

# Jr. High, College In Unique Program

By DICK BAUMBACH

**Elmira-Horseheads** — The reason for the double dateline of this story is because students at St. Patrick's Junior High School in Elmira have been going through a never-before-tried concept in education at the Elmira College Athletic and Education complex in Horseheads.

Paul Brand, director of athletics at the college, has termed the project "A school within a school." That's exactly what has been occurring for the last three weeks and will continue to do so until Friday.

Sister Clare Francis Mogenhan, principal of St. Patrick's, said the program is aimed at "exposing the students to the application of skills in many different ways. It is learning in an alternate way."

The students arrive at St. Patrick's daily and receive their religious instruction from 8:40 to 9:30 a.m. They then board buses out to the college center, which is about 15 miles from the junior high school, and at 10 a.m. start the remainder of their educational day.

St. Patrick's is located on the fringe of Elmira's innercity. Sister Mogenhan said, "At the junior high school we are basically in a confined area, while out at the college we have the country atmosphere."

For the college's part, they aren't just providing the buildings to hold the program, they also have 70 students teachers taking part in the project for degree requirements.

The entire student body of St. Patrick's, a total of 320 students, takes part in the unique program.

The 13 teaching staff members at St. Patrick's act as faculty supervisors as well as instructors for the program.

The students eat from bag lunches at the college and are free to roam over the open countryside in organized activities. "There are nature trails as well as sports areas that we just don't and couldn't have at St. Patrick's. This gives the students the opportunity to have some freedom and not feel constantly confined," Sister said.

But held in the quiet church A restless child, wondering, perched in the pew Staring at the mystery, listening, nurtured, And in the grace of God I grew.

Indeed we cannot grow if we turn our backs on the social and political problems of our day. But neither can we grow or respond to social challenge without a strong, clear view of the meaning of life and the purpose of the cosmos. Is there, as Mrs. McCready puts it, "a kingdom of mystery, a world of divine promise"? Is there indeed? It's a tough question and requires deep thought, long reflection, and then intense commitment. You don't do any of these things by speaking with tongues, attending a prayer meeting, singing at a guitar mass, or marching on a picket line — no matter how necessary or worthy or laudable such activities may be.

As I have argued in the last several columns, there is no point in trying to recapture the past in some sick sentimental nostalgia. It can't be done. The pertinent question is whether we can learn from the past, and if we can't, then we're in pretty bad shape. Mrs. McCready, who is neither a romantic nor a sentimentalist, observed that, "... we must take a look at the ways of the 'old church,' and see if there isn't something that was too precious to be tossed aside in our efforts to dive into total communal response."

God will not be rediscovered by fundamentalist enthusiasm any more than he will be found again by literalistic nostalgia. We must look respectfully at the past — not to deny the present, but to improve the quality of our response to the present. Mrs. McCready says it well:

"In a day when people are present or absent from church rather casually, when penance is a forgotten sacrament, when friendships are more and more difficult to sustain, and intimacy almost impossible, where do we find the trust, the forgiveness, the transcendency and the comfort of a sacred place?"

"We might find among the smell of beeswax and incense some hints about where we should be focusing our energies within the church. Our hearts still cry out with the same needs — to trust, to love, to be forgiven, to belong to a faithful God."

Does that mean we should begin once again to drop in for a few minutes at church? Well, it might. But don't try it.

The church doors are locked.



Gilbert Merrill, Elmira College assistant professor of natural history and learning resources specialist, points out the habitat of local wildlife on the nature trail surrounding the J. Ralph Murray Athlete-Education Center to Sister Clare Francis, St. Patrick's Junior High School Principal; 8th graders Debbie Huffman and Greg Malinoski, along with 7th graders Anne Shea and T. J. Stapleton and EC freshman Dave Conklin.

The principal said she would "love to have the program year round, but I don't know if it would be feasible. If it were a year round program I would build more basic skills into the system."

The students end their teaching day at 2:40 p.m. and head back, via school buses, to the junior high school in Elmira.

Sister Mogenhan said the one drawback she has seen with the program is the busing. "The busing gets difficult at times in trying to move an entire school every day to another location. In

the afternoon we have to make a double run from the college to the junior high school because the city school district's buses are tied up starting to take those children home."

However, Sister said she is "very excited about the program. It's very exciting for everyone and by that I mean both teachers and students."


"I feel we have been able to reach some students academically that we haven't been able to reach in a straight academic atmosphere. We have

students who are learning with knowing they are learning and I think a good reason for that is the atmosphere at the college."

The only cost to St. Patrick's is to share in the costs of the bus transportation and the purchase of some supplies for the project.

"The cost is well worth it when you realize that you are exposing the students to an alternate way of learning, and some of the students who were having difficulty with the normal system are really moving ahead. The program is wonderful. What else can I say," she said.

