

# St. Augustine's Offers Series on the Faith

A 10-week course of instruction in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the worship of Roman Catholics will open Sunday evening, Feb. 1, at St. Augustine's, 410 Chili Ave. It is intended for the unchurched and for persons of all denominations who wish to learn more about the Catholic faith.

Fathers Paul McCabe and David Simon, co-pastors, will lecture on successive Sundays from 7 until 8:30 p.m., in the rectory meeting room. Anyone who wants more information about this free course may call the rectory office at 328-2442.

The announcement from St. Augustine's said that "with parish prayer support for those attending

such classes and searching out the meaning of Christ in their lives," at least 47 persons had joined the church during the past two years. Father Joseph Champlin, nationally syndicated writer, recently described the team-operated west side parish as a model in evangelizing techniques.

## PRE-CANA

Ithaca — Couples from Immaculate Conception are reminded that the next Pre-Cana dates are Feb. 2 and 4. All couples planning marriage must attend. Pre-registration may be arranged by calling the rectory at 273-6121. The classes will be held from 7:30 to 11 p.m. in Room 108 at the school.

## The Church 1976



Fr. Andrew Greeley

Rome — As this city quietly marks the end of the first post-conciliar decade, it is obvious that the Curia is supremely confident that it has won the war despite losing the Battle of the Council. The furries unleashed by Pope John have been contained, the enemies of the Curia have been scattered, discredited, silenced, or beaten into exhaustion. The synod of bishops is a puppet show, the internationalization of the Curia changed nothing, the birth control commission was routed. Archbishop Bugini, the architect of liturgical renewal, has been suitably punished (fired from his job and living quietly without assignment in the Claretian house in Rome). The Dutch church is in a shambles, and envy has turned German scholars against Hans Kung. Ecumenism has ground to a complete halt.

The Curia figures it has won. It's business as usual, and the five million pilgrims who came to Rome during the Holy Year are cited as proof that it was right all along.

To think of the Curia as a monolithic body is simplistic, of course. There is endless suspicion, distrust, and infighting going on within it. Some of its factions are dismayed by the turn events have taken, and others bitterly resent their own subjection by the secretariat of state. There has been no single organized conspiracy to thwart the decisions of the Council, but then there didn't have to be. Enough independent actors worked toward the same goal without having to resort to conspiracy.

All that remains is to ensure the election of a pope at the end of the next conclave who will continue the status quo — with more charm, perhaps, than the present papal style. Toward the goal the curial forces work vigorously. The new conclave rules assure that the electoral base of the conclave will not be widened. One hears in Rome that the next consistory of cardinals is being designed to increase the curial and Italian representation so that the next pope will be Italian, and if not a curialist at least acceptable to the Curia. No one thinks they will be defeated in this effort.

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One may argue about whether the situation I have described is desirable or not. I do not think, however, that there are any "Vaticanologists" in this city who would disagree with the accuracy of the analysis. The post-conciliar era is over, indeed it was over before it ever began.

And I'm not prepared to blame the Curia. Its various factions did exactly what everyone — including themselves — said they would do. They acted according to their own lights and their own traditions. Often they were effective in frustrating Pope Paul's plans even when they didn't win him over to their perspective. No one with any knowledge of history or of the sociology of bureaucratic structures would be surprised at all by what has happened.

But I would strongly blame the powerful coalition which dominated the Vatican Council and then lost the post-conciliar struggles almost by default. The bishops and the theologians went home and immediately permitted their structures of communication to fall apart. Perhaps the most devastating blow was the creation of the theological commission with which Rome allegedly consults. By appointing some conciliar theologians to this commission, but not all of them, the Curia neatly split the two groups in half. Envy of the popularity of Kung and a few others promptly did the rest. Conservative Leo Suenens dared to open his mouth in defense of co-responsibility and was promptly denounced as a "radical" and cut off from effective influence — with many of his former friends and allies joining in the denunciations. Again envy over world publicity did much of the Curia's work for it.

And while the Curia plots endlessly about the next papal election, no one else even thinks about it. They are too weary, too bitter, too alienated. One elector told me that most of the cardinals of the world will learn about mandates from "Time" magazine.

It is well and good to hold meetings in Detroit about the ordination of women, bravely predicting such ordination within the decade. Such meetings affect not in the least the reality of curial power nor the forces shaping the election of the next pope.

Confrontation unfortunately is no substitute for coalition politics. The Curia learned that long ago. Its enemies have not learned it yet, and it appears they never will.

## THE OPEN WINDOW



Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman,

The letter to you in this week's Courier-Journal reveals a need long felt in the Catholic Community: the need of the older Catholic indoctrinated by the Baltimore Catechism to know the changes.

As a member of this segment, I feel disillusioned and dissatisfied. We know the Church has changed but we don't know precisely how it has changed.

Your column could provide the required information. For openers, please explain in detail, confession today. What does a penitent say or do when he confronts the priest in the confessional? The childish form we learned and used many years ago seems to have been discarded. I have heard that you confess only when you are burdened with mortal sin. Does this mean when you stand in line you are, in effect, saying, I must confess grievous sins? Shades of the past when public confession was the order of the day!

In confession, I find myself displaying a belligerent attitude and an inability to say what I really mean. A distortion results that makes me miserable for days — and possibly offends the priest. Perhaps you can restore serenity in my approach.

Respectfully, J.L.

Dear J.L.:

I feel very badly about your disillusionment and dissatisfaction. There are many who are in the same boat with you. When you ask, for openers please explain in detail, confession today you are asking for quite an answer. The form of going to confession or, as we say, the rite will be quite different in the near future. I cannot explain the reason for that today. Let it suffice to say the confessor and the penitent will pray together and share a passage from the Scripture. There will also be prayers of praise for the wonderful fact that God has forgiven. In a subsequent week I will outline the entire ceremony. Probably by that time you will have read it yourself. I think you will see that it is a very beautiful opportunity to awaken within ourselves the kind of change of heart which was often passed up in the hurried confession of sins and absolution of the past.

## Religious Items Available

Auburn — St. Peter's Episcopal Church has opened the Abbey Shoppe, a place where area residents may purchase assorted items with a religious theme. Among the items offered for sale are greeting cards, stationery, statuary, jewelry, calendars, plaques and banners.

The Abbey Shoppe, at 173 Genesee St., is open from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday.

## WANT A BETTER WORLD? START WITH A BETTER YOU

Enroll in the forthcoming COUNSELOR WORKSHOP starting February 18, 7:30 P.M. at Park Avenue Project (Park Avenue and Culver Road)

For more information, contact:

Drug and Alcohol Council  
9 Lawrence Street  
Rochester, New York 14607  
Telephone: 454-2535



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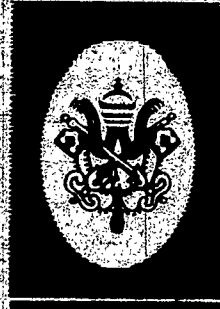
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