

Conference Draws Teachers from Around Diocese

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Seneca Falls — "I have been in education for 25 years and I have seen what a good teacher can do and what a bad teacher can do and it does make a difference," Dr. Nicholas F. Vitalo, Jr. told 300 faculty members from parochial schools in the diocese outside of Monroe County.

Dr. Vitalo, assistant superintendent for instruction for the Malverne Public Schools, was the keynote speaker at the recent Diocesan Teachers conference.

A simultaneous conference was held in Monroe County.

"The teacher in the Catholic school does have a particular dimension to his job and that is to provide the religious and spiritual dimension to the education of the youngster and the religious values system wanted by the parents," he said.

He said options in education are important. The parochial school system does provide an important alternative to the public schools.

Dr. Vitalo said an important element in teaching is moving with the times, the willingness to look at innovative classroom techniques which enhance individualization, diagnostic skills and improved methods.

"This includes the ability to broaden the approach beyond

the school and classroom to resources available in the general community. The teacher today must be aware of other forces from the streets and the media which compete with the education the child," he said.

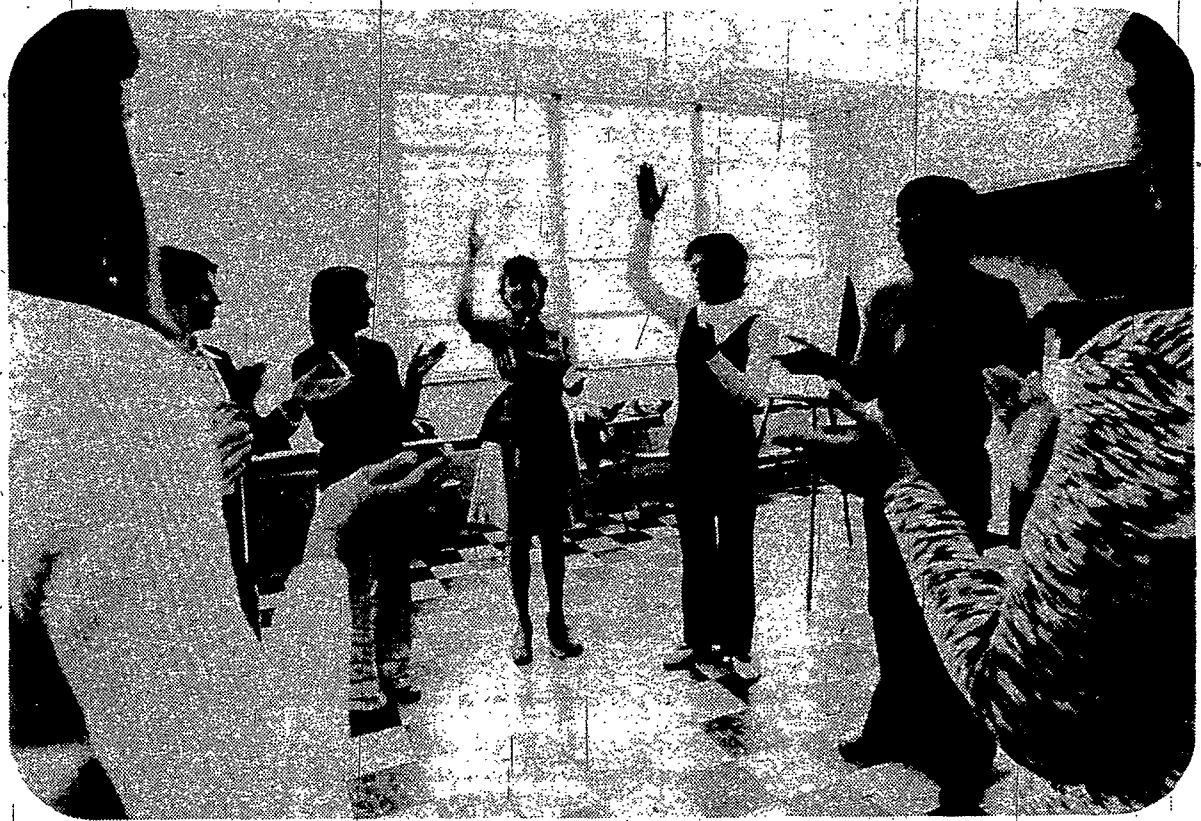
"Your school, to be truly humanistic and truly human, must be concerned primarily with the students developing the potential God has given each one of them. A basic idea about kids is that everyone needs to be loved and feel important," he noted. "You have to like kids and you have to let them know you like kids."

