

The Church in the Inner City

Second in a Series

'Eastside Story' A Hit in Elmira

Take six clergymen, two nuns and 12 college and high school students; mix them together and what do you have?

The heart of the Elmira Summer Service Project (ESSP).

This dynamic group is just winding up a successful six week venture in service to Elmira's Eastside, which is inner-city for that Southern Tier community. It might be called "the Eastside Story."

Brainchild of two Protestant ministers, who were aware of similar student service programs elsewhere, the project quickly took on an ecumenical hue when a priest and two Mercy sisters were invited in on the ground floor.

Methodist minister Rev. Donald Hoff and Episcopal minister Rev. William Rankin started the ball rolling. They asked Father David Mattie, assistant pastor of SS. Peter and Paul Church on the Eastside, if the Catholics wanted to help out.

The soft-spoken young priest jumped into the project, soon recruited two nuns from Notre Dame High School, Sisters Cornelius and Marie Jose.

Besides the five people mentioned, four others, all Protestant ministers formed the directorate of the ESSP. The other three were the Reverends Gary Balgeman, Donald Mills, Willie Wright and Gary Balgeman.

Challenge Brings Results
They ran a story in the Elmira papers, saying in effect:

If you're a live-wire college student (or a high school senior) and want to serve your brother in the inner-city, we've got a place for you in our project.

Before long, they had 20 students, all of whom were willing to be full or part-time volunteers in a variety of service programs in the Eastside area.

What did they accomplish?

• They provided hundreds of hours in service to Elmira social agencies, day care centers and recreational programs.

• They ran a two week ecumenical church school, termed the Neighborhood Interchurch Program (NIP). They helped organize a staff of 40 teachers and aides who taught more than 200 youngsters from pre-school to high school age in three different locations.

They started a teen-age Coffee House, which was open five nights a week. Located at Fox and Market Streets, the coffee house was dubbed "The Fox Hole," became an overnight sensation with The Eastside younger set.

An Episcopalian seminarian, Clifford Mowers and his wife, were in charge of the coffee house. The evening programs, from 8 to 11, were varied and entertaining. Rock bands and guitar-playing singers alternated with serious talks and discussions. "Nobody has to do anything," said one of the directors, "but there's plenty for them to do here, if they want something."

With Father Mattie in the program, SS. Peter and Paul parish became one of the focal points of activity. The pastor, Monsignor Philip McGhan, put his parish facilities at the disposal of the ESSP staff, which used them gratefully.

The Eastside Catholic church was the locale for much of the first week's orientation program for the student volunteers. Monsignor McGhan also provided space for the high school section of the vacation Church School.

Nearby St. Joseph's Hospital also helped out. The Sisters of St. Joseph provided rooms for four of the girl students in their convent and offered their cafeteria for lunches to the ESSP staff.

Four seminars a week for the ESSP staff provided informative talks on inner-city problems and plans by various experts from government agencies, community groups and neighborhood leaders.

The ESSP group appealed for \$2,000 to run the program. Help came from several sectors, including the Pastoral office of the Rochester Catholic Diocese and Elmira's Ladies of Charity.

"The program was very well received," Father Mattie stated, as the project drew to a close this week. "The Neighborhood House and the various social agencies were most enthusiastic about the job the students did." In addition, the young priest stated, "the ecumenical benefits gained from all of us working together in the Eastside have been tremendous."

He paid special tribute to the untiring efforts of the two nuns who helped direct the program.



NEIGHBORHOOD INTER-CHURCH PROGRAM was a two-week ecumenical Bible school which was attended by 200 children. These youngsters were doing a wall mural of Abraham heading toward the Promised Land. The Bible school ended last week.

Many people in the neighborhood mentioned to him how good it was to see two nuns talking such a part in the summer project.

Ecumenical Benefits
As part of their "ecumenical exposure," the staff tried to attend Sunday services at the various churches involved in the project.

"I think we all came away with a greater respect for the sincerity of other Christians,"

said Sister Cornelius. "To see their devotion, to hear the warmth of their singing, was a great experience."

Sister Marie Jose added that one of the best sermons she ever heard was given by the Rev. Willie J. Wright, Negro minister of Monumental Baptist Church.

"He spoke on the theme of 'Christ in the market place,'" she recalled, "and how we must help Him reach people in the crowded streets of today."

