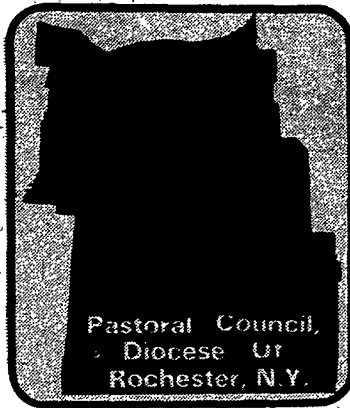


Countdown Begins for Diocesan Pastoral Council

This is the first of a series of articles prepared by the Diocesan Pastoral Council/Convocation Steering Committee to describe various aspects of the Diocesan Pastoral Council which will convene June 13-15. The purpose of the series is to raise the awareness of every member of the diocese of the importance of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.



March has been designated as the month during which the 170 parishes in our diocese will lay the foundation for the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC). Bishop Joseph L. Hogan has instructed each parish council to submit a nominee to its regional body and has sent suggested criteria for these nominees. Each of the 10 regions of the diocese will elect its three members to the Diocesan Pastoral Council from these nominees.

Along with the 30 members elected from the regions, the council will have between 23 and 28 additional members. The Priests Council and Sisters Council are currently devising a method through which five priests and five sisters from the diocese will be elected by their peers.

Bishop Hogan will appoint four youth representatives and one Religious brother from the diocese. Pastoral Office membership will include the Bishop, the director of Pastoral Ministry and the executive secretary of the council who will soon be named by Bishop Hogan.

After the results of the election are submitted on April 15, the Bishop is empowered to appoint between five and ten other members representing minority groups and special interests. Thus the members of the Pastoral Council will total between 53 and

point stating that "to the extent that each parish and region shares its gifts from the Spirit, our Pastoral Council shall become a unique participation of the whole People of God in the serving Mission of the Church."

Each region has been challenged to develop a nominating process which insures that all its parishes and institutions participate in determining its three representatives. At least two of the members from each region must be lay men or women and one member will be designated regional liaison. Many of the regions have adopted a procedure developed by the Northwest Region of Monroe County in which a regional nominating committee proposes the nominees for this regional liaison.

Father Albert Cason, coordinator of the Tompkins-Tioga Region, stated that his region has "a good comprehension of the nomination process since they are familiar with the process of parish elections to the Regional Assembly." Father Roy Kiggins, coordinator for the Southeast Region of Monroe County, indicated that the process was running smoothly. He has scheduled a Regional Assembly for April 13 to elect representatives.

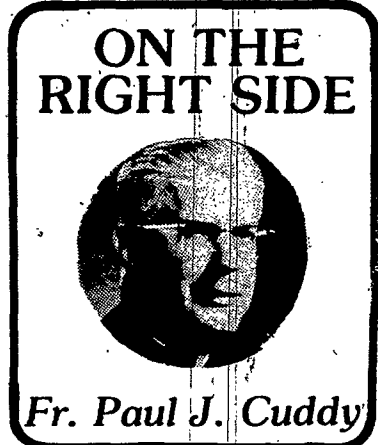
At the parish level, nominees are being selected in a variety of ways. Most parish councils have appointed ad hoc committees to recommend candidates and then the councils elect their nominee. This was recently done at St. Margaret Mary's in the North Region. Our Lady of Mercy parish in the Northwest Region asked each parish council member to

submit a name for nomination. The parish council then elected one person from these names. St. John the Evangelist parish in the Southeast Region asked parishioners through the Sunday bulletin to submit names to the parish council steering committee chairperson.

These few examples indicate that the parishes and regions are maintaining their individuality

and ingenuity in responding to Bishop Hogan's challenge. In general, indications are that our Diocesan Pastoral Council elections are off to a good start throughout the diocese. The regional elections must be completed by April 15.

In the next article some parish council chairpersons will share their views on the Diocesan Pastoral Council.



