



Father Vasile is surrounded by children in the new Family Program.

Family Program Grows At Saint Patrick's

By MARY ALICE BOSSELER

Coming — Like the tiny mustard seed, the idea of a family education program at St. Patrick's Church in Corning has grown from the

planning stages last summer to a full-fledged, eight-month program. More than 50 families including 101 children and 88 adults participated in the program — the first in the Southern Tier.

"One of the biggest rewards of the Family Program has been that parents show their support for their children's education by their actual presence in the program," commented Sister Mary Lynch, SSJ, Religious Education Coordinator. Sister, aided by core committee chairmen, Mrs. James Hintz, Mrs. Richard Fero and Mrs. John Reidy were responsible for the entire program. Also assisting the group were Father Andrew Teuschel, pastor of St. Patrick's; Father Louis Vasile, assistant pastor and Sister Agnes Catherine Battersby, SSJ, pastoral assistant.

What are the advantages of Family Home Sunday? "The gap is lessened between what children are getting today and what the parents received in their religious education," Sister Mary pointed out. She also stressed that a "total education experience is available on Sundays as the students experience joy in celebrating with their families."

One example of this was a recent liturgy in which the head of the family group distributed Holy Communion to his or her family. On other Sundays, students participate and lend their talents in music, dramatic arrangements or readings. Colorful banners, artistic creations and small children also "decorate" the altar.

Prior to each Sunday's program, teacher meetings are held to familiarize teachers with the renewed concepts in theology. Thus, each class is studying the topic from a similar point of view. Another bonus felt by Sister Agnes Catherine is: "The family sessions help to generate community feelings among the parents attending. We come to know people and to understand them better when we hear them express their concerns and questions."

Special speakers have been invited throughout the year to highlight the monthly themes. Father John Zimmerman of Immaculate Conception in Ithaca spoke on "Penance" and Father Sebastian Falcone of St. Bernard's Seminary spoke on "Death."

The Paulist Press publishes the Family Program and each month the materials of slides, teacher lesson plans, and adult information packets are distributed. Adults receive instruction from 10 to 11 a.m. Then the individual family members come together for a sharing session and Mass as the program concludes at noon.

What does the program demand of its chairmen? "Time, effort, and enthusiasm," chimed Mary Fero and Judy Hintz. Yet the leaders felt their personal time was well-invested. Judy senses a "whole new outlook in their family religion" as being gained. Likewise, Marcia Reidy, with pre-schoolers, notes that the boys have shown more of an interest in family worship and prayers since Family Home Sunday began.



Dear Father Hohman,
In theory I understand the meaning of community worship, prayer and penance and I am for it as a stepping stone to individual worship, prayer and penance. I believe it can be a preparation for deeper personal worship. However, I am a very firm believer in individual prayer, worship and personal responsibility for my own transgressions. To me, God is closer when I am in personal prayer. I find it difficult to express myself on this issue because I lack understanding of what you mean by community worship. I like being in church with people and I feel warm and friendly toward them, but I am not there to see them or talk with them; my purpose for going to church is to meet my own spiritual needs. I do pray for others and I am deeply concerned about others and I pray with heartfelt feelings for others' sufferings. When I am in church, it is comforting to me to see others in prayer and I have often asked God to grant the prayers of others if it is His will. I have never been forced to go to church, but I have always loved being in church whether I am alone, with just a few others who have stopped to pray or if the church is crowded. Even our Lord went off by Himself, when He wanted to feel more close to God or when He felt a deep need for God's help. That did not mean that our Lord did not love his followers or that He was not concerned for them. We all have to meet our own spiritual needs in ways that are peculiar to us. It is difficult for me to understand collective guilt. I am responsible for my own sins and I do not feel responsible or guilty for sins that others have committed. I would never commit murder for instance and I have no feeling of guilt when someone else commits this grave sin. However, if I deliberately put temptation in another's path, I would surely suffer the torment of guilt until my guilt was resolved.
The social injustices and the wars of this globe do give me concern and I take whatever action is possible to make my voice heard.

My husband and I both write to our state and national representatives, even the president to state our views on such issues as war, peace, abortion and so on. We take our voting rights seriously. I enjoy volunteer work with Red Cross, Birthright and other community projects. It would seem to me that just being friendly and social in church is not as important as being concerned for those in need in one's family, neighborhood or town. To me there is a time to be social and a time to be reverent and attentive to worship of God. I believe that action in helping others in need is more meaningful than false pretenses and empty gestures of forced friendliness. I do not think of church or of the Mass as a social club. I think of it as the house of God and a place set aside for worship of God.

