

Ithaca Parish Launches New GIFT Program

By JOY CHALONE

Ithaca — Immaculate Conception Church embarks this fall on a brand new project. Its name

is "GIFT," initials for Grow In Faith Together. Parish pastor, Father John Maloney, along with the two associate pastors, Father David Mura and Father John

Glogowski all anticipate an effective, in-depth program for the spiritual needs of the parishioners. The core lay committee for GIFT includes Mrs. Jeanne Seaman, Mr. Frank Kelsey, Mrs. Alice Pempel, Mr. Henry Thaisen and Mrs. Lois Cutia.



Twin Celebrations

Sister Mary Walter, [center], general chairman of the twin pilgrimage liturgy celebrations scheduled by the Sisters of Mercy for Sept. 22, finalizes plans with the liturgy coordinators, Sister Mary Edwina, [left], and Sister Mary Poole. The public is invited to join the Mercy Sisters at Sacred Heart Cathedral or at St. Peter and Paul's, Elmira, at 2 p.m. on Sept. 22 for a Eucharist celebration commemorating the Holy Year and the congregation's patronal feast of Our Lady of Mercy.

WORD FOR SUNDAY

Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R1) Am. 8:4-7 (R2) 1 Tim. 2:1-8. (R3) Lk. 16:1-13.

Last Sunday's first reading spoke of the golden calf which God's chosen people worshipped after having been delivered from Egyptian slavery. This Sunday's first reading tells us that God's chosen people, long after they had entered the promised land, were still worshipping the golden calf. The golden calf was the unbridled love of money!

Amos was a prophet around 750 B.C. This was a time of unprecedented prosperity for Israel. But it was a false prosperity in which the rich got richer and the poor poorer. Those who had, like our great oil companies today, wanted more — no matter how. Amos upbraided God's people for violating the Sabbath. Just to make more money, they did business on the Sabbath, not unlike so many of our merchants. Such greed could not go unjudged. Amos roared, "The Lord has sworn: Never will I forget this!" In 721 B.C. the God who is slow to anger finally judged Israel, dragged her off into bondage, and the once proud nation passed out of history and became known as "the ten lost tribes of Israel."

Judah alone remained. But soon love of money corrupted her heart too. She began to worship the golden calf of ill-gotten gain. Her social injustice soon rivaled that of her ill-fated sister kingdom to the north. Another prophet, Jeremiah, warned Judah. But in vain. So the terrible Babylonian Captivity followed. And it lasted, as Jeremiah had foretold, just 49 years (587 B.C.—538 B.C.) — a sabbath times a sabbath of years, in punishment for the violations of the Sabbath.

In this Sunday's Gospel our Lord laments the continued folly of mankind. How enterprising man is when it comes to making money! How resourceful! I just finished reading Vincent Teresa's My Life in the Mafia. I simply marveled at the incredible effort, time and talent expended to

make "a fast buck." Anything went. And for what? A few short years of wealth. Teresa confessed: "Now I see that I wasted the best years of my life."

We sweat and groan and burdens bear just to get a little set aside for a few weeks' vacation or retirement. And yet for an eternal vacation in a place sunnier than Florida in winter, where there will be no aches or pains or old age, no sorrows, but unending, ecstatic joys and delights — well, we so often just don't give a tinker's dam! What fools we mortals be!

Therefore Jesus advised, "Make friends for yourselves through your use of this world's goods." How hard it is to be detached from money! How dangerous money can be! An unchecked love for money and power spawned Watergate. The prodigal son became a prodigal only after he had money to spend.

Much money can be to virtue what supplies are to an army — an impediment. An army cannot be without supplies; yet supplies are nonetheless an impediment to an army on its march. Hence Romans called army supplies impedimenta. So with money. It is necessary. But it can become a hindrance, an impediment to salvation, especially if we set our hearts on it. "You cannot give yourself to God and money," any more than you can tune in on two radio stations at the same time and get anything but a garbled message.

Why give oneself to money anyway? We can't take it with us. Shrouds have no pockets. When John D. Rockefeller, Sr. died someone asked, "How much did he leave?" Someone quipped, "He left everything." If this be so, why the hurry, scurry, flurry to amass money?

"The Lord lifts up the poor," says Sunday's responsorial refrain — not necessarily the economic poor, but those whose hearts are not set on money, who are in spirit.

In the upcoming Holy Year proclaimed by Pope Paul, it seems a fitting response. As Immaculate Conception is one of the "pilgrimage churches" in the area, so also its parishioners are to make pilgrimages into their faith, to deepen it, become more aware of it, question it, respond to it. During an unstable and unsettled era in our history many significant changes have taken place, in morals, economics, politics, technology and especially, in man's understanding of himself. It takes courage to face uncertainties and we must be willing to risk our present images of God, of Christ, and of the church, in open dialogue with others.

GIFT is an adult education process, a contemporary approach to growth in parish spirituality. It involves priests, religious and laity in a community of special growth in Christian faith and life during a concentrated period of research, reflection and response.

