

'Feminism' a Church Issue To St. Joan's Alliance

By PAT PETRASKE

What would your reaction be if you heard that a feminist group to promote equality among the sexes was on the rise within the Church? Dismiss it as more of the liberation stuff? Denounce it as a bunch of bra-burning Amazons? Or welcome it as a new hope for Catholic women?

Feminism has become a popular word but it has not yet become a church issue that people take seriously, according to Ellen Zazycki, one of the primary facilitators of the Catholic feminist group, St. Joan's International Alliance. She added that some of the efforts of the alliance had been met with an "I could care less" attitude by a few diocesan priests.

St. Joan's International Alliance is a world-wide organization dedicated to feminism, which Webster defines as "the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes."

"We assume the word 'social' also means ecclesiastical," Mrs. Zazycki noted.

"People do not take an issue seriously until something serious happens. We want to avoid that," she went on, adding that she believed discontent had reached such a level that women were leaving the church.

A petite, dark-haired former junior high teacher for ten years, Mrs. Zazycki is not the typical "women's libber" and thinks the expression itself is derogatory.

"One of our problems is to fight the stereotype that people have of us. If you don't belong to the PTA, or the Mother's Club, then you're a women's libber," said the mother of three.

St. Joan's in Rochester can be traced back to a column in the Courier-Journal by Father Henry

Atwell which mentioned the alliance headquartered in New York City. "I found it as a hope for women who find nothing relevant for them in the Church," said Isabel Passero, who initiated interest in the local chapter. Six women now comprise the Rochester Alliance that began this Summer.

The issue of relevancy has caused many women to leave the Catholic Church, interjected Lyn Sommers, who is principal of the pre-school program at St. Augustine's Church and holds a degree in psychology. "The teaching of the Church has been geared toward marriage and motherhood. As girls we were taught that the whole object of life is to get married and our prime purpose is to have children. Where does this leave the woman who can't have children or who can't cope with children? This is the only way women are being told that they can be fulfilled and it's leaving a lot of women dissatisfied."

The alliance is asking women who are dissatisfied to come out of their traditional background and become aware of the anti-feminism which the alliance says pervades the Church.

"We're not forcing anyone to join but they should have a right to make a choice," Mrs. Sommers said. "Some older women are satisfied with the Legion of Mary, which I don't deny is tremendous, but not every woman wants to be a handmaiden who cleans the Church or a member of the Rosary Society."

Catholic action for women's rights began not with a religious issue but dates back to 1911 and the struggle of women in England for the right to vote. At that time the alliance was called the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, the only Catholic group to participate in the crusade.

American chapters of the

alliance did not begin until 1965 although the alliance had branched out in Europe to include collaboration with the League of Nations and later the United Nations.

While many of its interests remained on secular issues such as the petitioning by the United States section for the passage of the equal rights amendment, the alliance began to center on the ecclesiastical issue of women's participation in the Church.

One of the most "apathetic" positions taken by the Church has been the decree which prevents women from having an official status in the Church, according to Mrs. Zazycki.

Other areas of concern include the prayer of fidelity which is read only over the bride at a Nuptial Mass and pre-cana conferences.

St. Joan's worked to change the liturgy in several parishes to honor Woman's Rights Day, August 26, and plans to focus on the area of education.

A letter was issued to Bishop Joseph Hogan requesting a program to educate the clergy of the diocese on the issue of feminism. "His secretary (Father Michael Conboy) said it was under consideration and does see a need for this in the future," Mrs. Sommers noted.

The main educational thrust for St. Joan's will be a congress for women to be held in the Spring. "We don't want to organize women to death with meetings so we're working on a one shot deal" Mrs. Zazycki said. "The congress will be the beginning of awareness. The women will be able to bring this awareness back with them to their parishes."

GULI RECITAL

Francesca Guli, poet-in-residence at Nazareth College, will present a poetry recital Thursday, Oct. 18, at Nazareth. The program will begin at 8:30 p.m. in the Arts Center, Room A14.

Miss Guli will read selections from all her books, with particular emphasis on "Bitter Lime," her latest volume of poetry.



Father Billotte, Mrs. Alberici and Mrs. O'Connor prepare hosts for the special liturgy held recently in Auburn.

Special Mass Opens New CCD Program

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Auburn — A special liturgy prepared for "Catechist Sunday" celebrated Sept. 30 at Sacred Heart marked the opening of a CCD Sunday school program which has taken on a new format this year.

