

It would have to be an unusual parish council that would meet even though its officers had to sit in wheel chairs. There is one in Rochester that does as a matter of course.

This 16-member "parish council" represents the Catholic patients and residents of the Monroe County Home and Community Hospital.

The council has begun meeting on the first Friday of each month to discuss the liturgical and religious affairs of the Catholics it represents.

Father Bruce Ammering, chaplain at the Home and Hospital, gets pretty vehement talking about the capabilities of older people, who, he says, "have got the stuff."

The management of the council's business, says Father Ammering, is strictly in the hands of its members, who showed the initiative to get the project off the ground.

A meeting of the council bears out Father Ammering's point, for the ideas discussed are innovative and the exchanges are lively.

In one evening the council planned to revise its liturgy so that those who wished to could come up to the altar to participate in the Mass; results of previous experiments were evaluated; and it was proposed to gather money to "adopt" a needy child somewhere in the city.

The dialogue is often sharp but usually good humored. When a member strays from the point, an interjection often brings him back to it.

"I remember, when I was ten years old —"

"That was a long time ago!"

Everybody laughs, even the speaker.

The purpose of the parish council, explains Father Ammering, "is to substitute for what they would have in their own parish."

Actually, the community of Catholics in the Home and Hospital has no separate standing in the diocese; it comes under the pastoral care of St. Anne's parish.

But since many of those living there come from other parishes, having their own council helps "to keep links with their own parishes."



Katherine Geto joins in prayer.

'Older People Have Got the Stuff'



Laura Lazus listens attentively.



Howard Benjamin propose