

# Children, adults learn during Mass

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

IVID — Mysteries of the Mass were explained at Holy Cross Parish Feb. 29, as Father William Winters, pastor, turned the 10:30 a.m. liturgy into an opportunity to educate parishioners — youths and adults alike — about parts of the Mass.

During the Mass, Father Winters paused occasionally to explain what he and the congregation were doing and why. He began by reminding parishioners why they come together with other Catholics every Sunday morning.

"The first thing we do is gather. Gathering is the time when we ready ourselves for this action of participating in the representation of the Last Supper," Father Winters said. "It's more like gathering at Grandma's house for Thanksgiving than it is like going to a movie. It's a real powerful gathering."

Catholics are called to be active participants, instead of spectators, since each part of the Mass is important and included for a reason, he said, citing the penitential rite as an example.

This rite, during which participants acknowledge their sins and

ask for forgiveness, comes during the first few minutes of the Mass, so many late-arriving parishioners miss it, Father Winters said.

"It's not a good idea to skip this. To skip the penitential rite and then to come into Communion is insulting, when it's done deliberately, if you think about it," Father Winters explained.

When Catholics recite parts of the Mass, such as the penitential rite or the Nicene Creed, they should be aware of what they're saying and say it with conviction, Father Winters said. God can hear his people, he added, and simply muttering the words along with the priest is disrespectful. The creed, he added, is "a little digest of the activities of God for our salvation" and a profession of what Catholics believe.

After reading the Gospel, Father Winters noted the important distinction between a sermon and a homily. The word "sermon" comes from the Latin word for address, while the word "homily" comes from a Greek word that means a comment on what

has been said. A sermon can be about almost anything, he said, but a homily should relate to the Scripture readings. The New Testament accounts show that Jesus gave homilies, Father Winters added.

The parts of the Mass are defined by several moments of silence, in which no one — either on the altar or in the pews — is moving or talking. Some people might be tempted to think that this is a quirk, and that someone has forgotten what they are supposed to do or say next, but this is not the case, Father Winters said.

"Periods of silence are a nice part of the celebration of the Mass, (a time to) ponder whatever the spirit perks up in our minds. Silence in company is a powerful, powerful prayer," he said.

Father Winters said when he celebrates Mass, he enjoys knowing that the same words of prayer are being spoken by people all around the world. The main thing to remember about the Mass, he said, is that "this is the very best prayer in the whole wide world."

After the Mass, Father Winters said that he's been interested in presenting a teaching Mass since he

came to the parish two years ago. The parishioners let him know that they were also interested in teaching their children and refreshing their own memories, so he felt the time was right.

Parishioner Margaret Wiant brought her 10-year-old son, John, to the Mass because she wanted him to see there is a reason behind what Catholics do and say in church each weekend.

"I think it is very important that he understands why," she said. "I think it's good for all people, it's to remind us, (because) it becomes rote."

John said that while a lot of what Father Winters explained was review to him, he did gain a deeper understanding of the Mass.

Fellow parishioner Phillis Kaiser said she and her husband, David, brought their children to the liturgy because all of them wanted to learn more about the Mass. They'd always participated in Mass, but lately, their children have asked questions that the parents weren't sure how to answer.

"When you do it so many times, we just do it. It's nice to be refreshed," Phillis said.



William Lamb  
e with stu-  
nished lob-

ience. I re-  
government  
were done,"  
she would  
he gets the

was one of  
neva's De-  
ade the trip  
st time lob-  
opening ex-

ne of these  
I learn a lot  
nd the way  
s you a bet-  
Samantha


s students  
region met  
olio to talk  
, including  
1. The sen-  
ts of Mon-  
pkins, On-  
ties, gave  
o each tell  
attending

sincere in  
ly gave an-  
ions," said  
lly have to  
yourself."

onal  
tem  
ne

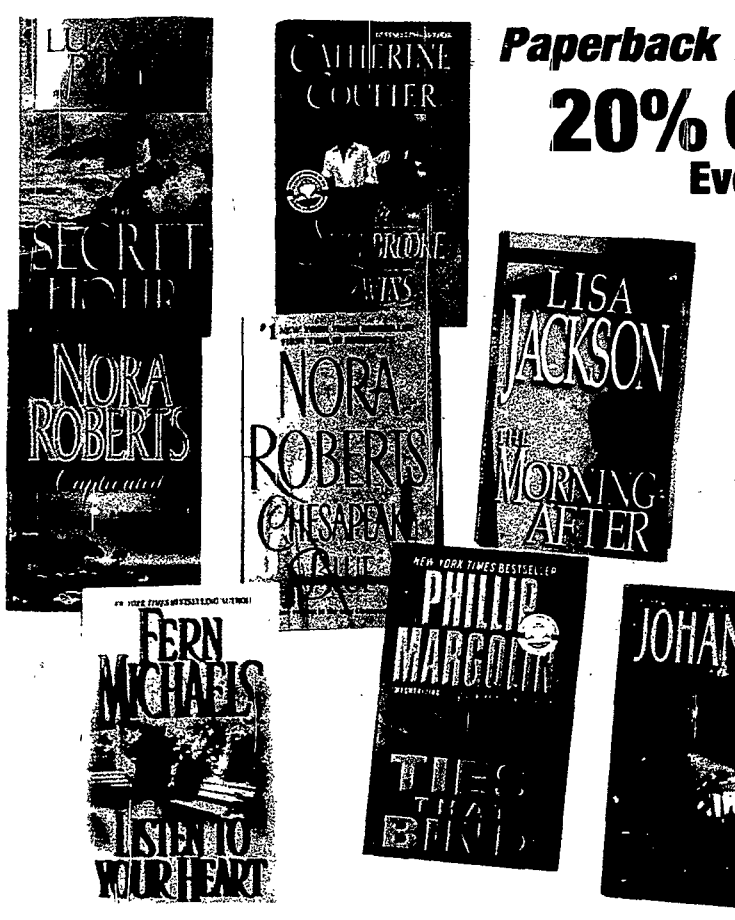
additional  
install  
0


613



Get <sup>maybe</sup> reading at Wegmans!

**Paperback Books**  
**20% OFF**  
Everyday





**Hardcover**  
**Book of the Month**  
**40% OFF**  
Book on sale thru March 27, 2004

**Hardcover Books**  
**30% OFF**