There was a new spirit moving in the Eastside area of Elmira this summer—

A zestful, tireless band of 20th century disciples, anxious to find and serve God in their neighborhood.

—Father Robert Kanka

The Catholic COURIER

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

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Local News

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Courier News Editor, Wife Going to Samoa

BY MONICA REEVES

While puddle jumping and umbrella carrying has proved to be a temporary if frequent chore for area residents as of late, there's one couple who are trying to become adjusted to rain on a slightly more permanent basis.

They are Robert Smett, news editor for the Catholic Courier, and his wife, the former Joan Stein, for whom rain will become an integral part of life when they move to American Samoa in September.

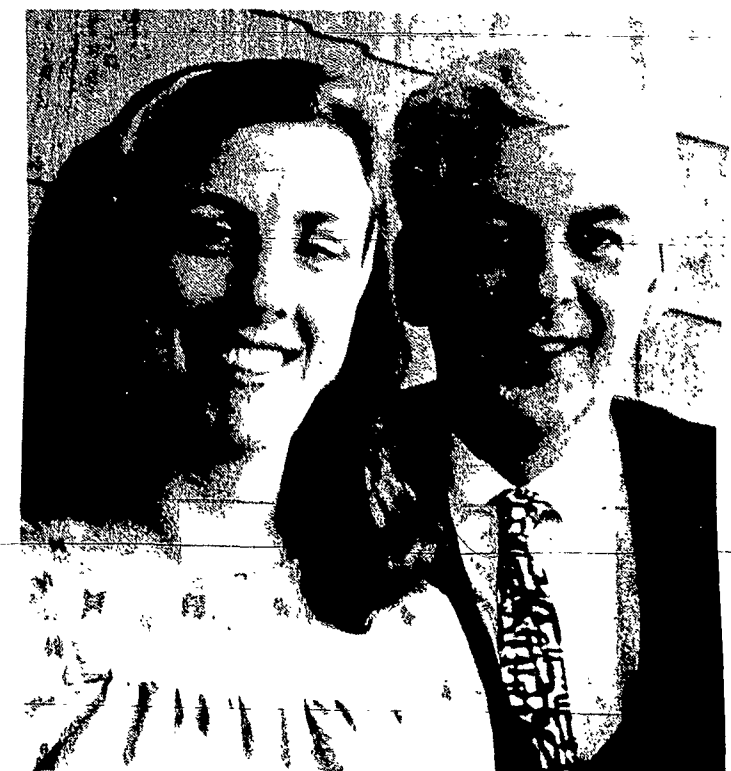
American Samoa 2,300 miles from Honolulu, is comprised of seven islands, the most significant of which is Tutuila, eighteen miles long and six miles wide at its widest point.

Here, in a Marist mission compound outside the capital city of Pago Pago, the Smetts will teach the ninth grade. For although this South Sea Isle is primarily noted for its rain, delightful inhabitants and unspoiled beauty there are always the children to be educated for entry into business world of Pago Pago's tuna industry and state-side jobs. Educational TV comprises the entire teaching core for Samoa's 7,000 students. From the main studios near Pago Pago, where lessons are developed by teams of Samoan and Mainland teachers, the shows are transmitted from 1700 foot Mt. Alava to the island's 26 schools.

Mrs. Smett, a native of Buffalo and the daughter of Mrs. Rose Stein, Prince St., will put to good use the training she received at Nazareth Academy, Miss McCarthy's Business School and Nazareth College, where she is currently working on her Master's Degree in English.

Smett, the son of Mrs. Marie Smett, Thurston Rd., a graduate of Aquinas Institute and the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, will be called upon to teach among other subjects, English to boys who use the 12 letter alphabet of pidgin English common to Samoa.

Despite the high tropical setting to which the Smetts will be going, there are certain inevitable hardships to be faced. A mission compound will be quite a change from their charming apartment on Harvard St. with its many art treasures that the couple has collected in their travels in Europe. A constant humidity reading of 80 per cent in this hot and steamy land along the 14th degree of latitude south of the Equator will be a far cry from Rochester's change of seasons. And hurricanes with winds of 100-miles-an-hour pose a constant threat to Samoa's inhabitants. And in addition to all that they must confront, there are friends and family to be left 7,500 miles behind.



