

That FIRST Detroit Meeting... 1 Year Ago

1st of 2-Part Series

By MARTIN TOOMBS

One year ago, 1,200 persons, mostly women, spent Thanksgiving weekend in Detroit discussing the ordination of women to the priesthood of the Catholic Church.

While preparations for that conference were under way, Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), issued a statement "to restate the Church's teaching that women are not to be ordained to the priesthood."

The combination of Archbishop Bernardin's statement and the conference itself made women's ordination one of the most discussed and debated issues in the Church. Many things have happened during the past year relating to women's ordination, including:

— Followup conferences in many dioceses, some drawing several hundred persons, discussing the ordination of women and women's role in the church.

— Statements from leading theologians such as Father Bernard Haring, CSSR, and Father Richard McBrien that they see no theological obstruction to the ordination of women.

— The June 1976 report of a task force of six women established by the NCCB recommending the ordination of women to the diaconate and priesthood.

— The October 1976 "Call to Action" conference in Detroit, sponsored by the NCCB, called for the ordination of women.

— A statement by the Pontifical Biblical Commission that Scriptural grounds alone are not sufficient to exclude women from ordination.

— And by the same commission a statement that the inclusion of women in the priesthood would not be contradictory to Christ's intentions.

— And in related events:

— Pope Paul warned Archbishop Donald Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury and the spiritual head of the Anglican Church of Great Britain, that the ordination of women in the Anglican Church would inject "an element of grave difficulty" into relations between the Catholic and Anglican/Episcopal Churches.

— The ordination of women in the Episcopal Church of Canada.

— The approval, at the United States Episcopal Church's convention in September, of the ordination of women.

The Rochester diocese has not

been a bystander to these developments. Sister Anne Mary Dooley of Nazareth Academy was a member of the task force that organized the Detroit conference. Nineteen dioceses attended the conference with a majority of them serving as facilitators or in some other official capacity. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Religious Education coordinator at St. Michael's, Rochester, is on the 19-member national Core Commission of the

Women's Ordination Conference, formed in June. Another member of the commission is Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt, now of Downer's Grove, Ill., but formerly a religious education consultant for the Rochester diocese. A local group, the Rochester Regional Task Force on Women in the Church, has membership of five lay women, five sisters and three priests.

Continued next week.

New Bishop

Continued from Page 1

about the family. At the top is the 92-year-old mother, Mary Flynn Harrison. Her parents settled in St. Lucy's parish in Syracuse, and the family remained there for three generations. The bishop bears his father's name.

Five Harrison children — the oldest, Marian, died in early childhood — attended St. Lucy's School, which in those days went through 12 grades. The two boys, both destined for the priesthood, spent two years at the University of Notre Dame before entering the seminary. The younger was the late Father John Harrison, of the St. Bernard's class of 1945. The other sisters are Margaret J. Harrison, a teacher in Syracuse, and Florence Timmins of North Chili.

The boys were very active athletes, Mrs. Tellier said. They coached teams wherever they were stationed.

Her bishop-brother taught in high school for awhile and was assigned to the downtown Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for years while he worked in the Tribunal and other chancery offices.

He spent some time at St. Mary's in Binghamton, and in 1963 returned to that southern tier capital of the seven-county diocese as pastor of St. Patrick's. Recently he has been pastor of St. James in Syracuse. His seen encompasses Onondaga, Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Oneida and Oswego counties.

Officially, as auxiliary bishop, he was designated Titular Bishop of Aquae in Numidia. As she talked about him, his sister, Mrs. Tellier, tended to refer to "Brud" or, restoring formality, "Father Brud."



Advent Wreath

St. Salome parishioners Earl Schaubert, J.D. Hagen and Thomas Moffitt (l-r) assemble an Advent wreath that Father Francis Blighon figures will be visible to everyone in the church. The framework is an old wagon wheel, to be suspended from chains. A candle lighting ceremony will take place on each of the Sundays leading to Christmas. This coming Sunday, the parish will organize a pilgrimage to St. Thomas the Apostle Church and take part in a prayer service hailing advent.

DPC

Continued from Page 1

"Liberty and justice for All" conference which he attended. He noted that the "happening in Detroit was essentially pastoral, not theological or Scriptural, and 'prayerful.' There were beautiful liturgies." He detailed the process leading to the conference, and how the local delegates were selected. "It would be a tragedy," Father Jankowiak concluded, if the discussion of the conference concerned the representation rather than the issues.

Bishop Hogan noted that he is seeking input on the issues discussed in Detroit before the May 1977 NCCB meeting when the recommendations will be presented to the nation's bishops.

The DPC Executive Committee presented a paper listing eight "values" that could be used in determining agenda items for the remainder of the year. The document, labeled a draft, caused discussion over the phrasing of the

introduction, which said that the executive committee believes that the agenda "must speak to the following matters."

Father Louis Hohman objected to the wording, stating that it sounded as if the executive committee was imposing its wishes on the council. Father Douglas Hoffman responded that the committee was saying what it felt was important, and wanted input from the council. After several minutes of discussion on the executive committee's purposes, the discussion was tabled.

A final resolution, added to the agenda, was offered by Marilyn Muench of the Social Mission Committee. The motion called for an ad hoc committee to "survey present opportunities for women to share their gifts and talents in official ministerial roles in the parishes of the diocese." The motion was approved after some discussion about the other lay participation in ministerial roles.

The 100 Neediest Cases in the Diocese

1 Mrs. M. feels as if she is coming to the end of her rope. There are eight in her family, but her son is paralyzed and needs constant attention. Her SSI check is very small, and she is being evicted. She needs someone to care.

2 Mr. M. is a very nervous elderly man with an ailing wife who is in and out of the hospital frequently. Their monthly checks barely keep them going.

