

**'One Parish'**

**Baptism A Parish Affair**

(Catholic Press Features)

In one parish, St. Andre's of Biddeford, Maine, a new method of conferring the sacrament of Baptism was begun a year ago. A priest of that parish, Father Roland J. Sirois, tells about it here:

At the outset, a baptismal catechesis was given to our parish community through a series of homilies and brief explanations in our parish bulletin.

The notion of a community celebrating and rejoicing over the reception of new members was disseminated among the members of the parish. It was pointed out that in order to make this a truly memorable event, Baptism would be celebrated once a month, on the last Sunday.

The two Sundays previous to the Baptism would be known as practice Sundays when parents and Godparents would be-

come familiar with the rite, learn hymns and acclamations, review the commitment of Baptism and go through the mechanics of the celebration.

Attendance at one of these two practice Sundays would be sufficient preparation for the ceremony.

In the meantime, the music department of our liturgical committee searched for appropriate music. Guitarists would offer their services at the actual celebration and assist parents and Godparents at the practice. The Adult Life Committee recruited and prepared lay couples to guide parents and Godparents in the mechanics of the celebration. Another committee accepted the responsibility of confecting baptismal robes.

Since the inception of this program a year ago, 108 children were received into our Christian community. Some 398 adults received baptismal catechesis.

Parents who had been neglectful in the practice of their faith received new insights and hopefully returned to a deeper commitment. Several marriages were blessed. One father was baptized with his infant child on the same day.

In one case, a mother wished to have her child baptized privately because her husband would not hear of his child being baptized. The Godmother insisted that the child be baptized with the other children in a communal celebration. Her wish became a fact when on that day, the mother, five other children, and the father were all present.

On the anniversary of this program, we celebrated Baptism at Mass.

Our next step, already initiated and in progress, is the teaching role of the entire community with regards to its new members. Six months after Baptism, the children are visited in their homes by a priest and the religious coordinator. This is but a first encounter.

The second step is to have lay couples visit the families every other six months until the child is of school age.

The total Christian community witnesses and receives new members and it cannot be satisfied only with the Christian birth of these children. As they grow physically, they will also grow spiritually with the help of the entire community. This is, indeed, the faith that the community has professed with them; this is the faith which the community wishes to see flourish in them.

**FISHER TOUR**

The St. John Fisher Glee Club will leave for an eight-day concert tour of Massachusetts on Wednesday, April 5. The 28-member group, under the direction of Dr. H. Wendell Howard, will appear on Boston's Larry Glick Show over WBZ radio. They will also sing at a Mass at the Boston Cathedral on Sunday, April 9. In addition, the group will perform at several high school assemblies and a home-for children.

**China Need for Machine Tools Cited as Reason for Friendliness**

China's need of machine tools is a major reason President Richard Nixon was invited there, according to William Ringle, the member of the Gannett News Service bureau who reported on that trip.

Ringle showed a slide of a boarded up Catholic church and said that he saw priests wearing the Roman collar, and the Mao suit. "None of them are in communion with Rome any more," he said.

"We produce more jeeps than the Chinese because of machine tools, not because of industrial workers," Ringle told a gathering of Rochester journalists in an after-dinner talk last week.

"I think one major reason Nixon was invited is they are now changing to an industrial economy since most of the soil is no longer workable," he continued, and to make this change more effective, machine tools are necessary.

Other possible reasons Ringle gave for the turnabout in their foreign policy toward capitalist United States are "The Chinese wanted to throw a little scare into the Russians, and they had their own political reason. They wanted to show their people they are doing something about Taiwan."

**Golden Agers Meeting Set**

The Southwest Golden Age Group, a non-denominational social organization which encourages active participation of senior citizens in dances, games and costumed revues will meet in the **Panel Room at 34 Monica St.**, at 1:30 p.m., Friday, April 14.

A spokesman for the group said new members are being sought for the group and volunteers are needed to provide transportation. For further information, call (716) 235-7909.

Refreshments are served at the gatherings.

**Our Parish COUNCIL**  
by Bernard Lyons

The bishops of Vatican Council II said in the Constitution of the Church (Article 10): "The laity should accustom themselves to working in the parish in close union with their priests, bringing to the church community their own and the world's problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which should be examined and resolved by common deliberation."

What did the bishops mean? Do lay people bring their own and the world's problems to their priests? To the parish council? Will they do so?

I suspect that, like our Protestant brothers and sisters, not many of us bring our own and the world's problems to our church community.

The National Council of Churches has done a very important and extensive study and report on these questions. An all lay committee, the National Committee of the Listening-to-Lay-People Project spent several years and \$700,000 in its study. They set up lay groups in 23 communities across the nation with the help of local committees.

Their work centered on the lay person as the Christian at work in the world. Their findings are summarized in "Listening to Lay People," compiled by Cameron P. Hall (Friendship Press, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, N.Y. 10027.)

"We turn our attention primarily to this aspect of lay people," the committee said, "because the church has all but abandoned them there."

"Our objective is to develop in the Christian church a new ministry through lay people to the institutions of the secular world."

The committee felt, "The barrier between 'sacred' and 'secular' has been overcome in principle. It must be overcome in practice. The secular is then seen as sacred. All life, where Christian lay people live and work, now becomes the arena for the church's ministry."


The committee made it clear that they were not speaking of a ministry of the church structures to lay people, but a ministry of the whole church through laity.

The implications of this are that ecclesiastical structures must make a fresh assessment of their prevailing purposes and operations.

If lay people are to minister to society they will require clergy to assume the role of enablers. Clergy and lay people will cooperate in a new way — the clergy and religious as servants to lay people, who in turn are directly active in society. The whole community of Christ will thus minister in and to the institutions of men here and now," the committee reported.

It sounds a lot like many of the Vatican Council II sentiments, doesn't it?

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