

People of Other Faiths Comfortable at Nazareth

Ecumenical spirit is not just a phrase at Nazareth College of Rochester — it's a way of life. Although run by the Sisters of St. Joseph and considered by many a college for Catholic young women, a check of the registration cards of the college's students shows that a number of them do not come from a Catholic religious tradition. There are girls at the Col-

lege who were brought up in all branches of Protestantism, and during the past five years, there have been students from all the other major religions in the world. What is it like for a Protestant girl to go to a Catholic college? How does it feel to be in a "minority," religiously speaking? What is the Protestant student's reaction to the criticism, often leveled at Catholic higher education, that there is a tendency for the subject matter in sensitive areas, such as history, philosophy, and religion, to be "colored" by the theology of the Catholic church?

Four Nazareth students who are not Roman Catholics were asked these questions recently, and their answers paint a revealing portrait of higher education at a Catholic college today. Linda, a freshman, is an attractive girl with a shy demeanor. She comes from Fulton, New York, and lives on campus. She is a Baptist.

"A friend from my hometown is a senior here now, and she was the first one who told me about Nazareth," she said, brushing her long brown hair from her shoulder. "I was looking for a college, so my parents drove me down to see it. The minute I saw the campus, it seemed like home. It was so beautiful."

Her parents wanted her to make her own decision about her school, and for Linda, there was never any other choice. "When I came for the interview, I was a little nervous," she recalled. "I felt a little strange, too, because it was the first time I had ever talked with a nun."

"But she was so nice to me and so interested in me that I didn't have a chance to think of her as a nun — or to worry about it."

Linda has elected to take the freshman course in theology, although it's not required for those outside the Catholic faith. "I don't find it slanted at all," she said. "We look at the Bible as literature — and the sister who teaches the course recommends a resource book for us that was written by a Baptist scholar."

"I find, too, that I know just as many of the Bible verses and stories as the other students. I've had a pretty strong background in this area — in fact, theology is my favorite course this year."

Linda is also eager to explore the tradition and meaning of the Catholic faith and goes to

Mass regularly. When her parents visited for a week-end recently, she took them with her to the chapel on campus. She said that her father was a bit skeptical of the idea, but once he had seen the service, he admitted that he had a much better understanding of the Catholic liturgy.

In addition, she has had long discussions with some of her classmates, probing the beliefs, the similarities, and the differences in her faith and theirs.

As a resident student, Linda is subject to the rules of dormitory living — rules that are fairly strict by some college standards.

"We have to be in our own rooms by 11 every night, and the dress rules are pretty strictly enforced. But I like the discipline. I don't feel constricted by it."

"I'm loving it at Nazareth," she said. "The teachers and the students aren't just 'Catholics' to me... they're individuals and I'm part of them. For me, Nazareth is a good school and everybody knows it. That's why I came."

A petite, dark-haired student from Thailand named Nuchanat Paikawongs Na Ayudhaya — "Nuchie" for short — is a freshman at Nazareth also. She is a Buddhist.

Nuchie became interested in Nazareth through a friend in Thailand who had graduated from the college. She won a scholarship to come to the United States, and spent the fall and spring of 1965-66 living with a family in Malone, New York, and attending high school there. During the summer, she went to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. for an intensive course in English, and entered Nazareth for the fall, 1966, semester.

"You see," she said in her heavily accented English, "I feel very at home here because I went all my life to Catholic schools in Thailand. My teachers have always been nuns."

She added that since there is no Buddhist fellowship in the area, she goes to Mass at the college, but she still holds to her Buddhist beliefs. She will not return to Thailand until she completes her B.A. at Nazareth — and then, she plans to teach in her native country.

Patsy, whose home is in Penn Van, New York, is a sophomore at Nazareth. An outgoing young woman with a ready smile, she comes from an Episcopalian background. She is majoring in French and hopes to be a third-grade teacher.

She first became interested in the college through the mother of a friend who invited her to a conference on Catholic schools.

"There is a lot that is similar about the Catholic and the Episcopalian church, so I didn't have much adjustment to make in understanding the symbolism and traditions of the Roman Church," she said. "In fact, some of the services I've attended in high Episcopalian cathedrals are more 'Catholic' than the Masses here on campus."