3 Mrs. E. has finally found something to live for. She has just come out of the hospital for the fourth time in two months, and in good spirits. Doctors have told her she has a little more time to spend with her small daughter and husband and she is trying to carry on as if death were not imminent. True, they must be careful how they spend their money but a little freedom from worrying about money problems would make it easier.

4 Mr. and Mrs. L. are an elderly couple living on Social Security in a rural area. They must bring water to the house by hand. The biggest need is a water pipe to the house.

5 Mr. B. is the father of two children. He is presently out of work and unable to provide much for the children. He is threatened with losing his home. Buying enough kerosene to heat the house is a strain on his meager income, and now he is threatened with the loss of his house.

6 Mrs. L. is on welfare and is trying to make a decent home for her young daughter. There are very few furnishings in the home and hardly enough to eat. She can barely make ends meet.

7 Mr. & Mrs. J., who were evicted from their home Sept. 20, have four children ranging from one to eleven. The three oldest children have hereditary eye cataracts and must have operations. (Oldest boy has had two operations already and must have at least two more.) Mr. J. has a low-paying laborer's job for the village. They rent a house for \$110 per month.

8 Mrs. J. is separated from her husband. She has a teen-age son who is working his way through a community college. Since she is physically disabled she is on welfare. By the end of the month her money is completely spent despite the fact that she is an excellent manager and housekeeper.

9 Mr. & Mrs. B., ages 26 and 25 respectively, have two children, ages 3 years and 9 months. Mrs. B. is recuperating from surgery. Mr. B. has just been declared totally disabled and has to have orthopedic surgery. They are on welfare awaiting disability pay.

10 Mrs. S's husband has left her with a twelve-year-old daughter. Since she is not physically able to work she is on welfare. Like most welfare recipients she has a difficult time stretching her money to the end of the month.

11 Mrs. K's husband died of a heart attack about a year ago, leaving her with six children ranging from 15 to 3 years of age. The K's lost their home in the flood of '72 and had just about settled comfortably in their new home when Mr. K. died.

12 Mrs. H's husband had open heart surgery several years ago and about 1 1/2 years ago he was

hospitalized again. He was forced to retire last January and died in the Spring, leaving Mrs. H. with four children ranging in ages from 15 to 8. She works part-time, but they are finding it hard to get along.

13 Mr. W. is an independent contractor whose income is affected by weather conditions and the local economic climate. This past season, due to an unfavorable combination of both, he has not been able to provide enough income for his family (4 children and wife) to meet basic needs. Prospects for the coming winter are bleak as this family struggles to maintain itself adequately, refusing to ask for public assistance.

14 Until last spring, Mr. S. had always provided well for his wife and 5 children. When he was unexpectedly laid off, his income dropped to \$95 per week (from unemployment insurance). This amount barely covers the minimum costs of mortgage payments, insurance and utility bills; there is almost nothing left for food — and one son is a diabetic who requires a special diet. They are proud people who are reluctant to request public assistance.

15 D. separated and the mother of 3 boys (ages 4, 5, & 6) is trying to support her family on public assistance. Living in low-cost public housing, she is trying to buy basic furnishings from her meager income. Her children sleep on floor mattresses and she on the couch. Often she is unable to get enough cash together to take advantage of food stamps.

16 Mr. and Mrs. C. and their 5 children (ages 1-8) are on partial public assistance. Mr. C. is mentally handicapped and

therefore has difficulty maintaining a steady job with a regular income. Because of his impairment, he is unable to understand the relationship between his work habits and the amount he is entitled to from public assistance. The family often does not receive even what it is entitled to and consequently they are constantly short of money to meet very basic human needs — food, clothing and shelter.

17 Two years ago Mr. S. suffered a mental breakdown, forcing his family to live on a Social Security income. Prior to his illness, he had been a good provider for himself, his wife, and their 5 children. The stressful situation has been difficult for the family, especially the mother who has a chronic physical problem. There is also one child who requires constant attention and special medication which is not completely covered by Medicaid. This family is forced to live under tremendous physical, emotional, and financial pressures.

18 Mrs. A. is divorced and lives alone with her two children in a low-income housing plaza. She is on welfare and does not work.

19 Mrs. D. is separated from her husband. He deserted and does not support his five children. Mrs. D. had to sell her home and is now living in an apartment and is on welfare. Mrs. D. has just completed her High School equivalency Test and will start a government sponsored nursing training program next Spring. Mrs. D. has trouble finding enough money to buy shoes for all her children and never has any money for recreation.

20 Mrs. E. is divorced and receives no support for her children from her ex-husband. Mrs. E. has a

part-time job in a church and her monthly income is \$225.00. She qualifies for welfare but refuses it because she does not want to give up her home. She also attends night college to prepare herself for a better job. The government sponsors her college expenses. Two of her sons have asthma and allergies, and one has a hearing problem. The daughter has skin allergies.

21 Mr. D's house burned and he lost everything he owned. Mr. D. is an SSI recipient and he has no money to furnish his home.

22 Mrs. S. has eight children and receives inadequate public assistance.

23 Mr. C. has ten children and is their sole support, although he does not make much money where he works. He is a proud man who believes that his duty is to his family is the most important thing in his life.

24 Mrs. S. is bringing up her five grandchildren. She is an SSI recipient. The mother of these children left them with her when her husband went to jail for killing a woman. Mrs. S. tries to do everything for them but her income is very limited even though she is getting public assistance for the children.

25 Mrs. E. has five small children under eight and no one to help her manage. Too much conflict spoiled her short marriage and her in-laws refuse to help her do anything except criticize her efforts to do better. She is becoming independent but she has had too many hard knocks and not enough encouragement. Christmas time promises to be painful for her and her children.

More next week.