

Our Reflection of God's Love Pushes Away Prejudice, Hate

By REV. PAUL E. KRITSCH

Having lived first in Westfield and now in Scotch Plains for well over 13 years, I have observed that the residents of our communities are for the most part decent people to have as neighbors.

If a need is known to the community, you can count on people rallying around and doing what they can to help. Just witness, for example, all that has been done over many months to help the victims of the September 11 attack.

But often the greatest tests of our faith are not in the grand, well-publicized moments, but in the daily routine when we are taken by surprise, when, for example, someone says something which shows their prejudice against others who are different.

We hear a joke at a party or a racist remark during a public meeting, and suddenly even people who make a living speaking in public are tongue tied. We know that what was said was terribly wrong and hurtful, but we somehow don't regain our voices until later on.

By then, the moment is past and our silence seems to have given approval to hateful attitudes. Christians call these "sins of omission."

Holy Trinity Service To Address Impact Of HIV and AIDS

WESTFIELD — On Monday, March 11, the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield will offer a prayer service that will address the impact of HIV and AIDS. Carmen Imgrund, a Westfield mother who lost her son to AIDS, will be among the speakers at the service.

Another will be Rafael Rodriguez, who was diagnosed with HIV infection in 1987. He is a founding member of the Union County AIDS Affected Caucus and the Red Ribbon Fellowship. In addition, he has hosted a local television program, "The Faces of AIDS," in Elizabeth.

All are invited to attend and a social and sharing period will follow the service. Holy Trinity Church is located at Westfield Avenue and First Street. For further information, please call Anita Dazzo at (908) 233-8710.

Torah Center to Hold Women's Gathering

WESTFIELD — The Union County Torah Center, located at 418 Central Avenue in Westfield, will host a Woman's Rosh Chodesh gathering on Thursday, March 14, at 8 p.m. in honor of Rosh Chodesh (new month) Nissan.

Shternie Block will give a talk about the special role that women played in the exodus from Egypt and its significance today.

There will also be a discussion of the practical preparations for the Seder and a recipe swap. Individuals are asked to bring their favorite Passover recipes.

There is no charge for this program, which will be held at the center, and light refreshments will be served. For more information, please call the center at (908) 789-5252.

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We can fail to live up to God's will for our lives not only by doing the wrong but also by failing to do the right.

Christians are currently in the season of Lent. Lent is a special time when we Christians take stock of our lives. We purposefully ask God to shine His light into even the darkest corners of our hearts so that our lives may be changed by His love. If forgiveness is needed, we are confident that God will forgive us.

Christians believe that His guarantee of forgiveness is the cross of Christ. Jesus' courageous sacrifice restores our relationship with God and provides the opportunity for reconciliation with others. It is Jesus' courage which empowers us to stand up for others, even if the moment comes upon us unexpectedly.

So the Christian faith has practical applications which benefit our entire community. What we do in our Lenten devotions is not so introspective after all.

A favorite of Redeemer School children is the old Sunday School song, "This Little Gospel Light of Mine." It's a joy to see their different faces, from all sorts of racial origins, as they hold up their index finger and make a circular motion over their heads. "All around my neighborhood, I'm going to let it shine," they sing. "Let it shine, all the time."

Can we adults learn to do the same? Perhaps we, too, can let the light of faith shine not only in our houses of worship, but also in public meetings and chance encounters, at parties and while we shop. As that light shines, there is no room for the darkness of prejudice and racial hatred.

Reverend Kritsch is the Pastor of the Redeemer Lutheran Church, located at Clark Street and Cowperthwaite Place in Westfield.

Shmurah Matzo Sold At Shop Rite Stores

WESTFIELD — The Union County Torah Center in Westfield has announced that it has arranged for handmade Shmurah Matzo to be sold at the Shop Rite stores on North Avenue in Garwood and on Central Avenue in Clark.

"Shmurah" means "watched" and is a description of this matzo. The wheat used is carefully watched and protected against any contact with water from the moment of harvest, as water would cause leavening and thus disqualify the wheat for use on Passover.

These matzos are round in form, kneaded and shaped by hand. They are baked under strict supervision to avoid any possibility of leavening during the baking process.

To receive a free holiday guide or for more information, please call the center at (908) 789-5252.

Rosarians to Honor Saints at Celebration

WESTFIELD — The Holy Rosary Altar Society of Holy Trinity and St. Helen's Roman Catholic Churches will hold a St. Patrick and St. Joseph Day celebration at St. Helen's Parish Center at noon on Thursday, March 14.

The celebration will be a "bag lunch" event. Light refreshments will be served and the festivities will include a sing-a-long. All are welcome to attend.



'FIRST LADY'...Rene Goodwin of Philadelphia, pictured above, will portray Eleanor Roosevelt during the Woman's Club of Westfield's lunch on Monday, March 11, at B. G. Fields Restaurant in Westfield to mark the club's 106 years as a member of the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs.

