

'One Parish'

Anniversaries, a Parish Celebration

(Catholic Press Features)

Yearly anniversaries of married couples in one parish have become a cause for liturgical celebration.

Every month, a special Mass is celebrated for parish couples observing their anniversary that month.

Each couple receives a written invitation to attend the Mass, followed by a reception at the rectory, where there is coffee and cake.

The anniversary Masses are announced in the parish, and all parishioners are invited to share

in the celebration, with other married couples being invited to join in the renewal of marriage vows, if they wish.

The special anniversary Mass was begun about three years ago, largely through the leadership of the chairmen of the parish's family life board.

During a discussion with an associate pastor who was founder of the parish's family life group, there was talk of the needs of priests, which led to plans for a family joining a priest at Mass on his ordination anniversary day, of children presenting an anniversary cake, of a special card that would say to

the priest: "Glad you made this commitment. You're important to us. We need you."

It seemed important to them that lay friends share the joy of a priest's anniversary, but they soon started having similar thoughts about the marriage vocation.

Marriage anniversaries, they felt, could become a cause of community celebration. Why couldn't those couples be told, "Glad you made this commitment to each other and to Christ. We need you. You are important as a basic unit of society, as center of the Church's ministry. Come, let's celebrate!"

U. S. Pledges \$24 Million to U. N. Program

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. (RNS) — The United States has pledged up to \$24 million to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities during 1972. This pledge is contingent on pledges from other donors toward the fund's total goal of \$40 million to \$50 million this year.

In announcing the pledge in Washington, Secretary of State William Rogers noted that the Congress had stressed the importance of looking to United Nations agencies for leadership in population programs and had emphasized the desirability of channeling U.S. support through U.N. agencies.

Rogers said that since its establishment in 1959, the U.N. Fund had received support from 49 countries, which have pledged about \$55 million in technical assistance grants for a wide variety of projects in the population field.

"We believe this reflects two growing worldwide convictions: One, measures to curb excessive rates of population growth are urgent and necessary, and two, that the U.N. population fund is financing effective programs," he added.

CDA Awards

Hornell — The Catholic Daughters of America have given their award for greatest scholastic achievement to Dianne Lackey and Michael Rahmlow at St. Ann's School's eighth grade graduation. The Daughters of the American Revolution honored James Kinsman and Mary Frances Argentieri at the same ceremony.

Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons

"Are you optimistic about the Church?" is a question asked many times.

"Sure, I am!" is my answer. I don't know how you can be a Catholic Christian and not be optimistic.

My optimism isn't based just on some dream, either. Nor is it based solely on the good that I see already accomplished — a new emphasis on Christ (not only in the Jesus people, but within the Church community, too!), English in the liturgy, the Pentecostal movement, Catholics in the forefront of opposition to the Vietnam war, the growth of parish and diocesan councils, and a continuing litany of persons, movements and organizations that make the breath of the Holy Spirit visible among us.

But more important to my optimism is what I think is a new self-awareness in the Church. I hear people identifying themselves as Church.

Many of the changes in the Church since Vatican Council II depended, in a sociologist's way of speaking, on "other directed" persons. We're beginning to see a great number of "inner-directed" persons.

It takes a certain freedom in Christ to be able to identify yourself as Church.

Do you think of yourself when you say "Church"? Do you include yourself in that concept of the "People of God"?

Many of us were taught our religion by a method that equated the Church with the pope, the parish, or the pastor.

We also had drawn for us a picture of the Church in the form of a triangle, or a pyramid. It had the laity at the base, and numerous categories of religious, priests and bishops above until you reached the pope at the peak.

The Vatican Council II fathers and Pope Paul VI have said that the Church might be better described as a circle. The circle recognizes that, yes, there are specific roles and ministries in the Church, but that we — religious, priests and laity — are the Church.

Say it — "I am the Church."

If you can say it confidently, what does it mean for you, say, at the next meeting when an idea is shot down because someone suggests, "The pastor won't like it."?

If you can say it sincerely, what does it mean for you when you realize how many people have

not heard about Christ and His Church?

If you can say it openly, what does it mean in your commitment to justice for the poor and the segregated?

My optimism is based on persons and groups thinking through the implications of questions like these. The persons, movements and changes of what we now call "renewal" are only a taste of what will bear fruit from this growing self-awareness of the Church.

I am optimistic because I see fewer laity thinking councils are nice because they give the laity a chance to help the priests and religious with what is considered essentially their work.

With more people taking a community view of the Church, we will understand even more that this mission of the Church is our work. We will see Christ at work through us in this, our apostolic community. We will consider ourselves as Church, as participants in all that concerns the Church.

This means that as we get beyond a static view of the Church — as "they" or as "someplace" or as "something" — and realize that we are the Church, renewal will only just begin.

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'Feis' Slated For July 8

Rochester will host its first "Feis" at the Monroe County Fairgrounds, Saturday, July 8. A feis is a festival of Irish step dancing.

According to Seamus McGinnity, chairman of the Rochester Feis Committee, "Irish step dancing plays a very important part in the cultural life of the Irish people."

Bishop Joseph Hogan has donated a trophy, one of 19, to be given at the dancing competition, according to the committee.

The Rochester group is part of a national commission which sponsors such festivals throughout the country.

The events begin at 10 a.m.

CDA CONVENTION

Brockport — Mrs. Frank J. Donahue, recently elected regent of New York State Court, Catholic Daughters of America, will attend the 34th biennial national convention July 15-21 in Atlantic City, and a meeting July 14-15 of state regents.

Convention delegates include Mrs. Mary Scott of Penn Yan.

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