how that same Gospel story entered the heart of the young mother. She and I were both children at one time and I know that both of us love children now. But she is parent to a child, and I am not. So I am reasonably sure that the story in question has a dimension for her that will always be absent

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

from my experience, except in analogous ways. I had my chance to relate the Gospel story to my daily life. I would have loved it if she could have done the same.

All of this happened yesterday, Sunday, Oct. 5, at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Irondequoit, where I had the great pleasure of presiding at a Eucharistic Liturgy celebrating their 75th anniversary as a parish community. It was a festive and reverent gathering. Of course, current parishioners were there in good number.

At the reception that followed the liturgy, I learned that many past parishioners also joined the celebration. They had memories of powerful moments experienced in the parish community and wished to share in yesterday's great act of thanksgiving.

In the course of those brief reception conversations, I noted a strong theme of people remembering life's significant times and thanking God for them. Implicit in their comments I heard a lively sense of their own childhoods. They talked about

how things were "then," about how life had unfolded since, and what all of it has meant to them now.

They were honest in their comments. They were hopeful. They conveyed a sense of openness to God that I found most heartening. Most encouraging of all, they communicated a sense that they, no matter the number of their years, know themselves to be beloved children of God. And when I heard them speak I had the same wish about them as I expressed about the young mother mentioned above, viz., that they too could have shared their reflections on the story of Jesus and the children.

Two concluding notes:

1. While it would be a great experience if we could hear many people reflect on the readings at liturgy, time limitations and other factors might make that impractical. At the same time, there are many ways in which we can enrich one another by sharing our faith in that fashion. If you are interested in such activity please ask your pastor about possibilities.

2. By happy coincidence, my next stop on Sunday was St. Charles Borromeo for one of our Hands of Christ celebrations. As you might guess, gathering to recognize the generosity of gifted high school seniors was yet another privileged opportunity to think and pray about a lot of things that matter to all of us.

More about the Hands of Christ gatherings later in the month.

Peace to all.

To our friends in Rochester

Cenacle Prayer Enrollments

send a beautiful Prayer Enrollment card today.

Our ministry of intercession for the living or deceased goes beyond the limits of time. We do not cease to pray for you and those whom you enroll.

Birth • Baptism • First Communion • Mother's Day
 Father's Day • Birthday • Religious Holidays
 Graduation • Confirmation • Anniversaries
 Wedding • Ordination • Jubilees • Get Well
 Deceased and many more to choose from.

All cards are beautifully hand lettered in gold ink, with the name of the person you wish to enroll.

If you would like a brochure, or to place an order, simply mail, call or fax us. You may be sure that your donation will continue to help the life and ministry of the Sisters of the Cenacle.

CENACLE PRAYER ENROLLMENTS

310 CENACLE ROAD
 RONKONKOMA, NY 11779-2203

1-800-541-2357 OR
 FAX (516) 588-9030

To subscribe to the Catholic Courier, call (716) 328-4340

World Mission News

175 YEARS OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

OCTOBER 19, 1997

"I hope with all my heart that on the threshold of the new Millennium the whole Church will experience a new impulse of missionary commitment."

— POPE JOHN PAUL II

This World Mission Sunday, recommit yourself to the Church's worldwide mission! Pray for the Church's missionary work. Offer generous financial help for the Missions through the Propagation of the Faith:

- ✦ A gift of \$700 helps to support a seminarian for a year
- ✦ A gift of \$100 helps to support a village mission for one month
- ✦ A gift of \$25 helps to support a Religious novice for one month

175TH Anniversary of THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH
 Please mail coupon to: Father Robert C. Bradler, Director, Propagation of the Faith, 1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, NY 14624

Please accept my gift for World Mission Sunday of:

\$700 \$100 \$25 \$10 \$____ (other)

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please remember The Society for the Propagation of the Faith when writing or changing your Will. #344 10/09/97