

SOUTHERN TIER AUBURN-GENEVA



George McLain, a bishop of the Universal Life Church, speaking to (ordaining) about 40 persons as ministers at Eldridge Park.

Ceremony in Park

Instant Ordination

BY MARTIN TOOMBS

Elmira — Forty persons became ministers of the Universal Life Church during a four-minute ordination ceremony at Eldridge Park Sunday, Oct. 10. Ordaining anyone who stood for the ceremony was Bishop George McLain, who claims ordination of more than 3,200 persons in the past 120 days.

The Universal Life Church has no doctrine, theology, or requirements for membership, McLain explained to those who attended the ceremony in a picnic pavilion at the park.

The Universal Life Church has been accused of being a tax dodge, with members receiving clergy discounts on their homes, or declaring themselves a church and applying for tax exempt status as a religious institution. McLain insisted that that was not the purpose of the church, emphatically telling the group that "I will not ordain you if you're doing it for the tax exemption."

He then spoke at length about property taxes. He claimed that one third of the property in New York State is presently tax exempt, and that by 1980 half of the property in the state will be off the tax rolls. He also described his home town of Hardenburgh in the Catskill Mountains, where school taxes, he said, exceed \$5,000 per child because so much land in the school district is tax-exempt. He noted that soon everyone in Hardenburgh will be an ordained minister of the Universal Life Church, leaving only corporate taxpayers in the town.

McLain, an unemployed plumber, quit his job in New York City 10 weeks ago, he said, because he only got home on weekends. Since then he has been supported by his wife's two jobs, he said, and has not drawn unemployment or welfare.

McLain said that the Universal Life Church was incorporated in 1962 by Kirby J. Hensley of Modesto, Calif., the church's president. The church has 5.5 million members nationwide, he said, and "many, many thousands of ministers."

McLain reported that all that was needed for a church was a president, a vice president, and a secretary. He said that he is the president of his own personal church, his wife is secretary and his

son is vice president. He also told the group that there is no need to change the ownership of their homes, but for the "church" to rent the property.

Those attending the ordination appeared to be a diverse group. Included in the parking lot were four Cadillacs (one of them McLain's), and a Mercedes-Benz, as well as pickup trucks and older cars. During most of the proceedings, one couple was trying to avoid being photographed. One woman who said she was from Horseheads, asked about zoning laws restricting her from calling her home a church. McLain told her that zoning laws don't affect churches. A man said that he was Catholic, and asked McLain if he would be excommunicated if he was ordained a Universal Life Minister. McLain said "probably yes," and then added, "I wouldn't excommunicate you if you were a minister and then became a Catholic."

Before conducting the ordination ceremony, McLain said only those who "see the light" should stand to be ordained, and not those looking for a tax exemption.

For the ceremony, McLain dressed in a gray suit with a Roman collar, read a prepared talk consisting of quotations from poetry and the Bible, and saying that each person should do what they feel is right. McLain hurried through the ceremony, explaining afterwards that he was cold, and apologized. During the ceremony, those being ordained stood silently, many with hands folded. All that was required of the new ministers was an "I do" at the end of the ceremony.

McLain then passed out "Credentials of Ministry" cards, in plain white envelopes. He asked that each person write his or her name and address on the envelope, placing a donation in it if they wished, and to give it to his wife. Several persons did place donations in the envelopes.

No attempt was made to insure that the cards were filled out properly, or that each person took only one card.

Speaking separately to the press following the ceremony, McLain admitted that each of the new ministers has the right to ordain others, but he said that they discouraged that "because of the paper work."

Bible Study Under Way at St. Alphonsus

Auburn — A Bible Study series on the Gospel of St. John is under way at the St. Alphonsus Parish Center at 7:30 p.m. every Monday until Nov. 22.

Special emphasis is on the seven signs in the ministry of Jesus and how they reveal the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Conducting the series is Brother James Leachy, director of novices at Christian Brothers Novitiate in Skaneateles. The series is open to the public.

Brother James has a doctorate in theology and has done post-doctoral studies at the Biblical Institute in Rome. He has taught at Manhattan College, St. Mary's College, California and the College of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

St. Joseph's Honors Class

Elmira — The School of Radiologic Technology at St. Joseph's Hospital graduated its 24th class in the Little Flower Chapel at St. Joseph's Wednesday, Oct. 13. The evening ceremonies were presided over by Dr. Joseph Montanarella, radiologist, Mrs. Firmina Willkins, RLRT, school director and instructor, and Mrs. Joann Treat.

Those graduating were William Wayne, Janet Sykes and Merle Baylor of Elmira; Loretta Roberts, Horseheads; Roxann Aldrich and Karen Booth, Millerton, Pa. and Arlene Lucas of Wellsburg, N.Y.

