

Southern Tier Scenarama Offers Many Church Careers

TEXT BY SHARON DARNIEDER, PHOTOS BY SUSAN MCKINNEY

Elmira — In an effort to boost religious vocations in the diocese among young people and acquaint their parents and families with the many religious orders and religious career options, a Scenarama of Church Careers was held in the Southern Tier, April 25-26.

Sponsored by the Southern Tier Association of Catholic School Administrators, the two-day event involved religious orders in and outside of the diocese.

About sixteen orders, local diocesan priests and a lay religious group called The Third Order of St. Francis, accepted the invitation to appear.

"We looked through the diocesan directory," said Sister Mary Dominic, RSM, one of the three co-chairwomen on the association's vocation committee, "and invited all the orders now serving in the diocese, and that for one reason or another, have a connection with this area."

One such connection is the local men and women who have entered the orders. For example, the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary (Marists) are headquartered in Waltham, Mass. Sister Mary Siena, a nurse and Elmira native, came as one of that order's representatives. She and Sister Ruth Danielski, a teacher, returned to the United States from the Fiji Islands in August, 1973, to continue their studies and promote religious vocations and the missions.

The Scenarama, which has been in the planning since September of last year, involved 15 Catholic schools in the five-county Southern Tier area.

"We liked the idea of a two-day program," said Sister Dominic, "because the first day gave the

kids an opportunity to have close contact with the various orders as representatives visited classrooms.

"And on the second day, the booths and displays set up by the orders at St. Mary's gym in Elmira gave the kids, their parents, CCD classes and anyone else who wanted to come, a chance to find out more about them."

Sister Campion and Sister Marie Stanislaus, both Sisters of St. Joseph and the other two vocation committee members, agreed with this approach.

Sister Campion said, "I think it's good for the child to have contact with all the different orders in the church. And we also strove for a total family education for a new appreciation of religious life."

"It isn't enough to try to build up this appreciation in the children," she added. "Their parents have to appreciate religious vocations too."

Sister Marie Stanislaus said that at the beginning of the year the committee was starting to get concerned over the gasoline shortage.

"We were afraid it would have an adverse effect on the program," she said, "but as it turned out it didn't. We've had a great deal of participation and cooperation."

"The children have been very interested in what the order representatives have had to say and I think the whole Scenarama was a tremendous success."

Representatives usually had only one or two schools to visit but were encouraged to stop in as many classrooms as possible.

Some, like the Marist Sisters, who showed classes several handmade items from their



Among the diocesan Sisters orders represented were the Sisters of Mercy. Here, Sister Judith Heberle, Superior, (left front) and Sister M. Florence Sullivan show Gerard Foley, (left) Jayne Minch, Mary Ann Haflett and Tim Todd what their order's about.

foreign mission regions, found that such things often increased the children's interest.

Slide presentations and pictures were used by other representatives both in classrooms and in booth displays.

Some of the other orders represented included the Basilian, Redemptorist and Columban Fathers, Franciscan Friars, the Carmelites (OCD), Society of St. Edmund, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, the Daughters of Charity and the Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary.

Father Bernard Maloney, OFM Cap., a native of Rochester and a 1960 graduate of Aquinas Institute, spent one day at Notre Dame High School, the only Catholic high school in the Southern Tier.

He spoke to students during theology classes and elicited a favorable response from most of them.

Dan Kelley, a senior, was one of those who thought Father Maloney's talk was good.

"I have one friend who's thinking about becoming a priest and I know Father answered a lot of his questions with his talk," he said.

"He was a pretty cool guy for a priest," commented Mark O'Brien, another senior. "I thought the priesthood was like the military that you had to do whatever the Bishop or your superior said. I found out that you can go into just about any field you choose."

Both boys were surprised to discover that prospective candidates for the priesthood can also get their BA in anything they choose.

Father Gerald Connor, director of diocesan vocations, spoke on

the diocesan priesthood at some schools.

Afterward, he noted that "the whole concept of Church vocations is growing and broadening in its meaning with a greater variety of works that people can go into."

And he mentioned the two lay ministries that exist in the Church now, the acolyte and the lector.

"And in the very near future the American Bishops can and probably will set up other new lay ministries," he said.

He emphasized that "the backbone still has to be the parish priest. He's the general practitioner and all the others are support groups," he added.

"We're all moving toward one basic goal," he added, "that of leading the people toward Christ."



Bill Kuttenkuler listens to seminarian Wayne Wood from Becket Hall.



Sister Claire, DC.



Brother Matthew Dilli, OFM, Conv.



Donna Manning, (left) Mary Ann Brown, Sister Mary Siena, Robin Ellis and Sister Ruth Danielski discuss some of the objects the Marist Sisters brought with them representing some of their foreign missions.



Father Francis Byrne, SSC.



Father Elmer Nadicksbernd, SVD.