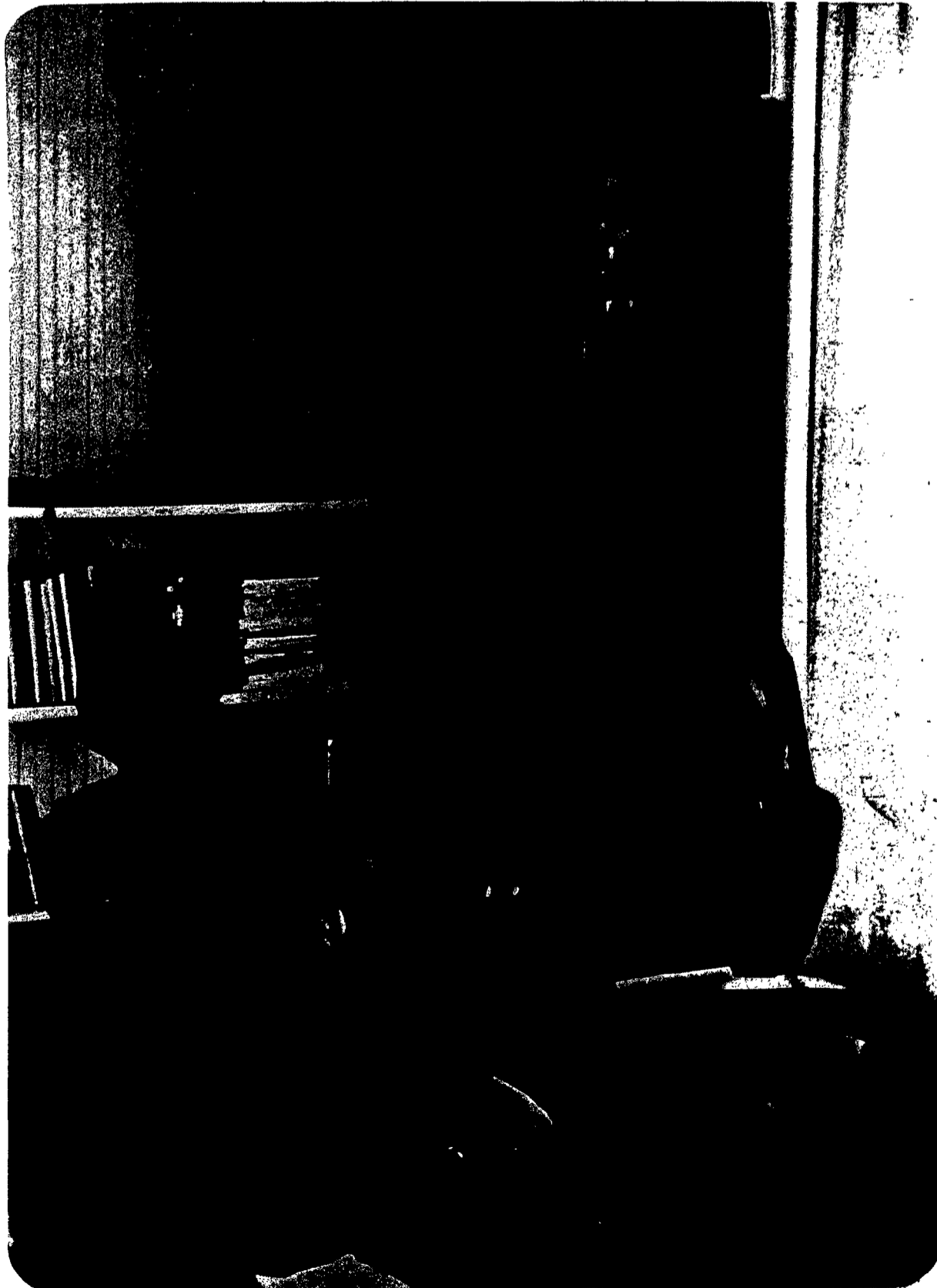




The estate of High Acres, above, peaceful in the afternoon sun, was the scene of conference for the Sisters' Council. Below, Sister Mary Barbara Hance, SA, on right, is regional representative to the National Assembly of Women Religious. Exchanging comments with her is Sister Elizabeth Anne LaValley, SSJ; seated in front, Sister Maria Lauren Donohue, OSST, watches conference.



## Sisters Council Ponders Goals, Priorities

The Diocesan Sisters' Council spent a recent weekend at High Acres, the Sisters of Mercy meeting center in Geneva, to establish goals. The one that received top priority was parishioner making processes of the Church.

The 23-member council, of representatives from the 15 Sisters' communities in the diocese, has been working for two years to get organized. Their efforts were praised by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and Sister Barbara Hance, the eastern regional coordinator of the National Association of Women Religious.

"It is time now for the Sisters' Council to come of age," Bishop Hogan told them, "to reflect an outward thrust, to encourage all religious and lay people in the process of renewal and to become truly representative of all the 1400 Sisters in the diocese, thus to be on a par with the Diocesan Priests' Council."

The sisters previously had geographic blocks, grouping all the religious houses of sisters council member will work with a block, reporting to its members and listening to them.

Sister Barbara Hance, of Trenton, N.J., said she was impressed by sisters' regard for ecumenism, evident in their concern for social issues.

"You are moving in the right direction," she told the council, "you should be a catalyst, working to coordinate efforts, and challenging the priests to respond to the needs that are obvious in the church; in liturgy and the education of the people of God in a worthwhile and meaningful way. Sisters could be a powerful influence if they would combine their efforts."

Sister Mary Bonaventure of Mercy High School, president of the Sisters' Council, concluded: "Religious women are trained in so many fields, we have valuable experience; we could be valuable leaders if they would let us."

Text by Barbara Moynihan  
Photos by Laurence E. Keefe