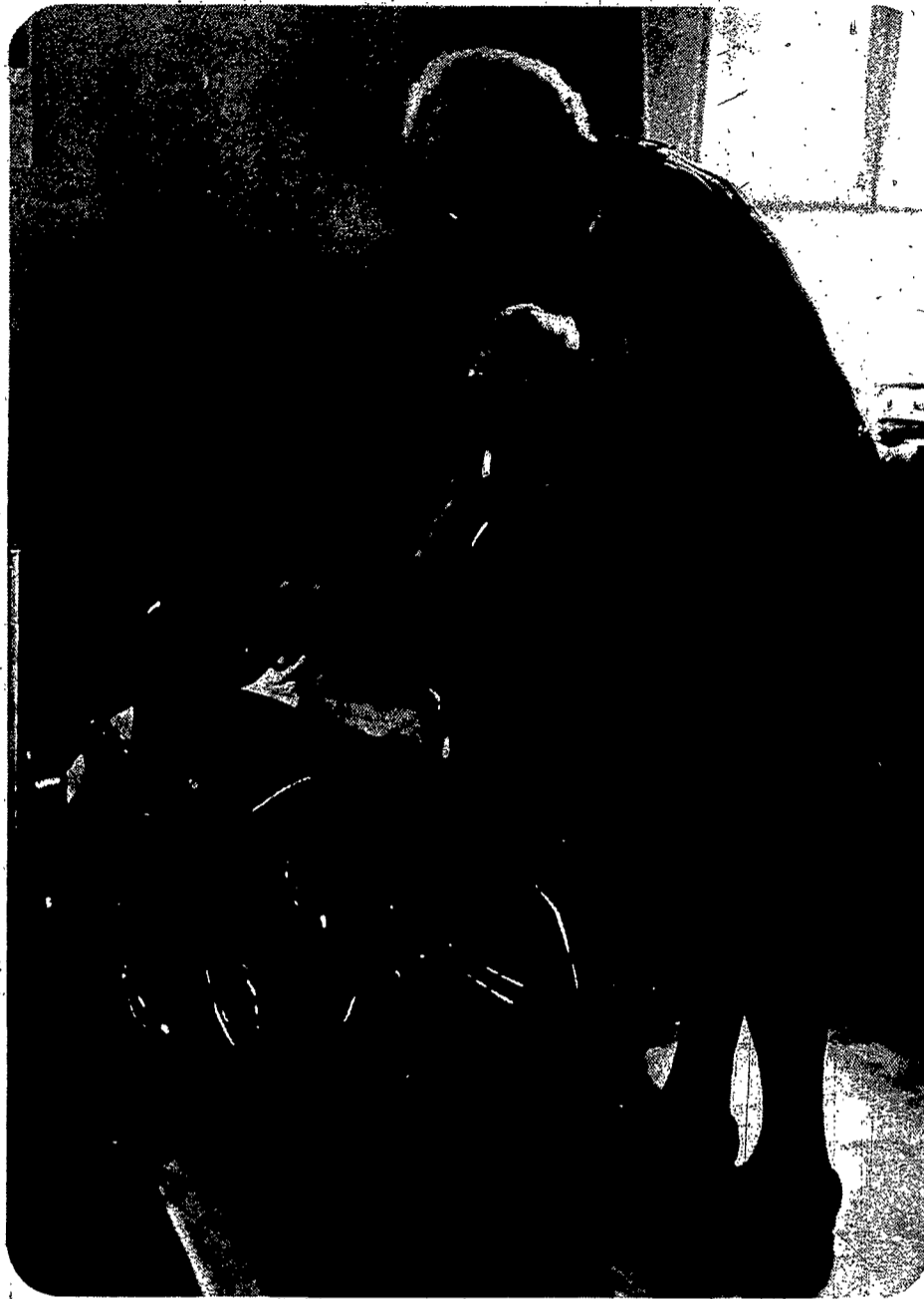


LEGION OF MARY



The eleven members of Comforter of the Afflicted praesidium in St. Ann's parish weekly visit patients in the Monroe County Infirmary. Shown wheeling a resident back from Mass is volunteer Marjorie Mann.

Fifty years ago in Dublin began an organization which has since spread around the world. "The Legion of Mary," says Miss Lucille Kunz, vice president of the Rochester Comitium, "has been ranked among the highest of apostolic works by all bishops and popes since its founding."

A typical parish chapter of the legion, called a praesidium, meets once a week for prayer, reports of work done, assignments of new work, and a short talk by the spiritual director, usually the pastor.

Legionnaires are expected to do two hours or more of outside work each week, consisting primarily of home visitations. In many cases, Legion members serve as a liaison between the pastor and individual parishioners, who are often so numerous that regular, personal contact between them and their parish priest is physically possible. In this way, legionnaires work to make a human community out of their parishes.

Each praesidium has three purposes: to stimulate the spiritual growth of the people belonging to it; to assist the priest; and to develop a group of auxiliaries. Auxiliaries are those Catholics who cannot do legion work, but who can pray for the success of legion efforts.

The Rochester Comitium of the legion directs and coordinates the activities of praesidia in the diocese. Officers are Father William A. Trott, spiritual director; Gerald Coursey, president; Lucille Kunz, vice president; Bernadine Begley, secretary; and Edward Adams, treasurer.

Not all chapters, however, are organized around one parish, a fact which demonstrates the flexibility of legion



Anna D'Argento does her Legion work by teaching CCD classes at St. Andrew's parish on Portland Ave.

structure. "Our Lady, Spouse of Joseph's praesidium, which prays with the men at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, draws members from all across the diocese.

On their home visits, legion members bring meditational pamphlets and words of comfort to afflicted people. A family with a child in the hospital, a son who has lost his father, or a wife who has a chronically ill husband can expect the spiritual assistance of legion members.

Several parishes have in addition to the regular praesidium, a chapter for juniors, boys and girls still in high school. These meet the same requirements as adult members.

At least once a year, the legionnaires meet at an Acies, a celebration held this year at Holy Name of Jesus parish.