

His Assignment... That the Deaf May Hear

By JOHN DASH

Father Thomas Erdle speaks with his hands. His congregation, drawn from all over the Rochester Diocese, hears him by following the intricate gestures that compose their language. They are the deaf. He is their priest.

The 40-year-old priest, who celebrated his birthday on Valentine's Day, is the coordinator of the apostolate to the deaf in the diocese.

Father Erdle introduces himself and his people by telling the story of Raymond Boduch, a 34-year-old electronics researcher in Buffalo.

"In my mind he is the most remarkable person, I've ever met," Boduch is both deaf and blind. "Even though we don't meet each other very often, just by touching my hand, he knows me," Father Erdle says.

Boduch is a "ham" operator. He has invented a device by which he can receive Morse code through his ankle and can send replies via Morse over the air waves.

Father says that he is also able to communicate with his mother over long-distance telephone through another device he has invented. By phrasing his questions to his mother so they require a



FATHER THOMAS ERDLE

"yes" or a "no" answer, he is able to "hear" her by feeling the vibrations of her voice. Boduch also is very active in the International Catholic Deaf Association. That the deaf are capable of as full a life as those of us who are constantly bombarded with sound is the basis of Father Erdle's apostolate.

Father Erdle's first contact with the deaf in a religious setting came in the Fall of 1951. A theology student at St. Bernard's Seminary, he began a program of visiting the Rochester School for the Deaf.

This school was one of the first such institutions in the

nation. From its experience and research, it developed what is known as the Rochester Method, a system of communicating by spelling words through gestures.

Father Erdle's duties there included teaching religion and learning sign language. The chaplain at that time was Father John Barron Gallagher, CSSR, who was first assigned here through a clerical blunder on the part of his order. It seems that a namesake in Manhattan was scheduled to work in the field and the wrong Gallagher came here.

In 1960, the year that Father Gallagher died, Father Erdle was called on by Bishop James E. Kearney, to coordinate the apostolate to the

deaf throughout the diocese, on a part-time basis.

About the time that Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen came here, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) was established at Rochester Institute of Technology.

NTID is a federally sponsored program of technical education on a collegiate level. The school is unusual in that it is located on a conventional "hearing" campus. Archbishop Sheen felt that such a development in the community required Father Erdle to assume his coordinating post full-time.

Today there are more than 300 deaf Catholic adults in Rochester, 120 Catholic children at the Rochester School

of the Deaf and 80 Catholic students at NTID.

Father Erdle explains his duty at NTID as sacramental administrator. With Father Appely, Catholic chaplain at RIT, he says Mass, hears confessions and counsels. In the past few weeks, Father has been interpreting (through sign language) tape recorded pre-Cana conferences as well.

The regular duties of the parish priest are Father Erdle's services to the deaf. These include Mass at St. Joseph's Business School auditorium, baptisms, marriages, counseling, and visiting the sick and imprisoned.

He is also chaplain to the St. Francis De Sales Organization, a social gathering of

Catholic deaf adults and is working in adult religious education with his "parish".

His duties at the Rochester School for the Deaf include training local seminarians in sign language, teaching religion and celebrating the Eucharist on Sundays and holy days.

Besides his specifically religious duties, Father Erdle also is on the Rochester Community Service Council for the Deaf. This is a civic organization to provide educational, occupational and social services for the non-hearing community. Father noted that he is especially active in the adult education program of the year-old council.

Hornell's St. James

Hospital in Great Shape at 80

Hornell—The 80th anniversary in a history of growth, progress and community service was celebrated last Friday, Feb. 13, 1890, by Father James M. Early, then pastor of St. Ann's Church. Records show that Father Early, "who realized the need for a hospital, bought from his own funds, the 'cure' building and presented it to suffering humanity to be cared for by the Sisters of Mercy." History shows that work began immediately to transform the farmhouse into a hospital, and that on April 23, 1890, the first patient was admitted.

The hospital had 15 beds and an operating room, "well light-

ed by a 4-jet gas chandelier." Three Sisters took complete care of the hospital, supervising, nursing, cooking and cleaning.

The first record book reveals that the majority of early cases were railroad injuries and patients stricken with typhoid fever. During the first year of operation, the hospital cared for 69 patients. The first birth was recorded in 1898, and notes show that when the mother came to the hospital for her confinement, she also brought along her small daughter who was admitted as a boarder.

The first volunteer group, the Women's Board, organized in 1904, founding the first maternity cottage, a small building outside the regular hospital. This department was cared for by the late Sister Mary Aquinas for 29 years until she was appointed administrator in 1934. The 5,000 babies born during those years, many of whom still reside in Hornell, are referred to as Aquinas babies.

