

# Don't Underestimate the Mentally Retarded

This is the second of a two-part series on the spiritual and educational facilities of the Craig State School at Sonyea.

By FATHER DOMINIC MOCKEVICIUS

In 1968 special classes in Christian formation were begun at the Craig State School in Sonyea. Sixteen Brothers from the Society of the Divine Word at Conesus help with this project.

A personal interview with each patient precedes the class.

The class is taught with the help of pictures, and the patient is asked to identify with the class material and how he can apply what he learned to his neighbor.

In a State School program there is a great need to coordinate with the community parish, public and private schools run for the mentally deficient. There is a great need to bring our knowledge into the home where parents might be caring for an exceptional child.

This can be done further through different organizations.

The American Association on Mental Deficiency is a professional organization of

individuals who are concerned with mental retardation and allied fields. Membership in the AAMD is open to anyone interested in encouraging the highest standards for the mentally retarded.

The National Association for the Retarded Child appeals not only to the professionals but also to parents.

The National Apostolate for the Mentally Retarded, recently started with headquarters in Nutley, N.J., appeals to the Catholic population and thus limits their

scope. Basic ideas in this field can be shared with all and are not limited by denomination.

Projecting into the future, more must be done for the exceptional child as he enters the community from institutions or is already there but living at home.

We can help by non-segregation and by encouraging full participation in religion, recreation, school.

Father Gnau, special consultant for the Archdiocese

of Detroit, says: "We encourage parents to bring their children—mentally retarded, blind or deaf—to church, so they will form a part of the community."

"What we have to do," he continues, "is to help the parish, its priests and all its members to look upon the handicapped not as members of a group, but as individuals."

As a member of the community be part of the team laying the ground work for

projects for the betterment of conditions for the retarded. A good example of this is the establishment of Half Way houses.

Even with the exception of the severely retarded—who never attains an intellectual level greater than the average 3-year-old and the profoundly retarded who will always require the care given to an infant, the President's Committee on Mental Retardation indicates 4,500,000 fall into the category of mildly retarded.

Most can adjust socially, can master simple academic and occupational skills, and become self-supporting citizens. However, to attain this goal, they need early diagnosis, parental support and guidance and special educational programs.

Retarded children can be helped. The community can no longer keep these Chosen Children of God hidden in the attic. The people of God must look to this 'new apostolate' for the children of God.



Michael Boland of 21 Marquardt Street has been named development director for Nazareth College. He had been assistant director of development at the University of Rochester. Boland, 27, holds a degree in history from the U. of R. and currently is studying there for a Master's degree in education. He also has attended Cornell Law School. He is an Aquinas Institute graduate.

## BOSTON COLLEGE RECEPTION TONIGHT

A reception will be held tonight at the home of Thomas Hanna, 1680 Lake Road, Webster for Father George L. Drury, S.J., assistant to the president of Boston College.

Father Drury has been delegated by Father Seavey Joyce, president, to acquaint alumni chapters throughout the United States with the philosophy and goals of the new administration of the Jesuit University. Father Joyce was appointed president last June. Alumni and friends of the college are invited to attend the reception.

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