



Photo by Dave Witbeck

Cenacle Holds Diocesan Meeting

In accordance with Bishop Hogan's request for preparation of the coming Holy Year by a concentrated program to promote spiritual values, a meeting was called on Monday, March 4, at the Cenacle Retreat House by the Executive Cenacle Retreat Council and the Sisters of the Cenacle. Presidents of parish councils and their liturgy and spiritual life committees were invited. Father Douglas Hoffman, director of Pastoral Ministry, and Sister Margaret Mary Mattle (above), Liturgy Commission coordinator, spoke on the projected program for the coming year. Sister Marie Halligan of the Cenacle outlined the facilities the retreat house offers. Retreats, days and evenings of recollection and other opportunities for promoting private and group spiritual renewal were discussed. Mrs. Louise Rozwell, chairman of the speakers bureau, told of the availability of speakers to go into the parishes and speak on the value of retreats and days of recollection in the life of Christians.

TOWARD TOMORROW

It is increasingly obvious that Catholics are getting divorced and remarried despite the Church's penalty of excommunication. Whatever may be the reason for this disregard of a long-standing Church law, a pastor must ask himself: what does he do for people like that in his parish? In the past they were either ostracized from all parish life or treated with pity but never pardon.

Commonweal magazine, in its Feb. 22 issue, reviews two recent books which raise the previously unmentionable possibility that the Church may have to reconsider its adamant prohibition against divorce and remarriage. The two books are: "Divorce and Remarriage for Catholics" by Monsignor Stephen J. Kelleher, former presiding judge of the New York archdiocesan tribunal, and "Divorce and Remarriage in the Catholic Church" by Lawrence G. Wrenn.

Most of the other changes in Catholic life which followed in the wake of the Vatican Council ten years ago — altars facing the people, Communion received standing, "open" confession, and all the rest — will be trivial compared to the trauma if the Church now changes its ban against remarriage. But certainly some change is needed if we are to deal in any realistic and compassionate way with the 120,000 American Catholics who are divorced within the year.

The Commonweal author, Jesuit Father David S. Toolen of Canisius College, Buffalo, states, "There is no barrier, either from Scripture or tradition, that stands in the way of the Church's adoption of a policy similar to that of the Orthodox and some of the Protestant Churches, a policy which adheres to the ideal of permanency in marriage while dealing compassionately and realistically with those who tragically fail to realize it."

To alter the Church's current divorce law, Father Toolen says, would really not represent so

great a change as we might suspect, but rather, he says, it would be "a recovery of our authentic tradition."

He cites the usually quoted words of Jesus, as in Matthew 19, 9, but says "they must be seen in context" — the call of Jesus to perfection, as is clear in the subsequent verses of that same chapter. St. Paul later insisted on this ideal and its possible realization but, as Father Toolen says, he was a realist and in the classic example of "the Pauline Privilege" of 1 Cor. 7:15, St. Paul judges that Christ's command must admit of an exception and said the ideal of permanency in marriage must be balanced by another virtue when we are confronted with a dying or dead marriage: "God has called you to live in peace."

For the thousands of people now trapped in a dead-end spiritual situation such thoughts can be a faint ray of hope. There will probably be prompt and thundering denials of any possibilities in this direction but we have heard similar denials on other subjects, too.

Father Toolen aptly concludes his article, "In view of the Church's current compassionate practice in releasing priests from their ministry and vows of celibacy, certainly an equally serious social commitment, intransigence on the divorce question, seems a clear example of double standard."

I am confident the Church will one day choose to be compassionate, not just to its clergy, but to its anguished lay people as well.

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Two More Schools To Merge

Faced with rising costs and declining enrollments, the parish councils at Holy Apostles and Holy Family Churches have voted to merge their two schools next September.

Under the plan, grades K-5 will attend Holy Apostles School on Austin at Lyell Avenue. Grades 6-8 will go to Holy Family School, Jay Street near Ames. Father Michael Mahler, assistant pastor at Holy Apostles, believes the merger will maintain or better Catholic education at a reduced cost. He estimated the savings at approximately \$3000, but he added that this figure may change when teachers' salaries are computed.

