

# Nursing Home Ministry Stressed at Council

By SHARON DARNIEDER

At their May 7 meeting, Priests Council members received an in-depth report from the Nursing Home and Liturgy task forces which included recommendations and proposed alternatives for parish nursing home ministry, suggestions for liturgies and facts and figures on nursing and domiciliary homes located in the ten diocesan regions.

The Nursing Home Task Force, established last November under the direction of Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, has been reviewing diocesan needs with regard to nursing and boarding homes to determine whether present patterns of service are adequate.

"It's a real pastoral problem," Bishop Hickey told the council, "and one that affects the priests of the diocese first, although not exclusively."

"We're not presenting the report to criticize what's going on now," he continued. "We only want to help priests in the parishes who already have many duties."

The study asks that regional coordinators and executive committees see as their concern the coordination of ministry to nursing home residents and to set up specific programs according to guidelines established by the task force and approved by the Bishop.

The study also asks that pastors reevaluate their present system of

service and that parishes establish communication with nursing home administrators and staff to reevaluate the religious services.

Bishop Hickey said the number of nursing homes and such had increased in recent years in many dioceses, "but they're especially noticeable in Rochester. Many of them are centered in an especially small area — two or three in a parish, and some parishes have none at all." He urged those priests who don't have nursing homes in their parishes not to ignore those who do.

"We must realize that nursing homes are the concerns of all parishes," he said, "and not just of

those who happen to have them in their boundaries."

However, the study also recommends that ministers to the nursing home apostolate participate, where possible on the basis of their own interest and ability rather than by assignment.

"Work with older, sick persons calls for special concern and care," notes the study. "Though most clergy and lay persons readily see the importance of such work, they do not all have the same aptitude for relating to sick and older persons."

Bishop Hickey noted that saying Mass for the elderly in homes "wasn't such a problem in the past when it could only be

said in the morning, but now that it can be said in the afternoon and evening, the elderly look forward to being able to attend Mass more often."

The written study points out that "a total, ongoing ministry of the Church to the sick and the aged must be clearly seen in the liturgical-sacramental activity of the community and should include ongoing liturgical-sacramental programs as well as the on-call emergency services for patients and their families — each and every member of the community, as much as he is able, should seek to participate."

The three options presented to the Priests Council for their

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## Fr. Neil Miller Heads SW Region

Father Neil Miller of St. Augustine's, director of human development for the Southwest Region for the past year, has been named coordinator of the region.

He takes over from Father Elmer McDonald, pastor of St. Christopher's, who has held the reins since regionalism formally was established in February, 1972. The change was announced this

week by Father Douglas Hoffman, director of pastoral ministry.

Father Miller, co-pastor of St. Augustine's since Jan. 31, 1973, said he was convinced that "regionalism is important. It is the direction we have to take."

"Parishes working together save personnel, costs, effort and time," he observed.

The Southwest slice of the Monroe County "pie" extends outward from the inner city through Gates and Chili to Brockport, Churchville, Scottsville and Spencerport. It includes 16 parishes, Holy Childhood School and Bosco House.

A year ago, Father McDonald spoke of a "communications problem" in his region.

"But we have more visibility now," he said last week. "We've had a lot of growth."

The new coordinator, whose colleague at St. Augustine's is Father Paul McCabe, is among the pioneers of the team ministry concept in this diocese.

He is a native of Corning and a 1961 graduate of St. Bernard's Seminary. He has served at St. Michael's, Lyons; St. Agnes, Avon; St. Mary of the Lake, Watkins Glen, and St. Lawrence, Greece.