Loretta Roberts was honored for outstanding scholastic achievement, receiving the Dr. Fred Barton Award and the Mallinckrodt Award, presented by a pharmaceutical firm. Arlene Lucas received the Dr. Joseph Montanarella Award and the Squibb & Son Award. The commencement address was made by William Wallace.

Reading Program Is Explained

Auburn — The "Open Court" reading program was outlined by Howie Freeman, open court reading consultant, at the St. Mary's Home School Association meeting Sept. 29.

The presentation was made to familiarize parents with the open court program which is the total language arts program used at St. Mary's.

Workshop activities reinforce classroom presentations and are a time for individualized help. Children learn from their own mistakes by correcting errors.

Handwriting, vocabulary building and composition are correlated with the basic reading skill subjects through the first four grades to provide additional opportunity for reinforcement in the language arts.

RUMMAGE SALE

Elmira Heights — St. Charles Borromeo's Rosary Altar Society will sponsor a rummage sale in the parish hall Friday, Oct. 22 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

SOUTHERN TIER NEWS

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Attendance Champs

Mrs. Jessie Duffy's fourth grade won the banner for the highest parent attendance at the Home School Association meeting. The students are: Paul Barnes, Sally Brennan, Robert Calder, David Cohick, Stephanie Cramer, Alice Flynn, Casey Griffiths, Charlee Hathaway, Denise Hoagland, Kathryn Hood, Elena Lenzo, Douglas Marchionda, Susan Mashewski, Maxine McNeil, Patrick Olbrich, Richard Pierle, Melanie Sullivan, Catherine Anne Brinn and Kurt Catalano.

Attendance Program Gets Successful Start

Penn Yan — A new program to encourage parent attendance at Home School Association meetings at St. Michael's School appears to be a success. The program involves the presentation of a banner to the class which is best represented by parents at the Home School meetings. As a result of the first meeting of the year, Mrs. Jessie

Duffy's fourth grade, which had 89 per cent attendance, received the banner. Runnerup was Mrs. Mary Lou Williams' second grade with 84 per cent parent attendance.

St. Michael's new principal, Sister Anne Maura Morris, welcomed the parents and said that she would do her best to insure a successful school year.

Reconciliation Service

Auburn — A service of reconciliation, "To ask the Lord to confirm us in the unity and charity of faith," will mark the opening of the Seneca-Cayuga Regional assembly at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 28, at St. Mary's School on Clymer Street.

Election of officers and recommendations from the Liturgy

and Human Development Committees will be considered by assembly delegates.

Father Elmer Heindl, regional coordinator, has reminded all parish council presidents that confirmation of their four parish delegates should be forwarded to Mary Jane Cox, assembly president.

Retreat Set In Dansville

Dansville — A Better World Retreat is being planned at St. Mary's Parish here. The ecumenical retreat, seeking to build better community, will consist of 31 hours spread over Friday evening, Oct. 22; Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 23 and 24; afternoon and evening; and Monday, Oct. 25 and Thursday,

Oct. 28, in the evenings.

The retreat is scheduled at St. Mary's auditorium. Babysitters and transportation will be provided at no cost.

Registration may be made by calling the rectory at 335-2700 or Flora Welch at 335-5618.

Notre Dame Hosting Liturgy Workshop

Elmira — The first of nine two-day liturgy workshops sponsored by the diocesan Liturgy Office throughout the diocese will be Friday, and Saturday, Oct. 29-30 at Notre Dame High School.

The program, designed for parish liturgy committee members, will be given by Father Robert Kennedy, director of the Office of Liturgy, and members of the diocesan Liturgical and Music Commissions.

The workshop will begin on Friday at 8 p.m. with a keynote address, "The Living Liturgy: Renewal of Worship in our Parishes," followed by an evening prayer and a social hour.

On Saturday morning, a talk titled "How Does a Liturgy Com-

mittee Go?" will be given at 9:30 a.m. Four workshops will then be offered. Organization of a Parish Liturgy Committee, Planning Eucharistic Liturgies, Liturgical Ministry, and Symbols and Symbolic Action.

The final general session is titled "The Parish Community and the Community's Gifts." It will be followed by a Eucharistic Liturgy.

The workshop also will be offered Nov. 5-6, at St. Mary's, Canandaigua; Nov. 12-13, at St. Catherine of Siena, Ithaca; Nov. 19-20, St. Anne's, Rochester; Jan. 7-8, St. Mary's, Bath; Jan. 14-15, St. Alphonsus, Auburn; Jan. 21-22, St. Charles Borromeo, Rochester; Jan. 28-29, Mercy High School, Rochester; and Feb. 4-5, St. Monica's, Rochester.

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