

# Discussion Groups Evaluated

By ED and JEAN COFFEY

**Ithaca** — In an effort to make Lent 1971 more meaningful, several groups of parishioners at St. Catherine of Siena instituted discussion groups to investigate some of the "gray areas" of changed thought in the church today.

Some of the groups found their interests sufficiently whetted during Lent that they decided to continue meeting even

after Easter. The results are interesting and perhaps indicative of trends in the activities and aims of tomorrow's religious communities.

Perhaps the most thriving group is that which gathers with Father Charles Mulligan. Interested and somewhat uncertain about the place of and varied forms of prayer in today's church, they focused first on Louis Everly's book, *Our Prayer*.

It was soon evident that members of the group had very different ideas on the subject of prayer in general.

Do you pray for things, specific needs of the individual or group, or for the love and strength to understand and accept things as they happen? The controversy blossomed, generating far more questions than it answered. Debate, however, did not bring division, but rather a spirit of community that resulted in the group's continued gatherings. In addition to a worthwhile discussion group, a laboratory for sensitivity had apparently evolved.

The group more recently has centered its attention on *The New Catechism* (Dutch catechism). They have also sensed the need for continued reading and study in matters relating to the church, its teachings and their role in modern life, and the new liturgy.

To this end, they have been instrumental in creating a parish library at St. Catherine's which operates in the vestibule of the Parish Center.

Even with the impending departure of their discussion leader, Father Mulligan, who has a new assignment as director of the Diocesan Office of Human Development, the group is determined to continue.

Other groups have also sensed a measure of success. A group of graduate student couples sought, and generally seemed to find, deeper meaning and understanding of their married lives through the discussion medium. Another group, particularly sensing a need for community in their parish, have instituted an experiment in Saturday morning community Mass and breakfast.

## Ithaca Area Notes

**Penn Yan** — In recently completed elections, officers were selected for the St. Michael's School Board for the 1971-72 school year. Elected were James Teahan, president; Mrs. Carlyle Sutherland, vice president; and Mrs. Edward Bolger, clerk-treasurer.

**Ithaca** — Teen Retreats for high school students and recent graduates are planned for July 23-24, 30-31 and Aug. 6-7, 13-14 at St. Catherine of Siena Parish Center in Ithaca. Activities will be scheduled from 8 p.m. Friday evening until 10 p.m. Saturday evening. 20-30 people may be accommodated on each retreat. Information and reservations may be obtained by calling Frank Sadowski at 273-5911 or signing up at St. Paul's Methodist Church.

**Groton** — The Cadillac Club of St. Anthony's Parish will sponsor a barbecue chicken dinner at the Groton Rod and Gun Club on July 25 at 1:30 p.m. Collectors and members of the Cadillac Club will be served free; other tickets are available at \$1.50 for adults and \$1 for children. Feature of the evening will be the selection of the Cadillac Club winner.

**Penn Yan** — St. Michael's Parish will sponsor its Summer Festival on the evenings of Aug. 5-7 at St. Michael's School playground, Keuka Street. Special features will be a ham supper on Thursday evening and a chicken barbecue on Saturday evening.

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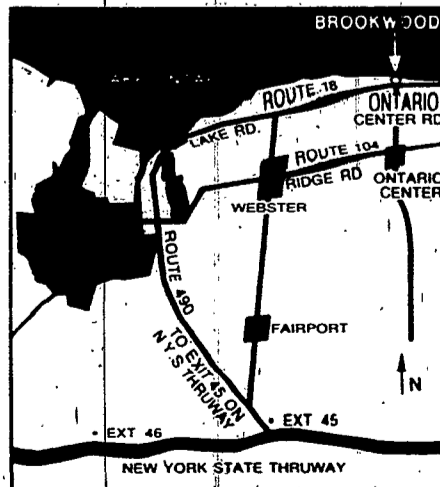
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