

'Primarily We Come to Work'

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Nailing a chair together, seeing that storm windows are put up and taken down, and keeping the furnace going daily in the wintertime are all part of the hectic life of two Sisters of St. Joseph who staff the farm house in King Ferry which serves as their convent home and headquarters of the Rural Education Center.



Sisters Elaine Theresa Mulcahy & Helen Goschke.

"Primarily we came to work with adults as well as supervise the schools of religion," explained Sister Helen Goschke. "And the emphasis has not been on teaching in the traditional sense, but on Christian development, which is a life long process for all of us."

Sister Helen has been with the program since its inception in September of 1968. Sister Elaine Theresa Mulcahy joined the staff in 1970.

"Our reception has always been cordial, but after four years we feel a real part of the total community," reflected Sister Helen. "The fruits of the work are really beginning to unfold as parishioners become more aware of how the program can be personally enriching. They are asking for specific programs based on their needs, and seeking a more active role in parish activities."

Sister Helen said that the most rewarding experience has been the change of emphasis from religious education completely outside home to reaching the children through adults and family living.

"The adults are asking to share more fully in the understanding of their faith in this changing world," she said.

The sisters pointed out that each of the five parishes they serve has its own personality, but they are able to respond to specific needs of each.

An innovation this year was the elimination of released time for seventh and eighth grades in the northern section of the territory and the institution of 10 weekly evening sessions in the fall and spring. Each child had to be accompanied by a parent and separate sessions were held. Some enrollment was lost, but the Sisters feel this approach provided greater depth.



New Post

Father John M. Ryan O. Carm., former vice principal of Mt. Carmel High School in Auburn, has been named pastor of Transfiguration Church, Tarrytown, by Terence Cardinal Cooke, Fr. Ryan was appointed Vocation Director for the Carmelites on the East Coast in 1967, before Mt. Carmel closed its doors. For the past five years he has lectured, interviewed and counseled prospective candidates for the Carmelite seminaries, which have doubled their enrollments.

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"Like all other programs, this one had its growing pains, but a real bond was created," explained Sister Helen. "These parents are now planning how to get more parishioners involved so they too can share this deeper appreciation of their faith. In the coming year we hope to reach out to parents not yet reached. What is hampering us at present is lack of facilities and personnel."

High schoolers meet in home discussion groups monthly with Sister Elaine Theresa. She explained that as in all parishes it is a challenge to present a meaningful religion program for high schoolers. However, one successful result of involving the high schoolers in action was seen in eight youths who teach religion to the elementary.

Sister Helen explained, "We emphasize continuing Christian development for all since conscience formation is a life time process. Unless religion is made an everyday part of living, children can get a warped idea of God. This could hinder their relationship to Him as they mature. We strongly encourage paraliturgies in the home, those little moments when the family gathers together to express the Christian life they share."

Plans for the coming year include the beginning of a program for parents of preschoolers because of the basic attitudes formed in early infancy. However, it may be necessary to limit this program to one or two areas until lay people can be trained to help.

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