Perhaps the best authority on St. James history is Sister Mary DeSales, who came to the hospital in 1900. Today, retired, she resides in the hospital convent. She recalls that the first addition, the North Wing, was

added in 1910, and the School of Nursing, the first in Hornell, was founded in 1912. Sister DeSales headed the school for 32 years.

In 1923, to meet the needs of a growing community, the South Wing, providing additional facilities was erected. The School of X-ray Technology began in 1948, and in 1951 the four-story East Wing was erected at a cost of \$1 million.

In the 1960s the physical therapy rehabilitation department, intensive-coronary care unit and other services were added. Progress in the educational field was noted when DeSales Hall, the School of Nursing's modern, functional building, was opened in 1968.

The Hornell Medical Center opened last year to provide more accessible health care for community residents.

The multi-million dollar West Wing also was opened in 1969.

Commenting on the hospital's growth, Sister Mary Rene, administrator, noted that admissions for the first 26 years of the hospital's existence were not as great as the total number of admissions in the year she resides in the hospital convent. She recalls that the first addition, the North Wing, was

'Nazareth in France' Planned for This Summer

The French Department of Nazareth College has established a "Nazareth in France" program which will offer students the opportunity to take an on-the-spot view of what they have been learning from textbooks and teachers.

For five weeks students will take morning courses at the University of Touraine in Tours. Afternoons will be devoted to excursions. An optional two-week program for independent travel. Arrangements for travel, lodging, meals, excursions and classes will be on a group basis.

The program is designed not only to increase proficiency in the French language but to expand the students' knowledge of France through on and off campus communication with the French people.

The first group representing Nazareth in France is scheduled for next summer.

Mrs. Svetlana Shales, a member of the faculty of Nazareth College, and M. J. Millsch, of the St. John Fisher College staff are co-directors of the project.

Nazareth Plans Parents' Fete

A special program of educational and social events has been scheduled for parents of Nazareth College upperclassmen on Saturday, Feb. 28.

The program begins at 2 p.m. with a showing of two video tapes, "Academic Vistas" and "Created at Nazareth," over the college's educational television system. They were prepared by the faculty in conjunction with Rochester's educational TV station, Channel 21. Other events include:

- 3:30 p.m. — Daughters will conduct parents on optional tours of the campus; 6 p.m. — Social hour and dinner at the Oak Hill Country Club; 9 p.m. — Dancing to the music of Len Hawley's Orchestra; 12:30 a.m. — Mass, offered by Monsignor William Shannon, college chaplain, at Nazareth College Chapel. Other Masses will be offered at 8:30 a.m. and noon Sunday.

Kennedys Married 50 Years Ago

Canandaigua — The wedding party depended on the trolley to get them to the church on time, but the tracks were blocked by drifted snow. A farmer friend hitched his team to a sleigh to drive them as far as the railroad, and Gertrude McCarrick and Edward Kennedy were married on schedule in St. Mary's Church, Canandaigua, on Feb. 18, 1920.

They celebrated their 50th anniversary last Sunday afternoon at a reception given by their eight children and attended by nearly all of their 21 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

The Kennedys have spent most of their married life on a farm on Algerine Street, Stanley. Mr. Kennedy was with the Army in France during World War I.

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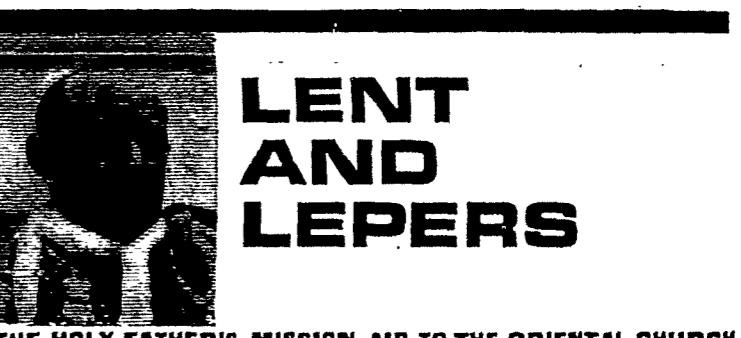
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- \$5,000—Builds a pre-fab clinic in a far-flung village.
- \$3,000—train ten native Sisters in nursing.
- \$1,500—provide an operating table.
- \$575—buy a whirlpool bath.
- \$200—purchase a microscope.
- \$100—give the clinic a sterilizer.
- \$95—provide a leper with a wheelchair.
- \$40—buy 1,000 vitamin tablets.
- \$30—give a leper a hospital bed.
- \$15—give him (or her) a hand-walker.
- \$10—give the clinic a blood-pressure set.
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