Mr. and Mrs. Robert Smett will teach school at a Marist mission in Samoa beginning in September. Mr. Smett has been a Courier editor for 15 years.

During this time, in addition to a full schedule of newspaper work, Smett has found time to become involved with local and national theatre groups. He served three years as vice president of the National Catholic Theatre Conference and is a founding member of Catholic Theatre of Rochester. Blackfriars found itself under his direction during his two year presidency of that group.

Besides producing the works of others, Smett has authored five one-act plays of his own one of which, "Appointment at High Noon," won the Chicago Drama Festival Award a few years back. His editing duties, in addition to those on the Courier, include his founding years as editor of "Catholic Theatre," a national monthly.

Smett, who has worked with the Catholic Courier for 15 years, the last seven of which he has been news editor, has contributed to 846 issues of the paper.



PLANNING THE ACTION. Mercy Sisters Cornelius, left, and Marie Jose are on the staff of the Elmira Summer Service Project, an ecumenical inner-city venture which includes clergy of several churches and 20 college and high school students as the nucleus of the project.

(More pictures on page 7)

Safeguarding Faith Sought in New Law

Albany — (NC) — The New York State Catholic Welfare Committee has recommended the state Constitution retain a provision that whenever practicable in child placement cases, the child be placed with persons of his own religion.

The recommendation was made by the Catholic group in a memorandum submitted to the state's Constitutional Convention.

The memorandum underscored that the religious protection clause of the present Constitution contains such a provision, originally enacted in 1921 and amended in 1961.

"This confirms the present desire of the people to guarantee by constitutional protection the fundamental right of parent and child to religious liberty whether they are a separated family or a family unit," the memorandum stated.

Basilians Elect Father Wey

Texas-born Father Joseph C. Wey, C.S.B., was reelected Superior General of the Basilian Fathers this week at a General Council of the order held at St. John Fisher College.

Father Wey was first elected to head the world-wide community of Basilians in 1961. He is the first American to hold this high office.

The Basilian Fathers staff Rochester's Aquinas Institute and St. John Fisher College. The order, which has about 700 members, operates 15 high schools, six colleges, several par-

ishes and missions in Canada, the United States, France and Mexico.

Founded in France in 1822, members of the Congregation of St. Basil came to the New World in 1852 to found a college for men, St. Michael's, in Toronto, Canada.

Father Wey is an alumnus of the University of St. Michael's College and did graduate work at Oxford University. He is a member of the faculty at St. Michael's and the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto.

Friday Luncheon Club Schedules Clyde Pastor

Father Paul J. Cuddy, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church, Clyde will address men of the First Friday Luncheon Club at Hotel Sheraton, Aug. 4.

This was announced by Urban G. Kress, chairman of the Knights of Columbus Sponsoring committee. He said the luncheon, open to all men who receive Communion on the First Friday, will begin at 12:10 p.m.

The Clyde pastor who is also a veteran Army and Air Force chaplain, will be presented by Father William Donnelly, club moderator and chaplain of Rochester Council K. of C.

Father Cuddy was ordained in 1935 and served at St. John's, Clyde as assistant pastor for his first assignment. He was named assistant pastor of Immaculate Conception, Ithaca in 1938 and was commissioned a Chaplain in the United States Army in 1942.

During four years in the Army, Father Cuddy authored many brochures and pamphlets for the moral guidance of men in his charge. He served with the 454th Air Service Group overseas and held the rank of captain.

On his return to the United States he was named Catholic student pastor at Sampson College and was honorably discharged from the Army in 1946.

Recalled from the service in 1952, he served at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas. Promoted to Major, he served later at Biggs Air Force Base, Texas.

He had served at St. Anne's Church, Rochester from 1950 to 1951. In 1951 he was spiritual



FATHER CUDDY

director of St. Andrew's Seminary.

Father Cuddy was appointed pastor of St. John's, Clyde and St. Patrick Church, Savannah by Bishop Kearney. On March 3, 1967 he was named by Bishop Sheen to the Priest's Council.

Frederick L. Murphy will be presented as the new co-chairman of the K. of C. Sponsoring Committee.

Father Joseph P. Burns, C.S.S.R. of St. Joseph's Church, at the July meeting described his experiences as chaplain aboard the S.S. HOPE, hospital ship making a tour of Nicaragua ports.

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