Vitalo said that it is his personal goal as a principal to be in every classroom everyday, not to keep track of what is happening, but to be present to the teachers and students, and to be supportive with positive suggestions.

"We talk in Christian circles of the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. We have to devise ways to do this in the classroom. We must show this loving concern by what we are. We must build on the positive," he said.

"We have to help them (students) grow and let them become functioning adults, building on their inner resources which have been built up by our support."

He said a crucial aspect of



In Rochester David Palma leads teachers in an exercise for use in teaching drama in the classroom.

Photos by Mary Ann Ginnerty and Bruce Genut

teaching is the feeling one. If a teacher is excited and enthused about what he is about, this will be passed onto the student. The enemy of learning is boredom.

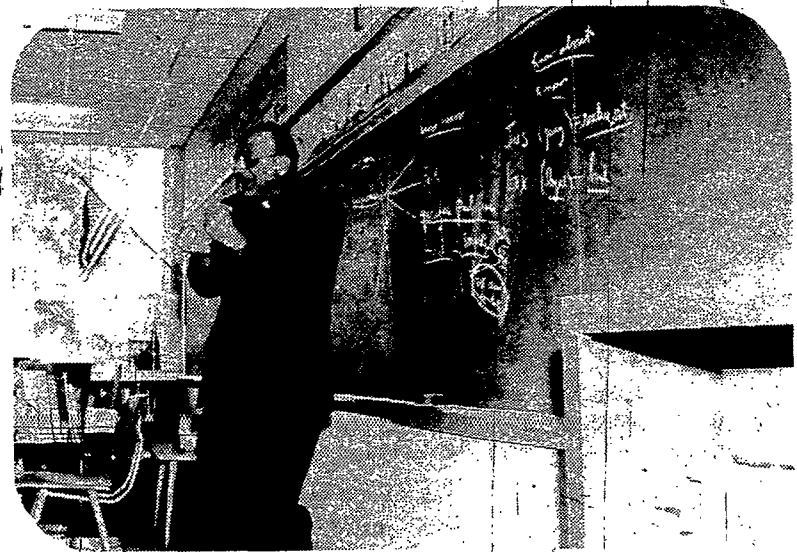
Parents must be involved in the process of change, he stressed. Parents are insisting on quality programs, good teaching and they want children to learn. Training, methodology, discipline and safety are concerns. Contents, especially, in religion are things parents are insisting on today, he said.

He also said parents want meaningful provisions for evaluation. They want priestly presence in the school. They want their children to have healthy personalities so they may live effectively with others and be able to think creatively and critically. They want their children to have a good grasp of basic skills, reading, writing and speaking. They want their children to have marketable skills if education does not continue beyond high school.

In conclusion, Dr. Vitalo



Father Daniel Brent, Sister M. James Lynch, and keynote speaker Dr. Nicholas F. Vitalo Jr. go over program in Seneca Falls.



Father Albert Shamon leads workshop on Sacramental Presentation.

emphasized that the action is in the classroom. It is the teacher's personal approach that makes the climate. The building of the community of faith has to start with the faculty and administration, he said.

"It is the added dimension of Catholic education that the teacher is the Christ to the child and the Christian witness in the classroom. Don't put your values under a bushel basket," he told the assembly.

The day of workshops exposed teachers to current programs available to meet individual student needs, and specific ideas to be used in the classroom.

A sampling from the 17 workshops offered include use of learning centers, expanding avenues in career education, teaching children from Scripture, nursery school sharing, Rosner Perceptual Skills in reading, values systems, and behavior modification. Learning disabilities and science and language arts for junior high students were also presented.

The welcome for the conference day was given by Father Daniel Brent, superintendent of Education for the diocese. Sister M. James Lynch, coordinator of educational services, spoke of the teacher, as an artist who heightens the child's own talents.



In Rochester Joyce Brasley lectured teachers on manipulative materials teachers can make themselves.



Paul Forte demonstrates tape teachers can use for film strips.