

Meditation on Lenten church visits

Monday evening, the second week of Lent.

On the way home from the office this evening, I smiled to myself. I knew we'd have macaroni with meat sauce for dinner. More, I knew that I had no outside commitments scheduled after the evening meal.

I do welcome that quiet time tonight — to write these words, to pray for a while, to draw from my experience of the first week of Lent whatever God wants me to realize from it.

Last week was a rich one. We celebrated five Rites of Election — three at Sacred Heart Cathedral, one at St. Mary's, Canandaigua, and one at St. Mary's, Corning. At those joyful rites hundreds of women and men, boys and girls were officially elected as candidates for baptism or reception into full communion with the church at the Easter Vigil. It would be difficult for me to explain to someone who has never attended one just how happy and moving those celebrations are.

The newly elect add their faith, good gifts and spirit of joy to the strength of our community. And they say to us, at least implicitly, that they see goodness in us such that they want to walk with us in faith. From the community that receives them, these elect receive a renewed pledge of support and affection.

On Friday, the day on which we celebrat-

along
the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

ed the Rite of Election in Corning, I stopped in Elmira for two very different but significant events. The first was a meeting of board members and staff of Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier with four state legislators from our southern counties. We discussed a range of issues of common interest with particular emphasis on concern that welfare reform, not carefully thought out, can have negative impact on people who really need help.

The second Elmira event was the election of a new prioress of the Dominican Sisters, a cloistered community whose monastery is on Church Street, not far from Our Lady of Lourdes Church. In simple, prayerful procedure, the sisters elected Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart as prioress.

Following the election we went to their common room and conversed for about an hour and a half. They had great concern

about the controversy we have experienced at Corpus Christi. I left there strengthened by the knowledge that all who in any way have been affected by it will daily be in the prayers of those generous women.

I spent Saturday in the Rochester area. In the morning we welcomed hundreds of Scouts to Sacred Heart Cathedral for a ceremony at which we celebrated their scouting achievements and their growth in faith. The boys and girls present ranged in age from 7 to 17. They were an impressive group whose presence and good works are encouraging signs of God's continuing care for us all.

Some parents of gay and lesbian Catholics met on Saturday and invited me to join them for conversation for an hour or so in the afternoon. This I did and, as usual, was happy to spend time with them. They impress me in many ways, but no more so than when they speak of the change of heart to which they are often called when their sons and daughters first speak to them of their sexual orientation.

In sum, the first week of Lent put me in touch with the church praying, the church growing, the church celebrating, the church suffering, the church divided, the church consoling, the church advocating, the church reforming, the church always needing the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I am grateful for every minute of it.

Peace to all.

1999 Parish Lenten Mission
Sunday, March 6
through
Thursday, March 11

Growing in the Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Father Benedict J. Groeschel, CFR

Fr. Groeschel is a prolific writer, nationally famous preacher, and dynamic retreatmaster. He is a frequent guest on EWTN TV and professor at Dunwoodie Seminary of the Archdiocese of New York.

	SATURDAY March 6	SUNDAY March 7	MONDAY March 8	TUESDAY March 9	WEDNESDAY March 10	THURSDAY March 11
8:00 am	Mass w/Mission Sermon	Mass w/Short Sermon	Mass w/Short Sermon	Mass w/Short Sermon	Mass w/Short Sermon	Mass w/Short Sermon
10:00 am	Mass w/Mission Sermon					
11:30 am		Confessions	Confessions	Confessions	Confessions	Confessions
12:15 pm	Mass w/Mission Sermon	Mass w/Sermon	Mass w/Sermon	Mass w/Sermon	Mass w/Sermon	Mass w/Sermon
4:30 am	Talk after Mass					
7:00 pm		Confessions	Confessions	Confessions	Confessions	Confessions
7:30 pm	Holy Hour w/Sermon	Holy Hour w/Sermon Confessions After	Holy Hour w/Sermon Confessions After	Penance Service w/Sermon Confessions After	Closing Mass w/Sermon	Closing Mass w/Sermon

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March 23-24

8:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m.
Guardian Angels Church
2061 E. Henrietta Road
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March 25

2:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
St. Catherine of Siena
St. Catherine's Circle
Ithaca

Featuring:

Jacque Jambor
author of religious texts,
noted speaker and consultant for RCL publishing

David Dziema
consultant on music and liturgy for Silver Burdett -- Ginn Publishing



Deadline for registration is
March 9
Cost: \$5 per module -
Maximum of \$25 per person.



For more information contact your parish religious education office or Mary Britton at (716) 328-3228 or (800) 388-7177, ext. 244 or email britton@dor.org.