



Precarious Perch

A worker high atop a crane surveys the demolition work going on at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira. The demolition is part of the rebuilding program for the institution following last year's flooding from Hurricane Agnes.

At Holy Spirit, St. Jerome

Child Liturgies Make Hit

By CHARLES RANDISI

Though the Mass is now entirely said in English, there are still some who do not fully understand it — children.

Sister Catherine and Sister Marie Brown, SSJ, religious education coordinators at Holy Spirit Church, Penfield, and St. Jerome Church, East Rochester, respectively, have been trying to make the Mass more meaningful for pre-teens with special liturgies for children at their parishes.

Just before the penitential rite at Holy Spirit's 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass, Sister Catherine asks for young volunteers to follow her to one of the classrooms back of the church. There, she and her mini-congregation of 40 to 50 children,

ranging in age from three to 12, light a candle, sit on the floor, and discuss the day's gospel.

Sister Catherine has been holding what she calls her "children's liturgy of the Word" since last October, and has met only with success.

She got the idea from Sister Marie, who is now in her second year of conducting children's liturgies.

In the classroom, Sister Catherine reads the gospel from an old tree stump that serves as a podium. Then the children join in the exchange, which she says is "pretty much of a dialogue for children."

Singing, flimstrips, pictures,

and a little artwork also go into the liturgy. Says Sister Catherine, "The children get a lot out of it."

She takes the gospel from the Living Bible, then paraphrases it into terms that the children can understand. For example, she said, when she read the parable of the Good Shepherd, she asked her congregation what a shepherd was.

"Some didn't know," she says. So the discussion centered on the meaning of the word and who the children thought were like shepherds in real life.

The liturgy lasts until just before the offertory, and the children file back into church for the remainder of the Mass.

Although Sister Catherine always gets a "full house," there are no discipline problems. "They realize that this is a special time," she says, "not play time."

The liturgy extends beyond the four walls of the classroom. Sister asks the children to share their experience and understandings with their parents.

Sister Catherine hopes to expand the program so that it might become "an available kind of thing at all the Masses. . . . It serves a real good purpose."

Sister Marie's liturgies are much the same as Sister Catherine's. She likes the idea, because "it helps them (children) get adjusted to the longer homilies, which are not, for the most part, adapted to children."

They got the idea from Christiane Brusselmans, a noted liturgist.

Official Directory

Church Numbers Still Fluctuating

New York [RNS] — The number of U.S. Catholics increased by 69,437 during 1972, but the Official Catholic Directory of 1973 reported an over-all decrease in the percentage of Catholics among the nation's population, from 23.3 to 23.1 per cent — plus decreases in schools, teachers, clergy, religious, baptisms and converts.

The directory indicated that there are 48,460,427 Catholics in the 50 states, including all families of the armed forces at home and overseas. However, the 69,437 increase in Catholics is less than half the increase for 1972 — which was 176,261.

Perhaps most significant among the data was that Catholic parishes increased to a record high of 18,384; that there was a 6 per cent decrease in the number of Catholic school children, and that the total number of converts to Catholicism, the lowest since 1939, revealed a drop of 5,087 in a year.

The Catholic Directory, published by P.M. Kenedy and Sons of New York, reported that the 32 archdioceses in the U.S. have a total Catholic population of 21,790,123, and the 133 dioceses a Catholic population of 26,670,304.

The 32 archdioceses reported an increase of 41,390 Catholics; the dioceses increased by 28,047.

The Catholic Directory, first published in 1817 and now reflecting more than 230,000 additions and changes each year, records the status of the Catholic Church to Jan. 1 of the year it is published. It includes a general summary sheet for statistical comparison.

Among notable changes in the U.S. Catholic Church were:

* An increase in the hierarchy by one member — from 304 to 305 in 1972.

* A decrease in the number of clergy by 452, bringing the total of ordained priests to 56,969. However, while the diocesan or secular priests decreased by 504, religious order priests increased by 52.

* A continuing decrease in professed religious Brothers — 539, leaving a total of 9,201; and a decrease of 3,860 Sisters, leaving 143,054 active.

* A total of 11,258 separate educational institutions — 455 fewer than in 1972.

* A decrease of 5,269 teachers in full-time teaching staffs of all educational institutions under Catholic auspices. There are 659 fewer priests, 250 fewer scholastics, 241 fewer Brothers, 3,666 fewer Sisters and 453 fewer lay teachers than a year ago. The current teacher total is 183,258 comprising 8,041 priests, 375 scholastics, 4,061 Brothers, 66,998 nuns and 103,783 lay teachers.

For the first time, there is statistical information on the new Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Tulsa, Okla., diocese. Both Sees were formed in December 1972 when the Oklahoma City-Tulsa diocese was divided.

With regard to the 11,258 Catholic educational institutions, this includes 107 diocesan seminaries with an enrollment of 12,925 — a decrease of 629; 304 religious order seminaries, novitiates and scholastics with an enrollment of 8,855 — a decrease of 554. This means there is a total of 21,780 candidates for the priesthood.

Aquinas Class Plans Reunion

The Aquinas Class of 1948 has scheduled its 25th annual class reunion at Sweet's Farm, Holt Road in Webster on Friday, June 1.

Graduates are coming from as far as Illinois, New Jersey, Texas and California. Anyone not contacted should call Tom Falk (377-4872), John Dellavilla (385-2149) or Bill Biekirch (247-2668). Cocktails are scheduled for 6:30 p.m. with dinner to follow.

Parish Slates Open Meetings

The first of a series of open parish meetings will be held tonight May 23, at 8 p.m. in the school hall of the Church of Christ the King.

The meetings have been programed to promote the free exchange of ideas and opinions concerning the status of the Church, its problems and its hopes for the future.

SUMMER CONCERTS

Victor Antonetti's vocal and instrumental ensemble will open the Hochstein Music School's Summer series of free, outdoor concerts at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 6. The series will continue Wednesdays through August 1, with the exception of July 4. In case of rain, the concerts will be held in the school auditorium at 12 Hoeltzer St.

ORGANISTS ELECT

Thomas Donahue, organist and choir master at Old St. Mary's, has been re-elected dean of Rochester Chapter, American Guild of Organists. Sub dean is Phil Bunker; secretary, Donna Terepka; treasurer, Nelson Carter; registrar, J. Elmore Jones, and chaplain, the Rev. M. Alfred Bichsel, chairman of the church music department at the Eastman School of Music.

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Drive your family to Brookwood Memorial Day

Or the Saturday before Memorial Day. Or the Sunday. Although usually closed on Saturdays, RG&E's Brookwood Science Information Center will be open Saturday, May 26 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for your convenience. And it will remain open through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. as usual. Memorial Day included.

We hope you'll include a visit to Brookwood on your list of things to do over the long weekend. So far, since the Center opened in 1969, over 300,000 people of all ages and nationalities have visited Brookwood to learn the fascinating story of electricity and nuclear energy.

Brookwood is located 16 miles east of Rochester on Lake Road on the grounds of RG&E's Ginna nuclear energy plant. There is no charge for admission or parking. For more information call 546-2700, extension 291-203.

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