Each week brings some surprise to me. The surprise for the week of March 2 was this: almost no one knew the name or even of the existence of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. I made a small survey, using a simple question: Do you know who Mother Teresa of Calcutta is? A few thought she was the Little Flower, St. Teresa of Lisieux. But for most she might be a lady from Outer Space. What is disconcerting is that she is a 20th century Francis of Assisi. A year ago the Readers Digest had an article on her, read by millions. Many other magazines have written of her work. The Courier Journal, which is advertised as having 93% readership, has occasional stories of her work. So the surprise of the week was the limbo in which Mother Teresa lives in the minds of Catholic people.

Who is Mother Teresa of Calcutta? She was born Agnes Boyaxhiu, in Skopje, Yugoslavia, of Albanian parents. She was born in 1910. She left a happy home to become a missionary Sister in India. From her walks in Calcutta, where she was a teacher of geography to middle class Indian girls, she was filled with compassion for the cast-off: men, women, children, dying in the streets. In 1948, she was dispensed from her Sisters of Loretta Order to begin what has become The Missionaries of Charity. Here is a part of a radio interview with British Broadcasting commentator Malcolm Muggeridge, from his book, *Something Beautiful for God*.

Malcolm: When you say Home for the Dying, you mean that these are people in the streets who have been abandoned and are dying?

Mother Teresa: Yes. The first woman I saw myself picked up from the street. She had been half eaten by the rats and ants. I took her to the hospital, but they could do nothing for her. From there I went to the municipality and asked them for a place where I could bring these people because on the same day I found other

people dying in the streets. The health officer of our municipality took me to the temple Kali. It was an empty building. I was happy to have that place for many reasons. Withing 20 hours we had our patients there and we started the work of the home for the sick and dying who are destitute. Since then we have picked up over 23,000 people from the streets of Calcutta of which about 50 per cent have died.

Malcolm: What exactly are you doing for these dying people?

Mother T: First of all we want to make them feel they are wanted. We want them to know that there are people who really love them, to know human and divine love at least for the few hours that they have to live. That they are loved and cared about, and there are young lives ready to give themselves in service.

While reading Muggerridge's book, I wondered how many people remember Mother Alphonsus, convert daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Katherine Burton wrote of her and her work for destitute, incurable cancer patients in her book, *Sorrow Built a Bridge*. Or how many people under 30 know the work of Dr. Tom Dooley, ex-Navy man, who gave his heart and medical skill for the destitute in Indo-China. He died of cancer at the age of 44 in 1961. He wrote several books on the work, the finale being *Dr. Tom Dooley, My Story*, written one year before his death.

The Missionaries of Charity follow the traditional religious life, with strong emphasis on community. They wear a habit of the white Indian sari with a blue border. They pray together, have Mass together, receive Communion together, recreate together and experience the joys of religious community life in their mutual concern. It is significant that the first ten young women to join Mother Teresa were women who had been her students. The order has a membership of about 5,000 grown in 24 years, and spread to every continent.

Mother Teresa wrote on kindness: "Be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come to you without coming away better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting. In the slums we are the light of God's kindness to the poor. To the children, to the poor, to all who suffer and are lonely, give always a happy smile. Give them not only your care, but also your heart."

Film Seminars Set March 22

A time frame for showing of films has been established for the Film Seminars sponsored by the Office of Religious Education at Nazareth Academy from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, March 22.

Films about youth and adults are scheduled for all day, elementary films for afternoon and pre-schooler films in the morning only.

It also was announced by the education office that Sister Carol Datz of Ss. Peter and Paul parish in Rochester will be a presenter, taking the place of Sister Mary Dennis of Nazareth Academy.

Parents, education committees, teachers and parish staffs are

invited to preview material from XXIII Publications, Alpha, Klise, Gospel Films, Pyramid Films, Teleketics and films available free from the Rochester Public Library.

Because eight audiovisuals will be shown concurrently each parish is advised to send at least eight persons.

