



Sister Diane Branch preaches at St. Joseph's Church in Penfield.



In Canandaigua, Sister Marie Albert works with Salvation Army Captain

# P.A.'s . . . on the M

Text by Bonita Baldwin  
Photos by Susan McKinney

My wife and I sat in the living room feeling blue,  
Because of our misfortune and very bad news.  
Then came a knock on our front door. To our  
surprise came the flying nun . . .

Whenever the flying nun is near, You never see  
blues but always cheer . . .

The "flying nun" praised in this poem written by a former Sonyea patient is Sister Angela Sutula. One of 30 pastoral assistants working throughout the diocese, Sister Angela of St. Patrick's Church in Mt. Morris, described her job thus: "It's just going anywhere to help anyone."

Sister Helen Goschke, pastoral assistant at St. Margaret Mary's Church, expressed the same thought. "We try to be where we are needed to build the community." She added that pastoral assistants do everything that priests do "except say Mass, hear confession, baptize, or perform weddings."

Another pastoral assistant, Sister Barbara Moore at St. Monica's Church, captured the breadth of their work, "P.A.'s are involved in all sacramental and community support aspects of the parish." Their roles vary considerably from church to church. Pastoral assistants may read scripture and preach during Mass. They may also administer the eucharist during Mass and in homes, but this is the only sacrament, save emergency baptisms, which they may administer.

The sacraments, however, are an area of parish life in which the assistants are very much involved. Sister Patricia Norton reported that she receives all the baptism calls at St. Charles Borromeo Church. She makes home visits prior to the baptisms, assists the priest in preparatory classes, and helps during the ceremony to see that things run smoothly. Earlier this year another pastoral assistant, Sister

Ann Maloy, organized a parish special anointing service at instruct converts, serve on cc and make home visits and as part of an entire church s for them," Sister Carol E assistants' working relations

Sister Elizabeth Mulcahy at St. Francis Xavier Church, re pastoral assistant is evolvi Elizabeth thus spends muc housing needs in her neigh works with the Spanish spe Carmel's Sister Carol Fox r women in jail. Sister Helen C adult education. Sister Ma Evangelist, Humboldt Stree high rises, while Sister An homes in Mt. Morris and Sis nursing homes near Canad

The sisters are ready Marlene's high rise ministry Marie works with the Sava terdenominational prayer g Morgan serves on the Cour on.

Pastoral assistants are not priests. They are women that a woman brings to th pondering the role of the p Goschke explained that p



Nellie Boles greet Sister Helen Goschke of St. Margaret Mary's.



On the steps of St. Patrick's Church, Sister Julia Norton poses with two first communion boys.



Sister Elizabeth Mulcahy supervises young workers at St. Francis church custodian, Dave Seldow; Kathy Morrill, Abner Ortiz, Elia Mary Lou Paciorek, Natalie Miller, Debbie Taylo