

U.S. Antipoverty Cutbacks Draw Protest from Priest

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Auburn — Father James Enright, associate pastor at St. Mary's, joined four bus loads of area residents who traveled to Washington, D.C., two weeks ago to protest the dismantling of federal antipoverty programs.

He feels strongly that federal programs should be continued, as individual initiative and free play of competition can no longer assure successful development of the person in today's society.

Father Enright, representative of the Auburn Interfaith Ministry (AIM) to Cayuga County Action Program (CCAP) and vice chairman of the CCAP Board of Directors, explained that funding cutbacks could mean the elimination or phasing out of Cayuga County based programs influencing economic development, manpower training, housing and welfare rights, unless Congress restores funds or local funding is forthcoming.

Specific programs include Cayuga County Homesite Corp. Family Planning Center and the Job Corps. Approximately 4,000 persons were served in some way by CCAP last year.

The importance of bringing awareness of the functions of government to the local citizenry, especially the low income, and the experience in political activism, were other motivating factors for his trip.

Father Enright was responsible for the first training session in a three-hour seminar set by CCAP for the Cayuga County residents once they arrived in the capital. He spoke on the Christian spirit of concern for one's neighbor and the need for grass roots America to assume a more active role in assuring the dignity of its people and meeting their material and social needs. CCAP officials met with representatives from Congress and the Senate.

"In today's society Christian people and the Church have to admit that because of the complexity of modern day politics and government, people have to be sophisticated and well-organized to make their needs known," commented Father Enright. "It is no longer the day of individual help from the local politician as it was in past years. There needs to be Christian involvement in all areas influencing man's ability to live within society successfully."

Auburn Area Notes

Weedsport — There will be Lenten 5:15 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph's on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, and an 8 a.m. Mass on Saturday. Lenten services at 7 p.m. on Wednesday and Friday will reflect special themes, and there will be stations of the cross at the Friday Mass.

Ecumenical services with the four Protestant churches in Weedsport will be held at 7:30 p.m. Sunday evenings. The emphasis will be on Christian family life.

Services March 18 will be in the Sennett Federated Church; March 25, at St. Joseph's; April 1, at the Baptist Church; April 8, at First Methodist and April 15, at the First Presbyterian Church.

Aurora — St. Patrick's Church Lenten activities feature a Wednesday 7:30 p.m. service; March 14 there will be a penance service, readings, homily and prayer. March 21 there will be a Eucharistic meditation followed by the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; a youth oriented service on March 28, with Penitential rite. Stations of the Cross will be held April 4. A Seder supper will be conducted April 11.

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Among the forces that move society is political action. Politics should not be a dirty word for simply defined it is the interaction of people in society to achieve a necessary goal."

In an open letter to Catholics of Auburn, released prior to his departure for Washington, Father Enright pointed out concern for social action was founded in the teachings of Christ and the Catholic church. Christians have been recalled to their commitment in the papal encyclical on the Development of People issued in 1967.

In restating the priest's duty to proclaim the gospel, Father Enright pointed out helping the

poor have a voice in their own destiny is one way the Church can provide moral leadership.

While personal charity is part of the Christian individual's responsibility, the Christian community needs to act together as a corporate body. He said communities must admit there are people to be fed, homeless to be housed, the socially and mentally disturbed, the imprisoned to be administered to in their needs. And the channels for social action to eliminate the cause of these social conditions need the support of the total Christian community employing those modern day ways of influence available to effect positive change, he said.

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