



Father Robert Miller, CSB, makes do as chairs ran out at Clergy Conference.

Photo by Dave Witbeck

## Respect Life Is Theme At Clergy Conference

The Respect Life Clergy Conference, Tuesday, Nov. 27, at Becket Hall, brought together more than 170 diocesan clergy with the overall theme, "Celebrate Life."

The conference was the major activity of this year's diocesan Respect Life Program, put together by the Office of Family Life, and was aimed at informing parishes of diocesan services that can help educate parishioners in respect life areas.

Another conference was held at St. Casimir's Church, Elmira, on Wednesday, Dec. 28, for clergy members outside the immediate Rochester area.

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, at an opening prayer service in the Becket Hall chapel, asked everyone there to "reflect with each other in Christ's presence."

A slide and tape show prepared by the diocesan Liturgy Office illustrated the conference's four subtopics: Youth, Elderly, Family, and Society's Unwanted.

Father Robert Collins, Family Life director, described the Respect Life program as "a consciousness raising effort for American Catholics."

Father Douglas Hoffman, diocesan director of pastoral ministry, compared parishes to

automobiles. "Parishes now come in different makes, models, and years of development," he said. The long-range goal of the conference was, he said, to "match up skills (of diocesan groups) with the needs which are surfacing in parishes with regard to respect for life."

To this end, he said, a booklet of diocesan services will shortly be published and distributed among parishes.

The conference then split into four "mini-sessions" with one subtopic discussed at each.

The Youth session was conducted by Father Timothy Weider, assistant director of Catholic Charities. On the panel with him were Marty Palumbos, diocesan consultant for Youth Ministry; John Klein, acting executive director of the CYO; and Thomas Cotterill, CYO youth development director.

Two diocesan departments, the Youth Development (CYO), and Youth Ministry (CCD) are working to give youth needed values, Father Weider explained.

Palumbos outlined services available for parishes through Youth Ministry, all of which are designed to assist them in designing youth programs.

Youth Development, said Klein and Cotterill, tries to assist youth with social involvement in the community through programs development, training and workshops.

The topic, Society's Unwanted, was presented by the Rochester Area Right to Life Education Fund, Inc. Panel members were William Polito, director of the Rochester Area Right to Life Committee; Elaine Kolasch of Birthright; Jeanne Sweeney, of the Education Fund; and Mary Ellen McCarthy, of Right to Life's Youth Coalition.

They summarized their pro-life groups' efforts to fight abortion on all fronts, and listed the many groups within the diocese that are involved in pro-life activities.

The session on Elderly was led by Sister Judith Reger, of the Office of Human Development. A question and answer period was held and priests discussed problems in their own parishes and possible avenues to make the needs of senior citizens known to parishioners.

Father Collins led the session on Family, with Mrs. Dorothy Charleton, assistant Family Life director, and Mrs. Catherine Wobus of the Catholic Family Center. Such programs as Marriage Encounter, Family Retreats, and Pre-Cana, were among the many options discussed.

## K of C Schedule

The following is a schedule of Knights of Columbus activities in Monroe County:

Henrietta Council 4812, Our Lady of the Genesee: Dec. 9, Christmas party for residents at Industry; Dec. 14, regular monthly meeting; Dec. 22, delivery of Christmas baskets to the needy of the area; Dec. 31, New Year's Eve dinner-dance.

Irondequoit Council 4691, Pope Pius XII: Dec. 2, Christmas party, Christ the King school hall; Dec. 4, regular monthly meeting.

Rochester Council 178: Dec. 6, regular monthly meeting; Dec. 15, children's Christmas party, club rooms; Dec. 20, Christmas party.

Webster Council 4612, Trinity Council: Dec. 6, first degree, Knights of Columbus Order.

Greece Council 3892, Our Lady of the Cenacle: Dec. 6, children's Christmas party; Dec. 19, regular council meeting; Dec. 22, member's Christmas party.

Notices of K of C activities should be sent to Thomas

Grosodonia, auxiliary state chairman, council activities, 241 Oak Ridge Dr., Rochester 14617.

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### THE OPEN WINDOW Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father,

As I write this, we are well into the month of November and I have heard little or nothing about the souls in Purgatory or about the indulgences we worked so hard to get for the suffering souls. I can remember back in school when we were told we could get a plenary indulgence for the souls in Purgatory by visiting a chapel and saying six Our Fathers, six Hail Marys and six Glorias. And we could do this as often as we cared to on the Feast of All Souls. I can remember having a kind of guilt feeling for not going in more than I did that day, imagining some poor soul standing in line waiting to get out, but I was refusing him that opportunity by not going in the chapel again. Where are we now?

Sincerely,  
E. F.

Dear E. F.,

I'm not at all sure I know where we are now, either, on the subject of Purgatory. I'll try to give you what I have been able to find out. As you probably have guessed, some of the traditions surrounding Purgatory are rather naive and legalistic.

1. The concept of Purgatory is not indicated in the New Testament of the Bible.

2. Apparently it developed from the combination of looking at God as a strict judge of all our actions and the fact that all men are sinners ("If we say we have no sin in us, we are deceiving ourselves" 1 John 1:8), as well as the fact that nothing defiled will enter heaven, the presence of God. So there had to be some kind of purifying process.

3. When we die we pass from

time to eternity, but because we have experienced only time, we tend to depict eternity as having a past, present and future. But by definition of eternity this is not the case.

4. The doctrine of the communion of saints makes us realize that, in Christ, human solidarity and our ability to bear one another's burdens transcends the barriers of death.

5. The tendency arose in connection with indulgences to think of them as taking so many days off the sentence of Purgatory which was considered some kind of a prison term.

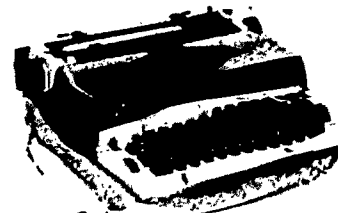
So what do we have left? We have the necessity of being purified before we enter God's presence in heaven. One author takes this out of the realm of a time period and makes it the extremely painful self-awareness we would have when our true self (petty, selfish, unfulfilled) is revealed to us at death.

Secondly, the idea of praying for those who have gone before us in death remains a good and wholesome thing. For a start it is an expression of our human solidarity in Christ and of our hope in Christ that as a community we shall share in His kingdom. It is also an expression of normal human piety, of remembering those we have known and loved but who are now separated from us by death.

So apparently Purgatory (nature unknown) exists and prayers for the dead are worthwhile. But I assure you, you don't have to worry about that poor guy who is stuck in Purgatory because you didn't go back to chapel the fifth (or fourth or third) time to gain those extra indulgences.

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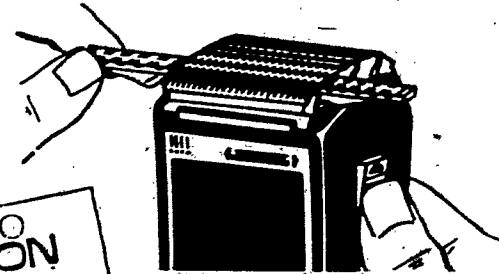
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