The consolidation will affect approximately 644 children who are presently enrolled in the schools, 372 at Holy Apostles and

272 at Holy Family. Enrollment for next year is expected to drop to 600.

Groundwork for the merger began with the establishment of a committee composed of school board members and parishioners from each parish last June. After surveys were taken and informational meetings were held, the plans were presented to both parish councils.

Advantages of the new program, according to Jean Meekin, public relations chairman of the merger committee, include a better teacher-pupil ratio to allow for more individualized instruction, a concentration of materials, physical education programs and school assemblies for the different age groups, and more

classroom space for religion-related activities.

Busing will not be necessary. Father Mahler said routes would be established for the children to walk and car pools would be formed for students in the outlying areas. Plans are being made for inter-school visits to familiarize the students with their new program.

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Cathedral Sets Lenten Concerts

Two short organ recitals and two choir concerts have been arranged by the music staff of Sacred Heart Cathedral for the remaining Tuesday evenings of Lent. All will begin at 8.

John Woolfolk, a professional musician recently hired as organist at Holy Rosary, will be the first performer, March 19. The second, March 26, will be Anthony Rimore, an Eastman School student who is assistant organist at the Cathedral.

Don Meminger, Cathedral music director, will conduct and accompany his choir in the April 2 concert. On April 9, Meminger will conduct "The Seven Last Words of Jesus Christ," with Woolfolk at the organ. Soloists will be Janet Hopkins of Brick Presbyterian Church, Richard Russell, a member of the Cathedral choir, and David Herendeen, an Arcadia High School senior who has won two competitions sponsored by the Greece Arts Council.

ADULT EDUCATION

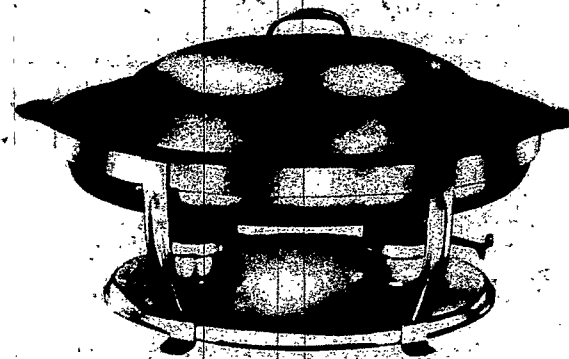
Owego — Representatives of Catholic churches in Tioga County are urged to attend the meeting of the Tioga County adult education committee scheduled on March 20 at 7:45 p.m. at St. Patrick Church.

Margaret West of St. James Church, Waverly, heads the group.

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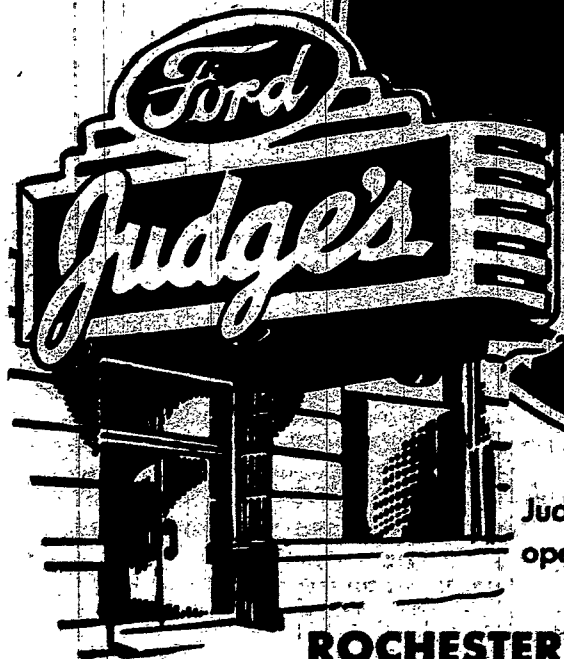


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