



Sr. Felicitas Almanza enjoys using song, study and prayer in her teaching during family Bible study at St. Francis Xavier Church.

# Apostolate to Our Span

"The Spanish Apostolate ministers to the spiritual and individual needs of persons unattended by other diocesan parishes or offices," Father Edward Golden explained recently in the former St. Bridget's classroom that serves as headquarters for the Apostolate. "We supply aid to the diocese and to parishes in their ministry to the Spanish-speaking people and encourage them to minister."

Father John Dillon, field coordinator with Father Golden, told that the history of the Spanish Apostolate stretches back 20 to 25 years to the arrival of Rochester's first Puerto Ricans. Now approximately 25,000 Spanish-speaking people, most of whom are first generation newcomers, live in Rochester. Father Dillon described them as "Catholic to the bone by culture."

Father Golden, formerly of the diocesan mission in Bolivia, Father Dillon, Sister Annette Truby, and six missionary Sisters of Guadalupe compose the Spanish Apostolate's full-time staff. The Mexican sisters began arriving in 1968 and are "worth their weight in gold," according to Sister Annette. The Sisters meet with people in their homes and parishes to help with personal needs and to give religious instruction. One of them, Sister Aida Sansor, was elected last November to serve as a member of the Northeast Region committee responsible for planning a Spanish cultural center in this part of the U.S.

Sister Irene Lara, community superior, said the sisters enjoy their life and work in America. "My mission is inside me," she said, explaining why she is not homesick. She and the sisters think life is simpler and happier in Mexico, where home is the center of everything, and that there is no real poverty in America, compared with life for the Mexican poor.

A spiritual renewal movement of Spanish original character is the Cursillo, introduced to Rochester in 1965. Ismael Ramos, lay director, said that "making a Cursillo" is like being in heaven.

"You feel so good, and you start to love your wife, your children, your home, and your neighbors." After a cursillo experience, which begins on Thursday night and lasts through Sunday, a person "wouldn't give up the memory for \$25,000 even if he only had a penny." Roughly 700 people of the dioceses have made cursillos in the past 10 years.

Ismael Ramos is a member of one of the newest Spanish expressions in the diocese, the Consejo or Council, which Bishop Joseph Hogan officially recognized last March. Candido Colon is president. Six lay people represents their compatriots in St. Patrick's, St. Bridget's, St. Michael's, Holy Redeemer, Corpus Christi and St. Francis Xavier parishes. Fathers Dillon and Golden and Sister Annette also are members. It is the goal of the Spanish Apostolate coordinators that the Consejo provide strong community leadership. Fathers Dillon and Golden agreed that they have observed tremendous development of organization within the Spanish community.

An important role of the Consejo is to communicate with English-speaking Catholics who wish to be integrated, but not assimilated into the American church. "We are all brothers and sisters, no matter what our nationality," Ismael Ramos said.

When a person comes to the States from Puerto Rico, he experiences discrimination, usually for the first time in his life, Sister Annette said. Races are so different here that there is very little discrimination. Rico said that he has been here for over 20 years and has never felt this way, he understands that Puerto Ricans "are made to feel low" when in groups with the English speaking people.

Young people coming from Puerto Rico are looking for a loss of faith, according to Colon. They don't find it in the American Church, explained that Americans don't express their feelings the same way. Also, life here offers more opportunity for enjoyment, and people can get trapped in their jobs and lose their faith in Jesus. In Puerto Rico, life is a balance of work, home, and Sunday Mass.

Spanish masses are offered weekly in several parishes, St. Michael's Church in Newark.



Father Golden, left, and Candido Colon.



Mrs. Fela Santiago looks up a Bible passage during the group's Bible study class.



Sr. Soledad Cruz goes out into the