Patsy did have an initial feeling of strangeness in addressing the nuns as "sisters" and in encountering them as teachers in many of her classes. (Full-time and part-time laymen are on the faculty also.) It didn't take long, though, before that feeling disappeared.

Her educational experiences at Nazareth have also been enlightening to her parents. "My father always thought that the sisters had an easy life," she said with a laugh. "Now that he's seen how hard they work and how much individual attention they give us, he's changed his mind. Both my parents are really impressed."

While Patsy does not feel strange or alien among her predominantly Catholic schoolmates, she has been eager to ask questions about their beliefs.

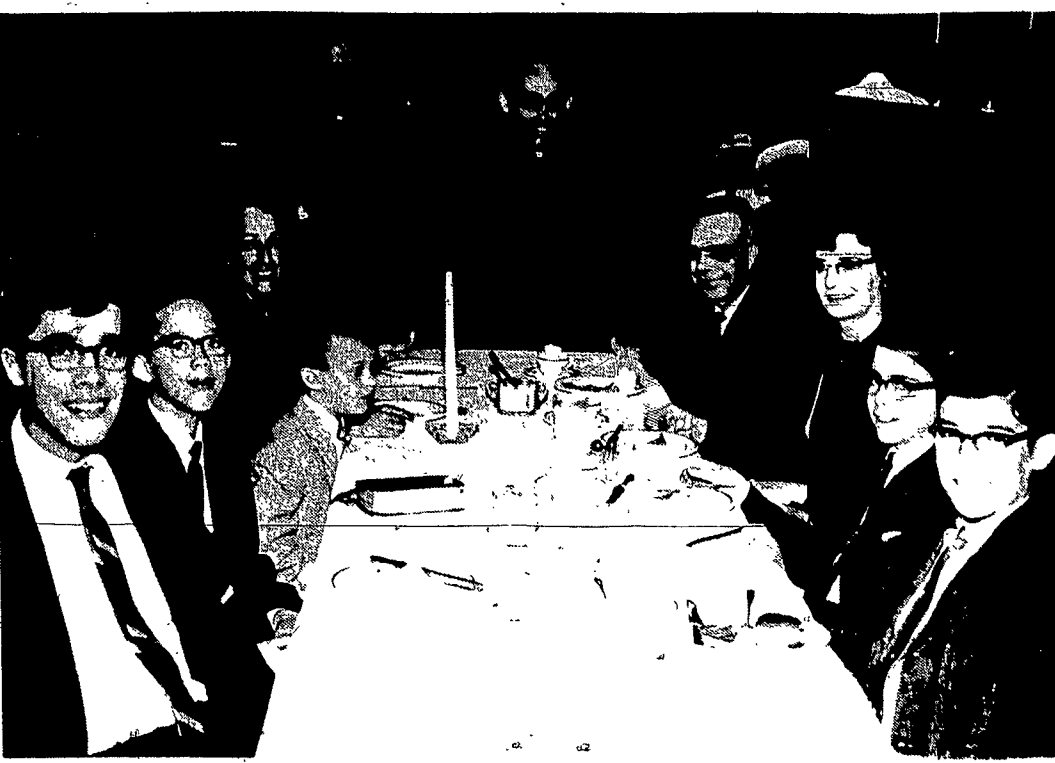
"We have long talks," she said. "I ask them what this or that means and why they believe certain things. And they have just as many questions about my church. We really learn from each other."

Patsy feels that the emphasis at Nazareth is on education, not religion, and she is happy at the school. "In fact," she said earnestly, "I wouldn't go anywhere else."

Margo is a senior art major, contemplating the choice between teaching or graduate school next year. She commutes to college each day from her home in East Bloomfield, where she is a member of the Congregational Church.

"Believe it or not, my father was the one who interested me in Nazareth," she recalled. "It happened to know Sister St. Catherine, the academic dean of Nazareth. He met her on the street one day and began talking about his daughter who was looking for a college. She told him that Nazareth welcomed Protestant students, and also that the school had a progressive and active art department."