During the research phase, which began this week, survey sheets were mailed to parishioners. Each adult and high school student is asked to fill one out, anonymously, and return it. The survey consists of 60 statements.

Persons are asked to agree or disagree with the statements which cover four categories: Belief, Prayer, Church, Morality. Replies will be collated by computer. Hopefully the survey will lead into the reflection phase. This phase invites parishioners of all ages to talk over their faith in small groups. The priests, sisters and leaders will participate, but only as equal members of the groups. The purpose of reflection is not to seek answers — but to sharpen questions. It is hoped a climate of mutual trust will evolve where persons can feel a sense of community and solidarity when facing difficulties in their faith.

This will lead into the response phase. This phase will be both immediate and continuing. During this time priests, sisters and invited resource persons will respond to the issues raised by the survey and explored by the reflection groups. Response will consist of a general parish gathering to determine priorities, themes for scripture readings and sermons at Sunday Masses, panels, films, lectures and debates.

It is hoped that GIFT will involve not only the regular church-going Catholics but also the fallen-away Catholics who have become disenchanted with the Church.

The program from survey to initial response will be completed by Dec. 21, so that, in starting the new year, Immaculate Conception Catholics will have new and concrete directions for their faith.

DANCE CENTER

The new Rochester Center for Dance at 103 E. Main will hold open-house Saturday, Sept. 21, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Students may register for classes which begin Sept. 23. Adult beginner classes are scheduled for noon time.

The center was organized by three professional teachers, Eleanor Citlin Lange, Susan Pointer and Wini Steiner. Further information may be obtained through 232-3566.



Pilgrim Virgin To Visit Here

Auburn — Father Edward Shamon, pastor of St. Aloysius Parish here has received confirmation of his appointment as official host for the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, the Pilgrim Virgin while in the Rochester Diocese. Father Shamon is chairman of the Rosary Rally of the Greater Auburn area.

The statue of our Lady of Fatima was a gift to the people of the United States from the Bishop of Fatima, Portugal, where miraculous appearances of Mary are believed by many to have taken place. The statue was blessed by Pope Paul VI before it was brought to this country on tour.

"People are not so naive to say that a rosewood statue brings miracles, but the response to the statue's tour throughout the nation's reflects the sensitivity of the people in the street," said Father Shamon.

"They are aware of a crisis in our own society. Often

bewildered, confused, but wanting to do something about it, they don't know what to do. Aware of what happened in Fatima, people come, not so much to view a beautiful image but because they are aware of the relevance this figure has with a striking and incontrovertible message reputedly given to the world in 1917," he said.

The statue will be brought to St. Aloysius, Saturday, Nov. 2 and arrangements for special devotions will be published shortly. A visit to St. Mary's in Waterloo has been scheduled for Nov. 4. Before the statue leaves the diocese on Thanksgiving Day, the image will be made available for "visits" to other parishes in the diocese based on a feasibility and priority basis, according to Father Shamon.

The statue, currently on tour in the Albany Diocese, drew over 5,000 people to St. Aloysius during its presence in Auburn last December.

Jesuits Dismiss Priest In Controversial Baptism

New York [RNS] — The provincial of the Roman Catholic Jesuit order here announced the dismissal from the Jesuits of Father Joseph O'Rourke, SJ, a New York priest who defied his superior's order and performed a controversial baptism in Marlboro, Mass., on Aug. 20.

The superior, Father Eamon Taylor, SJ, stressed that the dismissal was not based on the performance of the baptism nor the abortion question related to it, but on Father O'Rourke's "differences of understanding and judgment" with his religious superiors.

Father O'Rourke, speaking at a Sept. 6 news conference, termed his reported dismissal (he had not yet received a letter of dismissal) an "act of regressive forces" in the Catholic Church, and said he would appeal to the Vatican.

He denied that he had directly violated his priestly vow of obedience to his Jesuit superiors, but said he believed that he simply "disagreed fraternally" with his local superior.

At the news conference held in a Jesuit residence for students and faculty of the Woodstock Jesuit Theologate, Father O'Rourke stressed that his dismissal from the Jesuits did not

mean he is no longer a priest in good standing. He also said he "never suspected" that he would be dismissed as a result of the Marlboro baptism incident.

Father O'Rourke became involved in the controversial baptism of the three-month-old child of Mrs. Carol Morreale after two priests at Immaculate Conception parish, Marlboro, refused to baptize the child until they were assured the baby would be raised in accord with Catholic teaching. Mrs. Morreale, although a Catholic, had espoused a proposed abortion clinic in Marlboro.

Father Joseph Novak, SJ, the spokesman for the Jesuit Provincial, said that Father O'Rourke's dismissal was based on the fact that "he acted contrary to the expressed prohibition of his superiors. The judgment arrived at does not speak to the controversy that existed among the people of Marlboro prior to and after Father O'Rourke's presence there about abortion and about Catholic tradition on baptism.

"It has to do with differences of understanding and judgment between Father O'Rourke and his religious superiors with regard to the nature of a Jesuit's commitment to the Society and of the Society's service to the Church."