

'Because You Believe'

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an inner experience of religious significance. "Their confusion," he said, "reflects the confusion of the time." Yet at the casual, open discussions he has developed in an apartment across East Henrietta Road, opposite the college, the students seek concrete answers to their "search for" meaning in their own lives."

Father Donnelly realized early that many students had an ambivalent attitude toward his role on campus, yet he sees in this a hopeful sign. Shortly after he arrived, he recalls, one young man approached him with the statement, "It's important that you're here." Asked why he made that remark, the student explained to the new chaplain, "Because you believe. Both myself and my friends can't. Seeing you here with us gives us hope that we can some day believe again."

Father Donnelly hopes next

year to establish a regular center for the Newman Club in the College Complex Apartments across the road from the Community College. Now he operates out of the Student Activities Office and borrows the use of Emanuel United Church of Christ for Mass and the other services he conducts for the Catholic students.

He tries especially to bring the Catholic students into a situation where they will experience the Church as a real event in their lives. As he reflects on his situation, this priest sees some wry humor in the importance he attaches to his ministry. "After all," he points out, "each of us thinks our own work is the most important." At the same time he quickly points out that the future core of Rochester parishes now attends the Community College.

The counseling and religious

duties expected of a chaplain necessarily take up a large part of Father Donnelly's time. His 14-hour days express a conviction that before these formal encounters can mean anything, he must share in the experiences of the students.

With regard to a college chaplain's role in the church and in society, Father Donnelly remarked that, "A college chaplain has the opportunity to be as irresponsible as anyone, but to imply that this is widespread is potentially harmful. It is to dismiss a priest's work just because he deals with youth."

Such questions do not take up much of Father Donnelly's time. He is more likely to be found discussing State University budget problems with a group of students, or telling a youth where he can find out more about his problems with the draft.

