



Characteristics We Look For

By FATHER LOUIS J. HOHMAN
Diocesan Director of Vocations

Every once in a while a young man is dismissed from the seminary for one of several reasons, whereupon some people will complain, "Isn't it a shame. He was such a lovely boy and he wanted so much to be a priest."

In many of these cases the seminary authorities feel just as badly as these people do but also realize there are certain standards to be met. It would not be fair to many people to disregard these standards for sentimental reasons.

It might be useful, at least in a general way to delineate these standards. First, the physical requirements. It goes without saying that life in the priesthood does not require Charles Atlas types. But reasonable good health is required. Long years of study take their toll, as does availability to the flock later on. Chronic illness or defect would place an insurmountable burden on the candidate; therefore any such serious debility disqualifies a young man from the seminary.

In connection with this, the seminary wants real masculine men. This can be over-emphasized, and often is. No human being has only masculine characteristics or only feminine characteristics. Both men and women have characteristics of the opposite sex in some degree. Obviously those of the opposite sex should be relatively recessive and unobtrusive. Occasionally a young man with noticeable feminine characteristics will apply to the seminary.

In almost every case these are traceable to a dominant female figure in the boy's early life, and gradually disappear as the young man becomes emancipated from his early environments and relates more fully to his peers. It goes without saying that the vast majority of seminarians are real men through and through. The seminary encourages participation in athletics on every level of schooling, and on the college level varsity athletics are open to seminarians. A sound mind in a sound body. And especially in those younger years violent physical exercise is required to release all that nervous energy built up during the school days. Both our high school and college seminarians have made more than adequate provision for physical development of seminarians.

More often than not the spiritual and moral requirements for entrance into the seminary are highly exaggerated in the minds of especially the young. They think that to be a seminarian a boy must be some kind of angelic type who somehow rose above the temptations and faults of mere mortals like themselves. Or they suppose that when a boy does go to the seminary he prays and prays — that's all.

Seminarians get a real laugh sometimes when they hear what some high schoolers think about them. They know how very human and incomplete and undisciplined they are; they know the wearisome, discouraging struggle against temptation just like everybody else, and they know how far off they are from what they should be and what they can be. They are not "holier" types, walking around with eyes downcast and hands folded. But they are young men trying to be thoroughly Christian in a world which doesn't make it easy.

Quite a few high schoolers think that to be a seminarian one has to dislike or at least be indifferent to girls. This is not only impossible but undesirable as well. In fact, a seminarian who would show antipathy to or abnormal shyness of girls has a problem. After all, 50 per cent of the people of God are female and the priest's ministry is to the people of God.

There are those, of course who cannot understand how a "red blooded American boy" can live without the pursuit of sex and eventual marriage. I tend to despair of explaining this to these people, but the seminarian works it out in his own mind and heart and realizes that there is more to it than that. He knows that while the attraction will always be there, that for the sake of a higher goal, he can sacrifice that attraction and that relationship with girls without sacrificing one iota of his manhood.

He realizes that personal fulfillment is something far beyond sex and that he can cultivate mature interpersonal relationships with many people. He knows that he can find a full and rich life not in dedication to abstractions like mankind and parish but in real loving dedication to people — the ones who actually cross his path of life. He knows that the identification of masculinity with playful sexuality is sheer nonsense.

Although we realize that the word "normal" is somewhat relative in its interpretations, we want normal boys as seminarians. Serious psychological problems would disqualify a boy as a seminarian. Where these problems are discovered subsequent to his entry into the seminary, we try with competent professional assistance, to overcome the problem. If that fails, the boy must be dismissed. Some abnormal types do gravitate toward the seminary. Boys, for example, who are insecure, seem to think the seminary will

provide that security because it is free of rough crude types.

But in the seminary environment of today, they soon realize that they simply cannot remain in a cocoon, but must reach out to the world and others, and find security in a more normal way or fail. Thanks to available professional help and knowledge and a less monastic seminary training, almost all such problems are quickly discerned and dealt with.

The intellectual requirement for entrance and success in the seminary system is quite simple. A boy must be able to make the grade in college, to graduate with a degree, or he is not a candidate for priesthood. The rigors of theological study and the general upgrading of educational levels today requires such a standard, to which, at least in this diocese, there are no exceptions.

In summary, candidates for the priesthood must be normal, intelligent, healthy men, who aspire to be better than ordinary Christians, fully mature and responsible. With their good will and effort, the seminary can make them just that.