**The Church 1975**



Fr. Andrew Greeley

Remember visits to the Blessed Sacrament?

They went down the drain with a lot of other things in the quest for relevance and experience and self-fulfillment. How could you be "with it" and "involved" and "honest" and "relating" if you were in church praying? "Visits" were a way of "hiding behind the altar," a copout from the challenge and demands of the secular world.

Now, in such unexpected places as the "Village Voice" and Erica Jong's "Fear of Flying" (an undisciplined but not un-insightful novel), we find that the modern secular world is looking for an explanation of the meaning of life and death. We have a lot of answers (most of them superficial and potentially harmful) to complex social problems, but we can't seem to remember what answer we gave to the question of what is the meaning of human life.

My colleague Nancy McCready, in a poem from a recent issue of "Jesus Lives," remembers those "visits" and wonders about whether we gave them up too quickly:

Was it so long ago  
That a vigil light cost a penny  
or two  
And I would set the church  
aglow.  
With all the copper coins I'd  
stolen from Esther's dresser.  
(Remember the lady who lived  
with us, I loved her so.)  
And you, God, and I would sit  
together  
And amidst candles laugh at a  
little child's jokes  
Which now I know even held  
some wisdom.  
We were a secret pair, because  
with you I could share my cares  
What feelings were there inside  
Who I loved at school and why  
And how afraid and glad I was  
to think of dying  
How I would sigh there, at  
home with you  
And wish never to be anywhere

## Teen Heads Bike Hike

Terry Libonati, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Libonati of Rochester, anticipates a busy month ahead getting ready for what she hopes will be an even bigger and better Bike Hike for the Handicapped than the first one last year. The big day is Sunday, June 1. As Bike Hike chairperson as well as the recently re-elected president of Youth Organized and United to help the Association for Retarded Children at the Al Sigl Center (sponsors of the event), it is no surprise that she finds her hands full.

Terry was graduated from Franklin High School last year and attends Miss McCarthy's Stenographic Service. After she completes her studies in June, she hopes to work as therapy aide at Monroe Developmental Services on Westfall Road.

"I'm really wrapped up in my work with the handicapped," she says. "I just love it... to see kids who need help so very much begin to respond and grow and hopefully live up to their full potential. It's extremely satisfying to see progress no matter how small it may seem. And when it does come, you know the time and patience spent have been well worth it."

Terry began her work with the handicapped about four years ago. "One day I just called the Al Sigl Center and said I wanted to work with Handicapped kids. They told me about Y.O.U.T.H.—ARC and invited me to come up and meet its adviser, Fred Tee Boon. Fred was just fantastic in his enthusiasm about the organization and its work, but warned me that the job would not be easy. That certainly turned out to be the case, but I wouldn't trade these past few years of anything. It's been a really great experience."

"We have a terrific bunch of kids now in Y.O.U.T.H.—ARC; about 200 boys and girls from schools all over the county and they are doing a great job. I'd highly recommend the organization to anyone who is willing to give a few hours every week to help the handicapped."

Referring to Bike Hike '75, which occupies just about all her free time, Terry indicated that "we've been doing everything we can to organize an even better event this year and on behalf of Y.O.U.T.H.—ARC, I invite

everyone to participate either as a rider or a sponsor."

As in the past, riders will ask people to sponsor them for so much money per course mile completed. But, this year, the riders won't have the additional inconvenience of having to

## Priest as Educator Topic at Conference

Changing concepts of Christian education, its cradle-to-grave expansion and the resultant demands on priest and parish were discussed this week at a Diocesan Clergy Conference in Canandaigua.

Conference leaders were Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and Father Alfred McBride of the National Catholic Education Association, who is general editor of the evolving National Catechetical Directory. The three-day meeting at Notre Dame Retreat House ends today.

Presentations and panel discussions examined the emerging educational vision of the Church; the role of priest in Christian education decision-making; educational structure and staff relations; and Catholic schools.

collect money pledged to them. Terry indicated that all sponsors will be billed directly, by a computerized procedure.

Last year more than \$90,000 was raised and some 16 local agencies and organizations serving the her handicapped shared in the proceeds.

Responding effectively to the idea of the parish as total Christian educator has dramatically changed the traditional role of the priest as pastor, counselor, and sacramental minister. With the expansion of the parish educational spectrum (pre-schooler to adult educational programs), a new type of leadership is demanded of him. He must now focus his attention on administrative duties, educational planning committees, and consultative parish groups.

Bishop Hogan in his presentation, "Priest as Prophet of Hope," reflected a two-fold theme; the pain and the promise of the priesthood, and a call to positive hopeful leadership in the educational ministries.



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