



Building Community

The building above is not familiar to most Courier-Journal readers. It is St. Joseph's Center in Valatie, N.Y., near Albany and served as site for a unique program for Cardinal Mooney High School faculty recently.

The purpose was to develop an at-homeness with each other for better working relations and to explore how better to carry out their Christian apostolate of teaching.

Prime planners for the Enrichment Weekend on the local level were the principal of Cardinal Mooney, Brother Aubert Harrigan, CSC; assistant principal, Sister Mary Maureen, RSM; Brother Terence McGrath, director of studies, and the department heads of the school. Brothers William Reiser and Austin Byrnes, provincial councillors of the Brothers of Holy Cross, coordinated the program and were the main speakers. Brother William focused on educational issues and school philosophy; Brother Austin discussed apostolic implications and Christian values.

The staff was divided into rotating groups to facilitate discussions subsequently shared by the entire group. David Britton, doctoral candidate from the University of Massachusetts, conducted a full day work session on group problem-solving and decision-making, employing group dynamic techniques. Participant-observer projects gave faculty members behavioral insights of value in improving year-round faculty activities, discussion and problem solving. The experiences soon created an enjoyable rapport among workshop members.

Praying together was emphasized as an essential for building community and for serving the students in a Christian, apostolic way. Daily Mass and recitation of Lauds and Vespers were shared by the lay and religious staff.

Evaluation of this Mooney "first" at the closing session of the workshop resulted in an almost unanimous "We return home richer than we came. Let's go do it again!"



Cards and conversation helped pass the long bus ride for faculty members. Lay and religious faculty alike indulge in impromptu conversation during the day's unplanned moments.



Amidst the bustle and confusion of leaving, two of the nuns say farewell to the lay members who assisted in planning and conducting the workshop for the first time.