Margo said that when she arrived to look over the campus, the sisters were so open and welcoming that she felt at home immediately. Some of her relatives, she added, were concerned when they found out she was enrolling in a Catholic college, "but my parents cared only that I got the best possible education and that I would be happy wherever I went."



Father Moran at St. Casimir's

Father Richard Moran, C.S.S.R., of the Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua, was the main speaker at the family Communion breakfast at St. Casimir's Church, Elmira, on Sunday, April 30. In photo are the Kubinski family, Father Edward Kowalski, assistant pastor of St. Casimir's Church, Father Moran, guest speaker and the Sullivan family.



School children of Holy Family School, friends and parents, lined the sidewalk from Holy Family Church to the rectory to greet Bishop Sheen, following services at Holy Family Church in Auburn. At right is Rev. William E. Davie, pastor. (Tarby Photo)

Margo has not elected to take the theology courses open to freshmen and seniors, but she said she has not felt any "coloring" of the facts by the sisters who teach philosophy or history. "In fact," she said, "they seem to bend over backwards to give us all the sides of an issue or an event."

Because of the rather strict rules for dormitory students (in comparison to some other colleges), Margo is happy to be a day student. "Personally, I wouldn't want that much supervision," she said, "but some girls seem to thrive on it."

The matter of her religion at a Catholic school has not been of any concern. "Nobody — the nuns nor the other students — cares what you are. The emphasis is on what you're learning."

So successful has been her experience at Nazareth that her younger brother has enrolled at St. John Fisher, the all-male Catholic college just down the street.

Racial Projects Under Fire

Milwaukee — (RNS) — Archbishop William E. Cousins termed an attack on the 1967 Archbishop's Charities and Development Fund campaign "an appeal to racial prejudice."

He was referring to an advertisement in five suburban newspapers here which addressed a "special message to Roman Catholics" asking whether money given to the fund would help to finance "disorder, confusion and civil disobedience."

The full-page advertisement was purchased by the "Committee for STOP," a group that claimed to represent Catholic laymen but was otherwise unidentified. STOP claimed to represent "sanctity, truth, obedience, and penance."

The advertisement referred to civil rights activities by some Catholic priests and nuns, especially during the demonstrations in suburban Wauwatosa last summer when Circuit Judge Robert C. Cannon's home was picketed to protest his membership in an all-white Eagles club.

Catholic Schools Safeguard Faith

Belfast — (NC) — Catholic schools are the means of protecting the faith of the next generation, Bishop William Philbin of Down and Connor told the Catholic Secondary Teachers' association here.

Addressing the association's annual conference, Bishop Philbin said that without the protection of the Catholic schools "we shall be exposed to influences over which we shall have no control and which may well be increasingly unsympathetic and hostile to the things we stand for."

The bishop said Catholic schools "are an attempt to see the components of education in the perspective in which the Gospels see human life." He added that "the priority of religious to secular studies" in the Catholic school is an attempt "to put into practice the proportion of value which Our Lord accorded to secular and spiritual matters."

This statement reportedly shocked the Austrian Catholics since Catholic Church law bars membership in the Masonic Order.

The Catholic weekly Die Furche (The Furrow), published a long report on the issue. It said the story had been instigated by rightists who are opposed to many of the reforms which Cardinal Koenig has instituted here following the Second Vatican Council.

Father Cronin To Be Teacher

Washington — (NC) — Sulphur Springs Father John F. Cronin, assistant director of the U.S. Catholic Conference's Social Action Department for 21 years, will leave his post this summer and return to teaching.

His resignation was announced by Father Lloyd P. McDonald, S.S., U.S. Provincial of the Sulphur Springs Society. Father McDonald said he had not yet determined what and where Father Cronin will teach.

Spain OKs Madrid Mosque

Madrid — (NC) — The Spanish government has donated the site for construction of a Moslem mosque in a residential zone north of here.

The United Arab Republic and support from the Algerian and Moroccan governments are financing the temple's construction.

Donations from the Superior Council of Islamic Affairs in

COURIER-JOURNAL 19B Friday, May 12, 1967

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