



Above, Father Gerald Connor, director of vocations at Becket Hall gives a final puff on the balloon he's preparing for the children's Mass held March 11. Seminarian Mike Sullivan, far left, pedals off to enjoy the spring weather while, left, his classmate Bill Weckerly fights off spring fever to complete his study of sociology.

**TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY SUSAN MCKINNEY**

A behind the scene look at seminary life was given 64 high school boys who spent the weekend of Feb. 23-25 at a retreat at Becket Hall. The retreat, one of a series at Becket, aimed at giving the young

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Seminarians and high school students celebrated the liturgy, a religious aspect of the seminary; assisted in the cleaning and responsibilities of Becket Hall; and took part in the varied recreational activities of the seminary.

To help the visitors get the most out of their visit discussion and study sessions also were held. The first two of five small group discussions concentrated on interpersonal relationships. The last three discussions pertained to prayer and the spiritual life.

The goal of the retreats is to keep some contact with boys in high school who are interested in the leaders of the priesthood, according to Father Gerald T. Connor, diocesan vocations director. The retreat gives the high school boys an insight into how the seminarians, who are college students at St. John Fisher, live. Many people, said Father Connor, are aware of the role religion plays in the life of those studying for the priesthood. However, few realize the friendships, activities, and responsibilities which the seminarians share.

Retreats held by Becket Hall vary in their emphasis. Some are oriented toward religion while others are socially oriented. The social retreats, one of which is scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend, give boys a chance to talk one to one with seminarians. On social retreats seminarians and other students enjoy athletics, sports, cooking their own food, recreation, have daily prayer and plan the liturgy themselves.

Social programs are less structured than the religious retreats. Social retreats are an opportunity for those involved to live as a community together.

The most recent such retreat at Christmas gave boys an afternoon at the CYO

followed by Mass and supper at Becket Hall. The life of Becket seminarians is varied. There is the religious dimension, sprinkled with athletics, friendships, and demanding college classes. And now and then an original undertaking, such as the children's Mass held at the hall Sunday, March 11. The Mass, held for children of families who regularly attend services there was a large scale undertaking for Becket's seminarians who responded overwhelmingly to the idea. In preparation for the event seminarians blew up balloons, painted art, hung streamers and built an ark to hold the offerings of stuffed animals.

The seminarians' commitment to the children's Mass didn't end with the completion of decorations and the beginning of the Mass itself. The seminarians were there to do their part lending a hand to the smaller kids who couldn't see the Mass without being held up.

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