

Spanish Apostolate

Hispanic Catholics in Monroe County want to share their culture with the diocese, according to Italo Rodriguez, new director of the Spanish Apostolate Office.

"Spanish-speaking people want the opportunity to participate in the diocese," said the Hispanic layman who came to Rochester July 26 to head the newly reorganized mission.

The apostolate was formerly staffed by Fathers John Dillon and Edward Golden, the Missionary Sisters of Guadalupe (The Mexican Sisters) and Ms. Annette Truby. They are now working in diocesan parishes and continue to serve hispanic congregations.

The function of the mission is to preach the Gospel to the Spanish-speaking people, explains Rodriguez. There are an estimated 30,000 Hispanics in the diocese centered in Rochester, Newark and Geneva, in migrant camps in Wayne, Monroe, Livingston, and Yates Counties, as well as in prisons in Auburn and Elmira.

The Apostolate used to offer



ITALO RODRIGUEZ

direct services but now is a coordinating agency to channel resources to the Hispanic community.

Religious education and sacramental preparation in Spanish is offered to students through the mission. Spanish language services such as Masses, Baptisms, Marriages and Penance services are held at diocesan churches.

Priests and sisters are made available for counseling to hispanics and make visits to migrant camps, prisons and private homes and minister to the needs of Spanish-speaking Catholics.

The Spanish community is especially receptive to such renewal groups as Marriage Encounter, the Christian Family Movement, Charismatic prayer groups, Cursillo and Jornada.

Cursillo was described as "a renewal movement within the Spanish community to review your faith. It is a short course in Christianity," said Rodriguez. Jornada is a teen retreat program.

Rodriguez worked in religious education at the Spanish Apostolate in Newark, N.J. before coming to Rochester to head the Spanish Apostolate.

He works with the Spanish community through the Diocesan Spanish Council, known as the Consejo. It is an advisory group with representatives from parishes with a significant number of

Spanish-speaking people and from the various renewal movements. The Apostolate offers staff support to the council and assists in leadership development in the parishes.

"We want to help integrate Spanish-speaking people into the American culture, yet keeping our own culture and way of life," explained Rodriguez.

The Apostolate has worked with several diocesan departments in the past, but Rodriguez plans for more interaction. The Apostolate and the Liturgy Department published a Spanish Hymnal. With the Education Department and Human Development an Intercultural Workshop was given last fall. Projects have been coordinated with Religious Education, Planning and Pastoral Ministry.

Rodriguez envisions bilingual staff persons working in Religious Education, Liturgy and Human Development in the future.

"We want to continue to be of service to the community, and to

eliminate the possibilities of discrimination which are so common."

Rodriguez said that the main problem facing his office is a lack of communication with the people it serves.

"We try to publicize our office by word of mouth at present." He is hoping to expand publicity in the Spanish language through the broadcast and print media.

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Teen Seminar

Father Robert Hammond takes his job as diocesan director of the Teen Seminar Department seriously. In order to keep Teen Seminar a successful on-going as well as expanding program, Father is constantly on the move coordinating, directing, and implementing the department's purpose of "teaching youth about faith."

His travels take him to Binghamton, where he has been assisting with a new Teen Seminar program; then to Camp Skybrooke in Dansville for family campers' retreat; and then on to Camp Stella Maris for family retreats where, in a phone conversation, Father stated, "We have 190 people walking around and we are ready to begin a religious education program in 10 minutes."

Basically, Teen Seminar gives retreats to junior and senior high school students. But it also involves a Genesis program at the parish level as well as the Family Retreat Program. During the summer Father operates at Skybrooke and Stella Maris; his winter headquarters is the Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua.

In operating the week-end youth seminars, Father has the help of five lay adults and five young people who participate in leadership roles.

Leadership programs, another vital function of the department, are given three times a year through which 60 to 80 people per session are trained in the religious education of youth.

Also helping Teen Seminar to function are the board of directors which include Mrs. George (Dottie) Hoysic, Miss Mary Williams, Fathers Thomas Valenti, Daniel Gramke, Peter Clifford and Daniel Karl. These people oversee the seminars. They implement pre-seminar necessities, send out applications, formulate programs, and see to the accommodations including food and medical supplies.

The three-day seminars themselves center around group discussions with emphasis on the sacraments and prayer. The Family Retreat Program promotes the Christian experience of living together in a community, which Father declared, "gives people an opportunity to put into practice what they have learned."

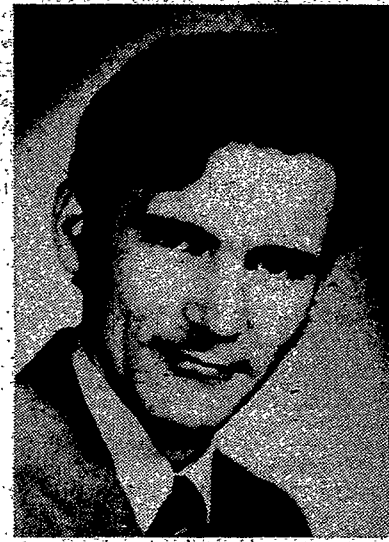
An offshoot of these programs is the Family Campers' Retreat. It was discovered that unless the parents are touched with a faith commitment the faith experiences of youth are lost.

This year Teen Seminar celebrated its 10th anniversary and Father proudly noted the department's far reaching effects. He estimated that 10,000 people have learned and lived their Christian faith through the department's programs. In a past survey it was discovered that 90 per cent of the people questioned over a number of years had retained and were still relating to the philosophy taught by Teen Seminar.

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