Preparation of the liturgy was the combined effort of the liturgical committee chaired by Mrs. Madeline O'Connor and volunteer CCD coordinator, Mrs. Jody Maywalt, and staff. Mrs. O'Connor pointed out this unique undertaking by the two parish committees is an example of how the sense of spirit and mission can come alive in parish life.

The Mass, concelebrated by Father Raymond Wahl, pastor, and Father Philip J. Billotte, gave as its theme the unity of the teachers in spreading the Good News. CCD teachers participated in the processional, presentation of the gifts (including home-made whole wheat hosts), and joined hands at the altar for the Our Father as witness of their unity and purpose.

Mrs. O'Connor pointed out that good liturgy for special events requires considerable preparation and practice, but the enthusiasm for such expanded parishioner involvement was apparent at the rehearsal for the liturgy.

Prayers and appropriate readings were researched by the catechists and liturgy committee, following pre-established guidelines.

Other parishioners were involved as typists, banner makers, and musical coordinators.

Resource material was provided by Father Edward Palumbos, regional liturgy committee chairman.

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Book Tells How To Knit Raglans

"Raglans Unlimited" is a book of concise and simple knitting directions for all basic raglan sweaters: Pullovers and Cardigans, with a choice of Round, Turtle or V neck; even a choice of long or short sleeves in the lighter weights of yarn. As a matter of fact, you can make 418 different sweaters from this book without repeating!

This book gives all patterns worked from the neck down — the very popular method of knitting raglans which has heretofore been so hard to find in a range of sizes and for different weights of yarn. As most knitters know, or will be delighted to discover, this method of knitting a sweater gives a finished garment that requires an absolute minimum of finishing or putting together and eliminates entirely the necessity of "setting in" sleeves — a task which so many knitters find objectionable.

Instructions are given for all sizes ranging from 2 through 52. There are very few knitting instruction books available with these larger sizes for any style or type of sweater, much less raglans.

Also: the instructions are given for four different weights of yarn: fine weight fingering yarn, medium weight sport yarn, heavy weight knitting worsted and also for the bulky weight.

Directions are written so that a complete sweater can be made without turning a page, with none of the usual tracking down of bits and pieces of information from page to page, to be put together like a jigsaw puzzle. This should appeal to the most experienced knitter, as it certainly will to the novice — and all degrees of skill in between.

"Raglans Unlimited" is not available in stores and can be purchased only through the mail by sending \$2.95 (postpaid) to Knit 'N Notion, P.O. Box 161, Fairless Hills, Pa. 19030.

Dept. B345



OUR PARISH COUNCIL Bernard Lyons

"Our parish council is considering a proposal to allow a community youth center to use our basement hall for a series of dances during the school year," writes a reader. "Would you have any ideas about this?"

I talked with a youth worker in my city about the proposal. His suggestion was that the council open the hall to the young people, but that the success of the dance should be planned for and not left to chance.

"Young people like to dance. It helps them to make friends and learn social skills, if it is planned right," the youth worker explains.

"Recently a dance at a church hall had to be broken up by the police. A fight started on the dance floor. There were only a dozen adults for 700 teens in the hall. The adults didn't know the teens, and couldn't isolate the first trouble-makers. Within a matter of minutes, fights throughout the hall were beyond control."

"A teen dance is not held in a vacuum," says the youth worker. "You need the community behind you."

Participation should come from groups and organizations, such as churches, agencies, schools, and block clubs. It should be clear who the sponsors are.

"Aside from the practical controls offered," he says,

"maximum participation by the community insures that your group will know the young people invited."

Some of the young people themselves should take part in preparations for the dance.

It might prove helpful to check with nearby schools in case the dances should conflict with exam week or with major athletic events. Take a look at the calendar for other youth events in the community. Kids are mobile. They may try to make them all.

One experienced dance planner brings up another point: "We always alert nearby restaurants, especially if they sell liquor, that crowds of young people will be in the neighborhood for the dance."

A policeman or two also helps. Contact your local police station. Police can keep out "crashers," enforce the curfews, and quickly cool any arguments.

The age range of the youngsters invited should not be too great. A 15 to 18-year age range is good. Trouble with liquor and curfew can come up if the age limit is not controlled.

Most planners agree on a cut-off time for admittance, usually an hour before the dance ends. This will avoid misunderstandings among late-comers, especially if there is an admission charge to the dance.

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