Bible Theology

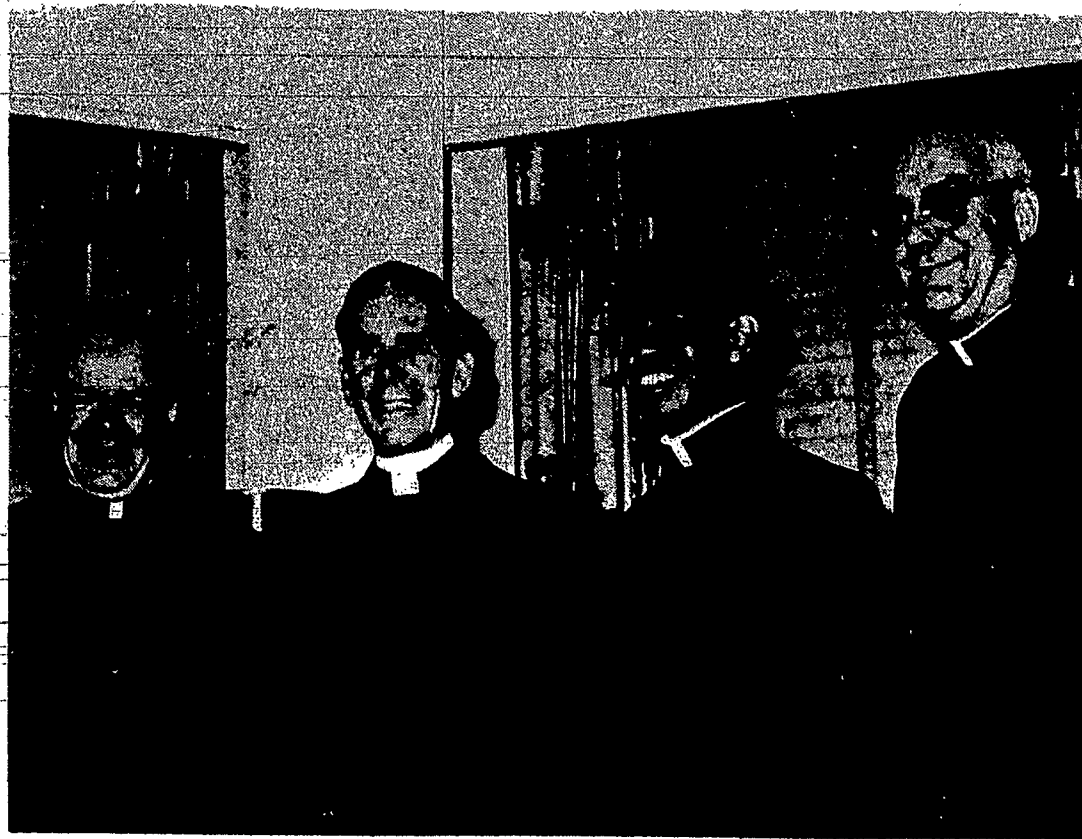
Mother Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J., will deliver the final lecture in the first annual McQuaid Jesuit High School Alumni Association Lenten Lecture Series, Wednesday, March 22, at 8 p.m. The topic of her talk will be "A Biblical Theology of Change."

Mother Sullivan is professor of religion and research professor of Sacred Scripture at Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, Purchase, N.Y., a member of the Catholic Biblical Association, on the board of directors of the North American Liturgical Conference, the advisory board of the New York Diocesan Religion Council and on the board of the Judeo-Christian Institute and of the Catholic Youth Encyclopedia. She is on the editorial board and has written articles for several magazines and she is the author of the books "A Companion to the New Testament," "A Companion to the Old Testament," "The Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia," "God's Word and Work," and the fourth volume of "The Bridge," a collection of Judeo-Christian studies.

Marat de Sade At Auditorium

The Rochester Broadway Theatre League, a non-profit community organization, will present Peter Weiss' Marat de Sade at the Auditorium Theatre Friday, March 31, and Saturday, April 1, at 8:30 p.m., and a matinee at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 1.

Mail orders are being accepted now. For information call 473-3871. The box office at the Auditorium Theatre, 875 East Main St., will be open the week of March 27 from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. Box office phone number is 454-7743.



Their Topic is Missionary

Bishop Sheen was speaker at recent Jesuit Mission Dinner in Rochester. With him are Very Rev. Cornelius J. Carr, provincial of upstate Jesuits; Rev. Mr. Felix K. Yaoch, Jesuit missionary from the Caroline Islands, and Jesuit Father Hugh F. Costigan, missionary in the Caroline Islands, largest mission territory in the world which is under spiritual care of Jesuits of upstate New York.

