



Some of the 900 guests join in prayer Saturday morning.



Father Ernest Larsen, guest speaker, and a congress staff member take notes.

# The Parish . . . It All Begins With

Father Douglas Hoffman, director of Pastoral Ministry, opened the first Diocesan Parish Council Congress by relating a story about the delegation from Apalachin, N.Y. They had called him and explained that they might not be able to attend, but they would pray "before, during and after" the weekend for its success.

Father Hoffman looked out at the auditorium, nearly filled with delegates from all over the diocese, including Apalachin, and said it truly showed the power of prayer.

More than 900 guests listened to lectures and attended workshops dealing with problems faced by parish councils and providing new ideas to improve them.

The spirit of the weekend showed

in other areas besides the efforts of the "Apalachin Group."

Father Robert Kennedy, guest lecturer, took time out of his prepared speech to tell the audience how he wished his students at Catholic University, Washington, D.C., who had expressed fear for their Church's future, could have been there. "I wish they could see this," he said.

Father Ernest Larsen, the other guest speaker, showed his dedication to parish life by making sure he could get back to Minneapolis in time for Sunday services.

People living in Rochester offered their homes to out-of-town delegates.

Cooperation seemed to be the key for everyone in attendance along with learning.

Delegates attended a series of concurrent workshops, geared to increased understanding of what a parish council is and how to go about setting up active, effective councils.

Parish councils have assumed a new role. They are now actively involved with the ministry of the Church. Many in attendance felt that programs such as the Parish Council Congress were vital to this new role.

James Lynaugh, from St. Mary's, Canandaigua, felt that the weekend had been "very informative" and that the speakers were "excellent."



Father Robert Braller, Holy Rosary and Samuel Giambra, delegate from Monroe Community Hospital discuss parish problems.



James Hogan, Holy Cross.



Charles Coyle, St. Thomas the Apostle.



Sister Elaine Ryan, Sacred Heart Cathedral, during the sharing session.