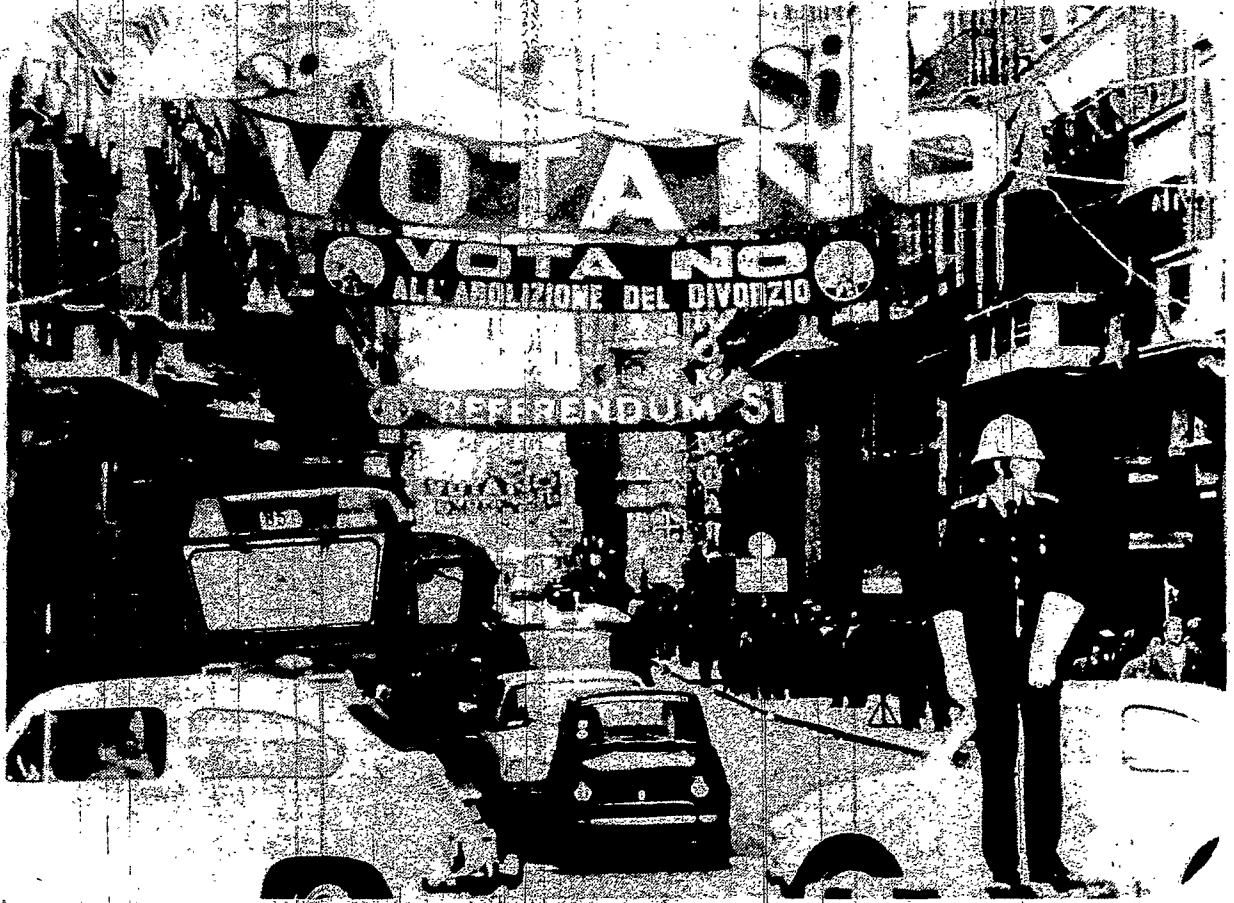


FATHER MILLER

### Bishop on TV

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will celebrate Mass for the diocesan missions on Sunday, May 19. The taped Mass will be televised over WHEC-TV, Channel 10 at 8:30 a.m.

This week the Courier-Journal features a special four-page center section on the missions of the diocese.



Divorce: Yes or No?

A profusion of banners proclaiming "Vote Yes" and "Vote No" hang across a downtown Rome street as part of a massive campaign for the national referendum for the repeal of Italy's divorce law. It is estimated that political groups and the Italian government spent more than \$100 million on the campaign. RNS Photo

## Abortion Sign of Times, Says Noted Theologian

By CHARLES RANDISI

"Abortion is not an accidental phenomenon. (It is) a symbol of a certain philosophy of life and man's understanding of the world."

The silver-haired, goateed man on the podium was Father Alexander Schmemmann, theologian, philosopher and dean of St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, N.Y.

His May 9 appearance and talk at the Greek Orthodox Church, 962 East Ave., was sponsored by the Rochester Area Right to Life Education Fund.

Father Schmemmann was born in Estonia. He is a regular commentator on Europe's Radio Liberty and has corresponded with Russian expatriate Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

Solzhenitsyn has written of Father Schmemmann, "I was amazed at the authenticity and height of his preaching art; not

one note of falsity, not a millimeter of strain ..."

The situation in the world today is the result, Father Schmemmann said Thursday evening, of two forces which rose in the 18th century Age of Enlightenment. One was the belief in "the power of reason," the other, man's "dream about happiness."

"We believed that through reason, we could shape civilization," he said. "At the same time, man's fundamental goal became the pursuit of happiness."

That is why, he said, today's religions offer either "a rational explanation of the world," or "the wonderful secret of happiness."

The belief that "man is someone who must be happy," he maintained, is fallacy. "There is no happiness mentioned in the Gospel," he said.

The abortion mentality, Father Schmemmann said, is a direct result of man's search for happiness, of

the philosophy that "each man has a right to be happy in his own way."

He said that the quest for happiness today approaches the "pathological."

The Christian world, in its "defense of unborn children," must return to a feeling of creation ("everything comes from God"), a recognition of what is evil, and a sense of redemption.

"It is fashionable," Father Schmemmann said, "to criticize and ridicule the Christian culture, world, and civilization of the past." He admitted that the Church of old was not perfect, but "in spite of all its failures, there existed a fundamental understanding of life ..."

"We threw it all out and found that little toy called happiness."

The possibility of change in abortion laws, he said, rests on a change in the abortion mentality and civilization.