

# Laymen Discuss Views on Ecumenism

Last week, the *Courier-Journal* ran the first part of this two-part series concerning Christian Unity Week. Several people representing different faiths talked about ecumenism. This week, laymen present at the discussion give their views.

By PEGGY PEASE

Lay people from four churches in Hornell reflected upon the discussion and gave their views.

Seated were DeForrest Angell, United Church of Christ; Kathy Johnson, First Baptist Church; Anna Clark, Park Methodist Church and Marissa Stryker, St. Ann's Church.

Angell: Speaking for the layman, I feel he sees definite results, that is, better understanding and more tolerance. Due to the fact we have concentrated on things we have in common and not our differences we can accomplish much more rather than going our separate ways.

Johnson: I feel my age group refuses to accept arbitrary standards. We must change from the past and change our attitudes.

Clark: The laity is in favor of ecumenical movement but afraid of losing its identity. Individual religious beliefs should be respected. We will have a great deal of effectiveness if we work together.

Stryker: I see a drop in Mass attendance which may somewhat be due to the ecumenical movement. It seems everyone can identify with the Bible and refer to it searching for a deeper meaning. The Bible can be a source of inspiration.

Johnson: As Dr. Hasler said, let's not slip into a new form of uniformity. Let's be united but individual.

Clark: People have a renewed zest for solidarity in these uncertain times. Therefore, study the Bible and find deeper meaning. The

many different versions of the Bible are beneficial.

Johnson: Sometimes change is slow and perhaps made easier as the change starts with our children.

Clark: With the view to the role of the laity, the laity should be a support to the minister and reach out to visit the sick, the lonely. They should welcome the new parishioners, help plan the service and be willing to investigate new ideas.

Johnson: The laity begins to take on renewed responsibility; with an interest in Christian Ministry there is a new sense of mission.

Angell: Working with the operation of the Church gives awareness and added responsibility. It is desirable and makes you grow.

Stryker: The laity should be willing to listen and to work in cooperation with the clergy and

the sisters to promote growth in the community. The role even now is different for the sisters - than when I went to St. Ann's. They are integrating themselves into the laity by their mission work such as the help they gave when we had the flood.

Clark: HEM is a good organization to work together without duplication. The oneness of the Church should be expressed. God's gift of unity is not

just for Christians. If there is segregation by age, the less unity we will find. Cooperation is the keynote.

Father Brown concluded by saying, ecumenism should mean working together within our own groups as well as outwardly. The movement starts first with ourselves. We attain personal salvation by slightly different routes yet we know what we have in common. Cooperation and fidelity to the Gospel is where it begins.

## Auburn Abortion Alternative

# 'You Have a Choice'

By MARY ANN GINNERTY  
Auburn Correspondent  
253-2176

Auburn — "Choice is a group of volunteers concerned with holding out a helping hand to the person who has or thinks she has a problem pregnancy," said Father James C. Enright, associate pastor of St. Mary's and a spokesman for Choice, the pro-life referral line operating 2 to 5 p.m. each week day.

"Basically the feeling is that if Christian love reaches out, then the person with a problem will respond in a Christian way. Volunteers answering the phone avoid judgmental attitudes and are concerned with making known the existing counseling, financial, and medical resources in the community for the pregnant girl," Father Enright said.

Choice emphasizes there are homes and doctors willing to work with the pregnant girl. Money and necessary services can be made available because there are people who care, he says.

"Unfortunately the problem of the unwanted pregnancy has centered on abortion in the press rather than exploring all the possibilities available to help the woman. Choice has found that the people calling have something fixed in their mind and you can't get a person to change their minds in one phone call. Choice directs them to counseling resources and tries to let

them know that someone in the community really cares about them as a person," Father Enright said.

Based on the number and types of calls Choice has received since it began in June 1973, problem pregnancies are a crucial problem for both the unmarried and married. Most people who turn to Choice, do so because they don't know where else to go. They respond to the telephone number, 252-0089, and the "you have a choice" slogan.

A non-sectarian organization supported by contributions from the general public, Choice while definitely pro-life, is not involved in the political realm. It chose to become involved, not in debate, but in helping people.

"The only thing that is going to help a person through an unwanted pregnancy is a Christian community that the woman knows, from past experience, will love her even though she is pregnant. Emphasis needs to be on building this kind of community rather than on horrendous attitudes," Father Enright said.

Father Enright explained the number of teens calling for information points out a lack of sex education in the community both in the public and parochial schools. While Choice is trying to meet the surface problems, the pregnant girl or woman, the deeper problem is that individuals are not educated to positive sexuality. He described this as more than anatomy, but

responsibility in relationships based on moral decisions. He has found much of today's education in these areas still based on a morality of fear with lack of communication, a real problem between parents and children. Choice's experience is pointing out that many youths do not feel this is the kind of problem they can take to their parents and prefer to call an anonymous telephone number to seek help.

"Society says don't fool around before marriage because you will get pregnant and that will really hurt your parents. Today's kids laugh and say their parents will never know. They will have an abortion. This kind of morality is where the problem of abortion really lies in this country," he said.

Father Enright is among volunteers who man the telephone line. He remarked that people are often surprised to hear a male voice. "Perhaps they don't consider that a man should be involved, but if there is a pregnancy there is already a man involved," he said.

Father Enright stressed the need to see pregnancy not as a female problem for sexuality is a two-way street. And, while marriage is not the answer in most situations, the man involved often can provide the supportive understanding that can carry a girl through a pregnancy. Oftentimes both the girl and the man can be involved in the growing experience. He feels it is Choice's function to try and refer them to the appropriate resource for help.

The lack of readily available medical services was found to be a problem in this area. It is difficult for the unmarried woman to get an appointment with a doctor and often payment is requested in advance. Choice has been able to arrange for girls wishing to bring their baby to term to be seen by doctors locally.

Father Enright stressed that "the way to reach men, to bring them to an understanding of Christian doctrine is through a helping hand. The long range approach to the problem of life is not based on law, but on the dignity of the human being based on a basic trust in the goodness of man, whatever their religious or philosophical orientation. It is our job as human beings to care for other human beings."

Other officers are Mary Franchina, president; Ann Murphy, vice president, and Marcia Walsh, secretary. Father Enright is treasurer.

## Workshop to Feature Cenacle Educator

A Cenacle sister who has been directing retreats and catechist training programs for 20 years will give three talks at the annual religious workshop at Watson Homestead, Coopers Plains.

Sister Rita Anne Houlihan will open the program at 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28, and will speak again at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday, March 1. "Be Still and Know . . ." is the title of the series.

Sister Rita Anne is stationed at the Cenacle Center of Spiritual Renewal at Lake Ronkonkoma. She is a graduate of the College of New Rochelle and holds two Master of Arts degrees — in psychology, from Fordham University, and in theology from the University of San Francisco. During the early 1950s, she was attached to the Cenacle Retreat House in Rochester. She has

directed studies within her order and has prepared many classes of members for vows at various levels. Since 1970, she has been on the faculty of the advanced program for adult catechists in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

The Watson Homestead weekend costs \$12. The rate for commuters, which includes lunch, is \$7. Checks should be made payable to the Christian Formation Board and mailed to Judy Wardell, 3026 Wynwood Road, Big Flats, N.Y. 14814. There will be no refunds for cancellations received after Feb. 19.

### FOOD PROJECT

Newark — The Human Development Committee of St. Michael's Parish has established a food collection on the first Sunday of each month. Jack Burgess is coordinating the program.

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