



Mrs. Anna Pohl was sitting in a lounging chair with her blue thermal blanket wrapped around her knees. A pillow, which was behind her head, was creeping slowly to the right edge of the chair.

Brother Charles Varnak, CSC, sat next to her holding her hand and giving it an occasional pat.

"How are you today?" Brother Charles asked.

"Oh, I'm just fine, sweetheart."

"I wanted to let you know that Father Hedges and the people at the parish are thinking about you."

"Yes, I say my rosary for them, too," she said.

"Do you have a new radio?" he asked.

"Oh, this one I listen to all the ballgames on," she said patting the top of the radio on the stand next to

Brothers with a Active

her chair. "But I always listen to the rosary on my other one."

"Your birthday is on the 24th I see and you'll be 97. Just think in three more years you'll be 100 then we can really celebrate," Brother Charles said.

"Yeah, and I'll be ready to go out dancing," she laughed.

Mrs. Pohl, one of the 780 senior members of St. Charles Borromeo Church, has become acquainted with Brother Charles, the new director of the parish Senior Citizens Committee.

Brother Charles visits parishioners, 60 years and over, to convey parish gratitude for the years of service they gave to the parish. He also recites prayers with them and occasionally brings communion to people who are unable to get to Mass.

Since he began the job two months ago, Brother Charles has been arranging a parish map divided into 16 sections. In each section, he has plotted the homes of people he will eventually visit. "This way I'll be able to see everyone in a certain section without searching through hundreds of names in the files trying to find out who lives where and whether they're a senior member or not," he said.

In case of an emergency, Brother Charles is always ready to help. "One woman phoned me quite upset because she had to face another cancer operation. She needed someone to talk to. So I dropped everything and went to see her. And I tried my best to be of some help," Brother Charles said.

He also visits the elderly in hospitals and nursing homes to bring a little cheer and say "hello" for the parish. "When someone is released from the hospital, I give his name to the school principal and he has the seventh and eighth graders send the people welcome home wishes. The names also are

given to the lay visitation group who will visit these people," he said.

Since the elderly at the Grandville Home for Adults and the West Side Manor Proprietary Home for Adults find it difficult to attend Mass regularly, Brother Charles conducts a prayer service every second Tuesday at Grandville and each first Thursday at West Side Manor and distributes Communion.

In an effort to involve other parish members with the elderly, he has invited parishioners to lend a helping hand by providing transportation to senior members to and from Mass. He has compiled a list of volunteers who are willing to contribute a few moments of their spare time to do chores, like shoveling snow, cleaning house and running to the store, for their older neighbors.

"For instance, one woman hurt her arm and found it very hard to clean her oven. I called a volunteer who was more than willing to help her out," he said.

In Merrittstown Pa., a coal mining town outside Pittsburgh, Brother Charles used to visit bereaved coal miners' widows.

This interest led him to work with the senior members of St. Charles Borromeo Church two summers ago for five weeks. "When Vatican II urged the Brothers of the Holy Cross to become involved in apostolates of social service, Father Hedges who was impressed with my work in the past, asked me to continue and expand my work with the senior members of the parish," Brother Charles said.

Agnes Froehler, Mary Studier and Blanche Stanin are on the committee which he heads. The women also visit, are on hand in emergencies and urge the senior members to play an active role in the Senior Citizens Action Committee.

They Perform a Variety of M

The Church cherishes four types of religious vocation: the priesthood, the diaconate, the sisterhood and the brotherhood: special callings from God to perform a service to mankind, whether it be by prayer or active works, because of devotion to God.

The brotherhood is a distinct vocation. Although Brothers do not administer the sacraments, they serve God and man in a fulltime capacity.

Depending upon the particular community, the Brother develops his natural talents to be of better service, be it professional or domestic.

Some Brothers are members of purely contemplative communities in which life revolves around prayer while most free time is spent doing domestic chores, keeping up the grounds or farming.

In an active community, Brothers perform medical, clerical, missionary, educational and social works.

The concept of the brotherhood is defined here according to the 11 communities with brothers in the diocese.

Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

There are 60 Redemptorist Brothers working in the Eastern Seaboard. Two of them are presently in the diocese.

Brother Thaddeus Wright, CSSR, is organizing the temporary church which is adjacent to the St. Joseph's Church building that was recently destroyed by fire. And at the Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua, Brother Lawrence Schneggenburger, CSSR, works as a maintenance engineer.

Candidates must have a high school education and a desire for the religious life. They enter a six-month training program which acquaints them with the religious society. Brothers spend one year in novitiate training and are permitted to obtain a college education.

The Brothers must take an oath of perseverance, to live in the congregation until death, as well as vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Discalced Carmelite Brothers

The novitiate home for the Discalced Carmelite Brothers is on Our Lady's Hill in Waverly.

The nine Brothers residing there along with nine priests, live a contemplative life, stressing devotion to Mary, the Mother of God.

Since the time of the reformation, the Discalced Order has remained basically the same. The Brothers live a life of prayer, primarily, and also do apostolic work geared to a particular skill.

The Brothers' work is rooted in house tasks. But they are permitted to leave the monastery to follow a profession like teaching, nursing or social work.

Candidates enter the novitiate at Waverly to begin six months of postulancy, followed by two years as novices. They then take the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and humility.

Unlike other monastic orders, the Discalced Carmelites take no vow requiring stability. This permits them to leave the grounds and move from one monastery to another. The man must have a high school education and two years of work, college or military service before entering the order.

Members of the order must abstain from eating meat and fast from Sept. 14 to Easter, except for Sundays and major feasts. Each lives in a simple cell which includes a desk, chair, bookcase, closet and a bed with a four-inch-thick mattress.

Society of the Most Precious Blood

Brother Anthony Canterucci, CPPS, is the administrator of the Society of the Most Precious Blood in Rochester. He also serves as pastoral assistant and religious instructor at St. Alphonsus Parish in Toronto.

Candidates for the brotherhood don't need a high school diploma to get into the Society, but must complete high school studies before beginning the novitiate year. After the novitiate, the Brother can receive special training in the field he desires before making his temporary promises.

After three years, the Brother makes the final promise of stability. This promise also includes the promises of chastity, poverty and obedience.

Brothers of the Holy Cross

The Brothers of the Holy Cross is an active teaching order and 19 of the 1300 brothers living in the United States are at Cardinal Mooney High School. Two of them are in solo apostolates. Brother Charles Varnak works with the senior citizens at St. Charles Borromeo Parish and Brother Etienne Cooper is a recreational therapist at St. Ann's Heritage.

A candidate enters a pre-novitiate program to assay the religious life. If he doesn't hold a college

degree, he will reside at Moreau Hall at Stonehill College, N. Easton, Mass. There area college or university of his choice degree would normally spend the one or and working within the Community.

During the next two years, the candidate enters a novitiate program, making him further a member of the Community. At the end of the program, he promises, which are renewed annually upon taken.

When he reaches age 25 and has completed a year of community service, the candidate enters a second year of perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The novitiate period is used to complete his education or to begin his life in Christian service.

Society of Jesus

Two Jesuit Brothers reside at Moreau Hall. Brother George Belgarde is a science teacher and Brother Thomas Garvey teaches mathematics.

Requirements for the brotherhood include high school education and the capacity to earn a degree in Theology. First vows are taken after 1 1/2 years of novitiate training. The Brother must be in the technical training of his choice. The age of 33 or has been in the Brotherhood for one year. Brother makes his final vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Trappists

At the abbey of Our Lady of the Ganges, 11 Brothers and 11 professed priests follow the life of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (Trappist).

Trappists observe the stringent life of the order. Throughout the day, the monks meditate, alone or in community, with the community.

They eat simply. Their main diet is fruits, soups, cheese, vegetables and bread. The fast period from September to Easter is a time of abstinence.

From 7 p.m. to 6 a.m., the monks observe Grand Silence where they communicate only in sign language. Monks have few contacts with the outside world. They are permitted to write letters to visitors at specified times but never listen to a radio.

The abbey is self-sufficient with 100 acres of land.