



The official count is not far off.



Bishop Joseph Hogan makes the count official with his signature.

ELECTION

Concurrent with national and local civic elections last week, the Sisters of Mercy also elected and installed a new Superior General and four Councilors. On Oct. 17, the 409-member Community chose Sister Mary Judith, the former Assistant Superior General, to head the Congregation. The four councilors were elected Nov. 6. The formal installation was held Sunday at the Blossom Road Motherhouse in Rochester.

The procedure for the election, drawn up and executed by the Mercy Senate had a whole "new look" from former years. A freer, more democratic and business-like, less "mysterious," atmosphere prevailed.

Ballots to nominate candidates and later to elect were distributed to the Sisters throughout the Diocese, and returned by mail or in person to one of the two designated centers: the Motherhouse, or St. James Hospital in Hornell.

The time was when Sisters eligible to vote assembled in the Motherhouse Chapel, and proceeded one by one to place their respective ballots in a box in full view of all present. The final count was announced in solemn silence, whereupon the ballots were burned in a small iron casket.

Unlike most previous elections, when Sisters were discouraged—even forbidden—to discuss candidates, the current pre-election-day trend was to talk about the natural talents of the Sisters, the obligations of the office, and to share opinions.

On election day, the Sisters were asked—if possible—to be at one of the two centers to watch the opening and counting of the ballots; and should, if be required—to vote a second time, if no Sister had received the necessary one over majority on the first ballot. A telephone committee was ready to receive the count from St. James; to phone the results to absent Sisters; and to call these same absentees if a second vote were necessary.

After the opening hymn and a prayer by presiding official, Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, the president of the Senate, Sister Mary Bonaventure, (now a newly-elected Councilor), gave directions for the rest of the morning.

Sisters circulated freely among the three counting tables; gathered around the compiling table, where Bishop Hogan checked and signed the results; returned to the Chapel for the announcement and final prayer; and then joined Sister Mary Judith in the dining room for an informal supper.

The formal official act of obedience whereby each Sister approached the new Superior and kissed her ring, was replaced by Sister Mary Judith's coming out to the Congregation with a kiss of peace. This act symbolized her role as "servant" and as well, the Congregation's role of sharing in her authority.

A new sense of collegial government, shared responsibility, and renewed trust in one another was evident in the entire program.