'Mrs. Roosevelt' to Appear At Woman's Club Lunch

WESTFIELD — To celebrate the Woman's Club of Westfield's 106 years as a member of the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs (NJSFWC), members and their invited guests will meet for lunch on Monday, March 11, at B. G. Fields Restaurant, located at 560 Springfield Avenue in Westfield.

The club will welcome as honored guests Mary Ellen Brock, President of NJSFWC, and Vice Presidents Anne Quinn, Deen J. Meloro and Mary Pat Marcello. Twenty-three women's clubs in the area will also be included in the guest list, as well as Sixth District Vice President Mary Seeler of Chatham.

Immediate Past President of the

NJSFWC, Carol Hancock-Carlew, formerly of Mountainside and now a resident of Millburn, is expected to attend as well. She is a member of the Woman's Club of Westfield.

For the program, Rene Goodwin of Philadelphia will present a dramatization entitled "Eleanor Roosevelt: Woman of Note," for which she will adopt the persona of the former First Lady.

Her first-person interpretation of Mrs. Roosevelt will focus on the first 55 years of her subject's life. Ms. Goodwin has played this role at the White House Visitor Center as part of the Living History Series.

For information about membership in the Woman's Club of Westfield, please call (908) 654-3946.

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March Dilemma: To Plant Seeds Indoors Now Or Wait 'Til Spring

By JODY MELLOAN

Gardeners get itchy fingers at this time of year. Should we get a head start on spring by starting seeds indoors, or wait to sow them directly outdoors, when days are mild and the soil is warm?

It's a dilemma with plenty of advice both pro and con. Barbara Mullin of Mountainside, one of the most knowledgeable, self-taught gardeners I've ever met, waits until late April to sow seeds directly in the numerous flower beds she has created on her New Providence Road property.

She dislikes starting seeds indoors. "They usually grow into plants that are too weak and spindly," she said.

Her success is evident to anyone driving past her home from May through autumn. She fills the raised flower beds with a succession of blooms: iris and tulips in the spring, followed by daylilies, black-eyed Susans, cone flowers and a profusion of other perennials and annuals that flourish well into September. She has raised nearly all of the plants from seed or by division.

"I've spent most of my life in New Jersey and have enjoyed experimenting with all kinds of flowers and vegetables that will grow here," she said. "For myself, my goal is to fill my property with flowers."

For others, she enjoys sharing her garden know-how in the "Gardening Tried and True" classes she teaches to senior citizens in Plainfield.

But, if you yearn to plant now, it is quite simple to start with some packets of seed, a bag of soil, some small plastic pots or seed trays and either a sunny window sill or a light table in the basement.

Years ago, a friend gave me a gardener's diary, which I keep in a haphazard fashion. An entry for February 15 last year describes my experiment to start flowering vines to train on a small plastic trellis I'd bought at a garden store.

I planted seeds of nasturtium and sweet peas in little pots and set them, hopefully, in front of the trellis beside a sunny window. By early April, tendrils from both pots were twining around the lower rungs of the trellis and a month later they were in bloom.

At about the same time, my husband devised a light garden in the basement. It was simply an old bookcase with three shelves, each lit with a fluorescent bulb designed for growing plants. On each shelf, I placed seed trays planted with a variety of

annuals and herbs.

I can't claim total success. The basil, cosmos and zinnias sprouted, then promptly died. But the petunias, when transplanted in May, flourished all summer in a window box on the back porch. At that time, I also transplanted the bachelor buttons and marigolds to the flower garden and the dill and parsley to the herb garden.

The most outstanding achievement of the indoor crops, however, was a veritable bonanza of cherry tomatoes. I gave away at least 10 plants to friends and neighbors, planted three or four in a garden bed, and three more in patio pots. All of them yielded dozens of tiny and tasty red tomatoes well into September.

But my success rate was modest compared with Barbara Mullin's; drive by her garden next summer and see for yourself.

Jody Melloan is a member of the Garden Club of Westfield.

Interfaith Singles Post Meetings For March

WESTFIELD — Interfaith Singles, a support group for single adults over age 45, holds weekly discussions on successful single living. Meetings will be held this month on Sundays, March 10, 17, 24 and 31, from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

Continental breakfast is available and a \$2 donation is requested. Meetings are held at the First Baptist Church, located at 170 Elm Street in Westfield. For further information, please call (908) 889-5265 or (908) 889-4751.

Rabbi Block to Give Passover Lecture

SCOTCH PLAINS — Rabbi Levi Block of the Union County Torah Center will present a special Passover lecture on Wednesday, March 13, at 8 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center, located at 1391 Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains.

The lecture will address many different commentaries on the Haggadah and will give participants insights and information to enhance their own Seder tables.

The program is open to the public free of charge and everyone in attendance will receive a complimentary Shmurah Matzah and holiday guide. For more information, please call (908) 789-5252.

Good News

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Isaiah 58:8

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