Family Rosary Radio Leaders

The Family Rosary for Peace program is broadcast each evening at 7 p.m. by Rochester radio station WSAY, WMOB-FM in Auburn, television cable companies Channel 8 in Elmira, Channel 5 in Hornell and at 88.75 mc in Corning. Those who will lead in recitation of the Rosary this week will be:

Saturday, March 18 — (Mass will be celebrated) — Edward Georger, St. Monica's parish.

Sunday, March 19 — Raymond Brien, St. Francis of Assisi.

Monday, March 20 — Representative of Knights of St. John.

Tuesday, March 21 — Father Daniel Wheeland, St. Charles Borromeo, with members of Legion of Mary.

Wednesday, March 22 — Leonard Nickel, St. Andrew's, with Holy Name Society members.

Family Life, Faith on TV

"A Question of Answers," the last of a three-part dramatic television series dealing with the American family today, will be presented Sunday, March 19, at 1 p.m. on "Directions" by the Public Affairs Department of the American Broadcasting Company in association with the National Council of Catholic Men.

Moving in and out of a setting that is descriptive of the Depression of the 1930s, a father and mother find their childhoods contrasted to that of their own children today. The drama shows that today faith no longer goes unquestioned, and a man does not easily define his own position and the position of his children in a broadening universe.

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Churchmen Ask Poverty War Step-up

Washington — (RNS) — Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish leaders, deprecating the "disappointedly limited" character of the Economic Opportunity Act, have urged President Johnson and the Congress to give top priority to a greatly expanded effort to eliminate poverty.

The Interreligious Committee Against Poverty told the nation's governmental leaders:

"The elimination, amelioration, and prevention of poverty require a massive coordinated governmental program on a scale not heretofore projected as politically feasible by any branch or agency of government."

The interreligious committee, established more than a year ago, is sponsored by the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference, and the Synagogue of America in cooperation with other Jewish groups.

In the ICAP statement, in preparation since September, the religious leaders noted that "our opposition to involuntary and unnecessary poverty is deeply rooted in theological convictions which are shared by our three religious communities."

"God wills that the human community be characterized by justice and compassion."

Dean's List Totals 236

Fourteen scholars who earned the grade of A in all of their courses topped the 236 St. John Fisher College students named to the Dean's List for the fall semester.

Seniors heading their class with straight A grades are: Louis C. Attinas, Michael J. Beyma, Paul B. Merkel and Michael S. Goodnes of Palmyra.

Among juniors the top students listed are: Michael J. Mahler, David G. Wolf, Salvatore J. Giganti and Gary L. Mucci of Buffalo.

McQuaiders Still Eloquent

Two McQuaid seniors, Joseph Combs and Kevin Hennessy, took four out of five debates last Saturday and Sunday to take second place at the seventh annual Gannon College Invitational Debate Tournament in Erie, Pa. As usual, Gannon offered a real test of forensic skills, drawing a top notch field of 18 schools from 6 states.

McQuaid won their preliminary contests over Cathedral Prep of Erie, Jamestown H.S., Calvert H.S. of Baltimore and Catholic Central of Pittsburgh to set up the showdown match with Catholic Memorial H.S. of West Roxbury, Mass., a suburb of Boston.

Closer to home, McQuaid debaters and orators had great success in the preliminary qualification tournament held at Bishop Kearney H.S. Saturday. Four orators and four debaters won the right to represent the Finger Lakes District at the New York State High School Debate championships to be held in Albany in mid April.

Rome to Set Renewal Pace

Vatican City — (RNS) — Pope Paul VI, in a message to priests, religious and laity in Rome, exhorted them to work together in causing the Diocese of Rome to lead the worldwide movement for Catholic Church renewal and reform.

In his letter, dated March 5 and just made public by the Vatican, the Pope dwelt on the forthcoming pastoral visitation program in Rome, expected to start on Good Shepherd Sunday, Second Sunday after Easter.

He observed that the post-Vatican II period, "with its emphasis on spiritual renewal, gives a social quality to the present pastoral government of Rome."

"In every part of the Christian world," the letter said,

Honor Group Enrolls Eight

Three St. John Fisher College faculty members and five students were inducted into Gamma Tau chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma, national Catholic honor society, at a dinner meeting held at the University Club March 9.

Dr. John A. Leermakers, Eastman-Kodak vice-president in charge of research, was the guest speaker.

The faculty members honored are Dr. Erwin Delano and Dr. Joseph V. Martinez, both of the Fisher physics department, and Wendell Howard of the English department.

Student inductees are John S. Morreall, Michael J. Mahler, David G. Wolf, Kenneth R. Jones, and Robert R. Riley. All except Riley are graduates of St. Andrew's Seminary High School. Riley attended DeSales High School, Geneva.

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