

Marriage Encounter Sets Convention This Weekend

The annual convention sponsored by Rochester Marriage Encounter will be held at Aquinas Institute Nov. 13 and 14, from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day.

The convention theme, "New Life - New Creation," will be reflected in 20 talks and presentations. Father Thomas Schmidt, rector of Notre Dame Retreat House, will be the keynote speaker.

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will

celebrate Mass at the end of Saturday's session. Father Edward Palumbo, ME coordinating priest, will celebrate the concluding Mass, and couples are urged to bring their children.

Out-of-town members will be guests of local residents. Pot-luck suppers and other social gatherings are planned for Saturday night. Further details may be obtained by calling Fred or Judy Osborne at 716/548-2532.

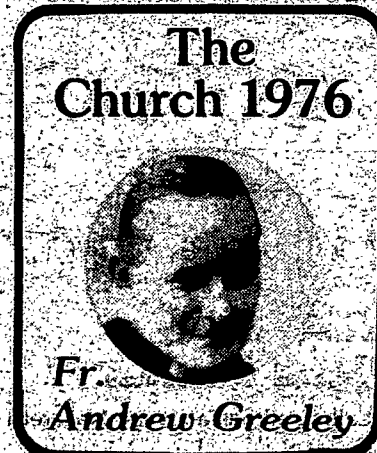
Greece Parish Plans Major Renovations

Parishioners of St. Charles Borromeo Church, Greece, will be asked this weekend to help meet the costs of a major renovation of parish properties.

The Rev. L. John Hedges, pastor and the Parish Council announced recently that repairs must be undertaken during the next two years, at estimated costs of approximately \$200,000. To prevent further deterioration and consequent future greater cost, repairs are planned for the church, school, convent, rectory, recreation hall

and parking area, the pastor said. Goal for the renovation fund has been set at a minimum of \$150,000, with payments to be spread over an 18-month period beginning in January.

Heading the home visitation committee for commitments to the fund are Richard Stillman and George Bunting. Leaders of groups include William Burke, John Geisler, Paul Cannon and George Praifer. Assisting in direction of the effort is a representative of Foley Associates.



The Church 1976

Fr. Andrew Greeley

The vocation crisis, according to Marianist Father William Ferree, is a time bomb with a delayed action of about three decades. Vocations to religious communities, he has demonstrated, have fallen about 90 per cent in the last 15 years and mean certain disaster for the American Church before the century is over.

Why?

I submit that no one knows the reason for the vocation decline. There are as many explanations as there are people who talk about the problem. But all the explanations are guesswork, speculation, personal prejudice, or possibly private revelation. No one can offer any proof other than personal anecdote to support any of the explanations or recommended cures.

Are young people any less generous or more materialistic than they used to be — as many bishops have suggested? Such an explanation flies in the face of the success of the far-out religious cults which make a greater demand on generosity than do most religious orders. It may still be correct, but there surely is no proof of it.

Would optional celibacy lead to an increase in religious vocations? It might, but anyone who argues that it would is relying on private revelation rather than evidence. Would the ordination of women lead young women back to the religious life? It might, but the low

level of support for such a reform (only 30 per cent of the Catholic population is for it and more than half strongly against it) raises some doubt. To repeat a position taken in this column often, I am for the ordination of women, though I don't think it would be any solution to the vocation problem. Like everyone else, I have no data, however.

Historians of the future will be aghast at the vast number of seminaries, schools of formation, novitiates, scholasticates and religious houses which have been closed down, sold or abandoned in numb despair without any attempt being made to discover the reason why. Investments of billions of dollars have been phased out with mute resignation and not a cent spent to see why the young people were there no longer.

There is absolutely no reason to think that this will change. It is almost as though we don't want to know the answer because then we might have to do something about it.

Realizing that it is useless, I still wish to point out that my colleagues and I have designed a project to study a representative national sample of 1,500 American Catholics between 15 and 30 to determine what their attitudes are on the priesthood and religious life, how they relate to and what they expect from the Church and the circumstances in which the various forms of religious education have an impact on their life.

SPECIAL SERVICE

A special Eucharist and Penance service for separated and divorced Catholics is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 15, at St. Paul's Church, 783 Hard Road, Webster. Fathers Terence Fleming and Ronald Harley will co-celebrate. A wine and cheese social will follow. An informal get together for the same people is planned for Saturday, Nov. 20, at St. Paul's beginning at 8 p.m. All interested are invited to these two events.

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