

Catholic Charities Sizing Up Its Spirituality

(First in a Series)

While parishes and individuals throughout the diocese are re-evaluating their own priorities in light of Bishop Joseph L. Hogan's call for a Year of Renewal, the largest diocesan department, Catholic Charities, is doing some large scale soul-searching.

Its director, Father Joseph D'Aurizio puts it this way:

"Our renewal will place greater emphasis on the spiritual dimension of life. Our dedication to Christ and his mission in the world is the unique contribution we make to the field of social welfare. We must witness Christ in the world and build the physical and natural into the spiritual and supernatural."

"The service of Catholic Charities must be sacramental, that is, evidencing the mercy and love of Christ," Father D'Aurizio added.

Father D'Aurizio has been with

Catholic Charities for 11 years and has been its director since Feb. 3, 1972.

Catholic Charities, as he sees it, is the central office or heart of the many agencies which in turn serve as arms into the community.

The central office also serves as liaison between the Pastoral Office and the agencies the DePaul Clinic, the Catholic Youth Organization, the Catholic Family Center in Rochester, Elmira and Auburn, St. Ann's Home, St. Joseph's Villa, and the Genesee and Charles Settlement Houses.

Referring to Catholic Charities renewal as a "kind of rekindling," Father D'Aurizio says it will be reflected in concrete terms, for instance with the CYO, where greater effort will be expended in influencing youth with Christian values as well as providing recreational opportunities.

"We at Charities see our work differently than secular agen-

cies," Father D'Aurizio said. "Life is important not only for reasons that all admit but also because natural life is the basis for a greater and fuller life destined to be shared with Almighty God. In the family service programs, family life together has so much more meaning when this dimension is added.

"In the case of an unwed mother, for example, the unborn child's potential for sharing eternal life more strongly emphasizes his right to life."

Father D'Aurizio also stressed interest for the aged.

"Society doesn't really rank older people very high in the order of priorities. America places a great emphasis on productivity. We at Catholic Charities see the great significance in the acceptance of suffering, the need to supernaturalize that suffering in terms of expiation of sin. We can help them prepare for eternity which is not very far off for them, which they, too, realize."

He said there is a feeling in some quarters that perhaps the word "Catholic" should be toned

down. He strongly disagrees.

"The very word means universal and by emphasizing Catholic you are saying you are trying to help all people. Catholic is Christian and the more Christian you are the more you want to help all people."

"Look at it semantically," he said. "Catholic Charities can be said another way — universal love."

NEXT WEEK — Some new directions for the Catholic Youth Organization.



FATHER D'AURIZIO

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