Reservations may be made through Mary Travaglini at the Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Payment is \$3 per person or \$10 per parish. Child care will be provided by reservation, again through Miss Travaglini, 328-3210.

Communal Penance

Last in a Series
By the Diocesan
Liturgy Commission

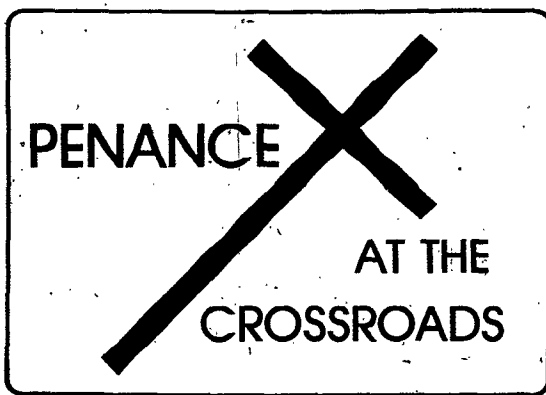
In the past few years there has been a notable decline in the reception of the sacrament of Penance. This decline has been noticeable even among those who are sincerely dedicated to a fervent living of the Christian life. Nor is this phenomenon confined to Catholics of one country; it has occurred throughout the Church. What is the reason for this world-wide decline in the sacrament of Penance?

Some people are inclined to say that the sacrament of Penance as we have practiced it in the Church simply does not come to grips with the really great social reconciliation-needs of contemporary life. They believe that private confession — with its weekly "shopping list" as some have rather cynically called it — does not face up sufficiently to the social responsibilities of Christians. It appears to give us a "clean slate," when we know very well that our slate, as responsible members of society, is not clean. It serves to encourage complacency, while ignoring our deep needs for reconciliation in the social order.

This may well be a valid observation. After all, the traditional form of Penance came into being about the Eighth Century and derived from the practice of private spiritual direction for Irish monks. The problem of recent years for those who take their Christianity most seriously, including its social dimension, has been the gap between the manner in which we celebrate reconciliation in the sacrament of Penance and the tremendous and widespread need for reconciliation in a society so alienated as our own. Forgiving souls one by one does not seem to be enough in the face of the massive alienation of people from God and from one another. In an attempt to bridge this gap, many churches have turned to the celebration of communal penance services. The new rite of Penance provides for two such communal rituals of reconciliation.

The first of these is called **The Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution**. In this form of celebrating the Sacrament, individual confession and absolution are inserted into a communal celebration in which all listen to the Word of God and admit their sinfulness and invoke God's mercy.

This service involves a proclamation of God's Word. It is similar to the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass. The homily which follows the Word Service leads into a general examination of conscience and a



general confession of sin similar to the penitential rite of the Mass.

The Lord's Prayer is said by all and then opportunity is offered for individual confession and absolution. After the individual confessions have been completed, the priest invites all present to offer thanks to God for His forgiveness. The priest encourages the participants to the performance of good works that will proclaim that the grace of repentance is active in their lives. Following this exhortation, a hymn praising God's mercy is appropriate. After the hymn, the priest blesses the people and dismisses them with words like the following:

**The Lord has freed you
from your sins.
Go in peace.**

To these words of dismissal all reply, "Thanks be to God."

The second form of communal penance is called **The Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution**. This way of celebrating communal penance is basically the same as the first form except that individual confession and absolution are not included. Instead the people make a general confession and the priest gives general absolution. This form of celebrating the sacrament of Penance is permissible only where the circumstances make it impossible to have individual confession and absolution. The penitent who receives such general absolution is obliged — at least if he is guilty of serious sin — to make individual confession of his sins as soon as it is reasonably possible.

These two forms of communal penance will not satisfy everyone. In particular, many will feel that general confession with general absolution should be allowed more frequently and even under ordinary circumstances. But these two forms do represent a beginning in our striving as Church to achieve a form of penance that will adequately meet the great social reconciliation needs of our contemporary life.