

Making Religion Dramatic

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Auburn — Youth appeal was the keynote of an ecumenical service at St. Mary's Church recently.

A modern day morality play, "The Waiting Room," unfolded on a darkened altar with the spotlight on a simple setting. Four main characters representing babies in a heavenly waiting room anticipating their birth, engage in conversation with a butcher who mistakenly entered their room as he awaited judgment after life on earth. The butcher tries to dissuade them from their picture of life, but the children resolve to enter the world with faith in God that life can be different from the experiences of the butcher.

The dramatization at St. Mary's, under the direction of Father James Enright, was presented at an ecumenical service which included songs accompanied by guitars, bible readings, and concluded with nearly all 100 participants gathering on the altar in a sing-a-long.

Father Enright pointed out that morality plays, or current day adaptation, need not be re-

stricted to youth services, but could be one of a variety of approaches including dramatic form in preaching the Christian faith in the church setting. Morality plays are an attempt to take basic questions men have been asking for centuries and ask them again.

Although "The Waiting Room" was written recently, morality plays as a form of religious drama were first produced in England in the 1400s. The characters represented such qualities or conditions as virtue, vice, ignorance and knowledge. The plays were used to teach reforms and developed from church pageants. Originally in the hands of the clergy, the plays passed along to trade guilds, but were a characteristic product of the Christian life of their times.

Father Enright feels liturgy should reflect a constant growth and celebration. Whenever you read a scripture passage, you should discover something new in it.

He pointed out that in recent years there has been the realization that the liturgy does not have to be the same. Universality doesn't mean uniformity.

and that you can experiment without endangering reality.

"Drama isn't anything new," he commented. "Ritual certainly isn't new, nor is man's wanting to communicate more than just by words, but by actions, new."

Father Enright explained that dramatic readings, the story of the gospel in modern language acted out, re-reading the gospel story in modern words, are all ways readings could be adapted to different groups.

"One of the things which is encouraging variety is the fact the Mass is now in English rather than Latin. With English language being used in the liturgy, it has been taken out of mystic ritualism and into happening of everyday life."

He also indicated today we have certain technical advantages. People are becoming concerned with acoustics. Media such as slides and movies can be used.

"However, it has to be done in good taste," stressed Father Enright. "It should enhance and bring out the beauties of the message of the word. It can't be done just for the sake of doing drama in church. The methods used to proclaim the gospel are secondary to the gospel, and the methods can never become the primary emphasis. When art form becomes primary and liturgy secondary, that is wrong. We must keep balance."

Father Enright added, "Liturgy isn't meant always to be comforting, but stimulating and awakening. If prayer is the raising of the heart and mind, the mind should be stimulated and that means new thought, new ideas, and constant growth. If Christian ritual becomes stagnant, then we are missing that dynamic part of Christian faith — the going toward completion."

Father Enright feels the variety of ways of proclaiming the gospel evolving today can encourage people to enter more fully into the celebration. More and more people are responding by being able to tell you what happened in church beyond the parking lot.



Ecumenical service for teens.

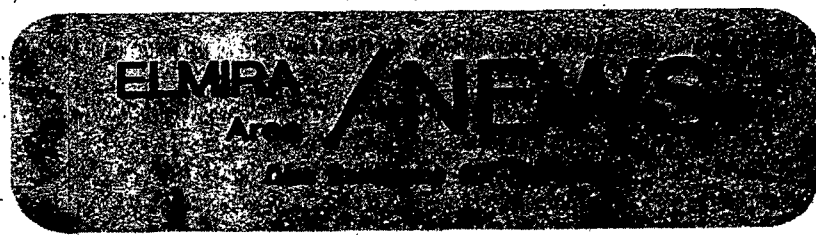
Auburn Area Notes

Auburn — Novena for the Sorrowful Mother will be held on nine consecutive Fridays, Feb. 23 through April 20 at 6:45 p.m. at St. Aloysius Church.

Auburn — The Holy Family Athletic Association dance will be held Feb. 24 in the Holy Family Auditorium. Reservations may be placed with Mrs. Dominiak Padula, Mrs. John Manzone, or Mrs. Joseph Morabito.

Port Byron — There will be a community renewal program at St. John's Church March 2, 3, and 4 at 7:30 p.m. The four Port Byron churches are sponsoring their triduum and everyone is invited, youth included.

Port Byron — There will be a bake sale in St. John's Hall before and after each Mass, Feb. 24 and 25.



Religious Education Workshop to Be Held

Watson Homestead — Late registration for a two-day workshop on "Personal Renewal" will be accepted by officials of the Christian Formation Board, sponsors of the program.

The workshop is slated March 2 and 3, at the Watson Homestead, located in Coopers Plains near Corning.

Retirement Program Relocates

Elmira — The retirement counselling program sponsored by the New Horizon House, a center for senior citizens, has been such an overwhelming success that future counselling programs are being moved to a larger facility.

Harry P. Seebach, chairman of the program, said all programs for retirement counselling will now be held at the community room of the Chemung Valley Savings and Loan Association, West First and North Main Streets.

All programs begin at 7:30 p.m. and will be held on Feb. 27, March 6 and 13.

Elmira Area Notes

Elmira Heights — The Altar and Rosary Society of St. Charles Borromeo will put on a smorgasbord supper Saturday, from 5 until 7 p.m., in the church hall, 130 Oakwood. Tickets are \$1.75 for adults, \$.75 for children. Mrs. William Stone and Mrs. Hector Lorenzini are chairmen.

Courier-Journal

Sister Jose Hobday, OFM, will be the guest lecturer for the entire program. Sister Jose is currently living and working on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Mont.

She is also doing research for the American Indian Culture Center at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The workshop will consist of one Friday night lecture and two lectures on Saturday. Discussions will be held after each lecture.

The program is open to individuals who wish to stay overnight as well as to day commuters.

Registration forms may be obtained from Mrs. Judy Wardell, 3026 Wynnwood Road, Big Flats, or by calling 607-562-3355.

Study Group Look's for Members

Apalachin — An unique study program is being conducted at St. Margaret Mary Church to acquaint parishioners with various portions of the Bible.

The parish has organized a bible study group which meets every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. Approximately 10 women are involved in the program but new members are being sought.

Parish officials also explained that persons who cannot attend every session are also welcome at the meetings.

The group meets today at 11 Terrace Drive, Tioga Terrace.

Fr. Mulligan To Be Feted

Auburn — A community reception is being planned to honor Father John Mulligan, former associate pastor at St. Mary's, recently transferred to be co-pastor St. John the Evangelist Church in Rochester.

The reception will be held in the ballroom of the Auburn Inn on Sunday, Feb. 25 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Msgr. James D. Cuffney, pastor at St. Mary's, extends his personal invitation to all of Father Mulligan's friends in the community. Father Mulligan gave impetus to a number of community and parish activities.

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