Signed, R.L.

Dear R.L.,

You have no doubt heard the expression "every action has an equal and opposite reaction." Well that seems to be the case in the new emphasis upon community worship. Liturgy, by definition, is community worship, a group of people who come together knowingly and willingly to worship God in common. There is nothing which says that one way of praying (private) is superior or inferior to another way of praying (in community). There are times for both as Jesus clearly indicated. By praying alone in the desert He showed the need for individual, personal prayer and pointed out that where two or three are gathered in His name He is in the midst of them. So community prayer is also important.

We have gone through a stage in the church where emphasis was almost entirely upon individual prayer and even individual worship at Sunday Mass. Because the priest was facing the other way and praying in a language generally unknown, many people felt that they were relating directly to God without reference in any way to the people around them. We are trying to change this because that would be a bad state of affairs. Everything you have said in your letter indicates that you are very well attuned to community worship. You must not expect from it something outside of what you have already pointed out. And you are perfectly right that actions on behalf of our fellow human beings are the direct result of our praying with them and for them. What we are doing is expressing eternally the fact that we are a family, children of the one God, our Father. I will take up the question of communal guilt at another time.

Right-to-Life Organizing In Cayuga

By MARY ANN GINNERTY

Auburn — John Arena, New York State Right to Life organizational chairman, encouraged establishment of an active Cayuga County Right to Life committee at an organizational meeting held May 27 at the Farm and Home Center.

Arena said the main objective of the Right to Life Groups is to secure passage of the Human Life Amendment or the Buckley amendment designed to protect the life of the unborn child.

He presented medical, social and historical information which groups need to show the public the meaning of abortion.

Effective political activity which can be undertaken by local committees is to identify the stand of their state legislators and work publicly to defeat those in opposition to the amendment's passage. Arena pointed out that a constitutional amendment requires federal legislative action plus ratification at the state level.

Arena said that the 1973 Supreme Court decision stated that meaningful life does not exist in the womb, and thus does not have status as a legal person. This, he said, was a conclusion in the face of growing medical evidence that a baby has a functioning nervous system and a heart beat that can be monitored 18 days after conception.

Arena said the law does require a physician to be present to aid the aborted baby in late pregnancy abortions. It is illogical, he said, to have a physician to aid the baby if, in the first place, the baby is a non-person.

Arena advised the group to point out misleading ideas of right to life that it is solely a Catholic issue. He reported eight out of ten Senate co-sponsors of the Buckley amendment are not Roman Catholic. He said in North Dakota and North Carolina, where pro-abortion referendums have been defeated, there are few Catholics.

Arena also said that the two who voted against the Supreme Court decision in the seven to two vote

were non-Catholics, even though there were two Catholic justices.

Arena stated that even if abortion were safe and simple, there are other considerations. Dr. Ada Ryan, president of the committee of 6,000 New York doctors and nurses, opposing abortion, in testimony before the House Judiciary Committee, Nov. 9, 1974, said the women are being treated like cattle on an assembly line and released after a few hours. Deaths from illegal abortions have increased, not decreased. Dr. Ryan continued, as illegal abortions still assure anonymity and are a "better buy."

Another interesting fact is that some insurance policies will pay for an abortion for an unmarried woman, but not the child's birth.

He also said the incidence of human experimentation is increasing with the use of the aborted fetus by researchers. Arena also said that if we can carelessly kill inside the womb, it is going to become increasingly easier to support legalized euthanasia.

"Prayer alone is not going to work. We have to organize at the grass roots level," Arena said.

Cancer Society Sets Fund Appeal

"Wipe Out Cancer Weekend," a fund-raising event scheduled for July 23-25, will benefit the Monroe County unit of the American Cancer Society. All local commercial radio and television stations are cooperating, promoting public contributions to enable the Cancer Society to maintain and expand its educational programs and services. Pledges can be called in to the local office throughout the weekend, special gifts will be presented to contributors who bring donations to the office at 8 Prince St., Rochester.

The reason for the special appeal, according to the executive director, Mrs. John Maloney, is the lowered income from the Lengths for Lives swim benefit last March, due to the ice storm and school closings.



Award Winner

Rochester native Brother Ralph Carpenter of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, State Retreat Chairman for the Knights of Columbus of Illinois, received a Medallion award from State Deputy Joseph Bomba at a recent state convention in Chicago.