

COURIER-JOURNAL

28 Pages

Wednesday, December 8, 1976

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

20 Cents

Hornell Man, a 'Feeneyite,' Ordained Priest

A Hornell native whose pursuit of theology and the religious life led him to the once-discredited St. Benedict's Center in Massachusetts, will be ordained to the priesthood this Saturday at the age of 50.

William Gibbs, lately known as Brother Gabriel in Father Leonard Feeney's community, will be ordained for the Diocese of Worcester by Bishop Bernard J. Flanagan. He will remain at the center, whose St. Therese House received ecclesial recognition Nov. 19 as the "Pious Union of the Benedictine Oblates of Still River."

Father Gibbs will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving Jan. 2 in St. Ann's Church, Hornell.

The son of Margaret A. Gleason-

Gibbs and the late Sidney W. Gibbs was born May 19, 1926, in Hornell and went to school there before entering Harvard. He served in the Navy toward the end of World War II, and on his release studied at St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries. Over the past several years he has completed theology studies at the Trappist Abbey of St. Joseph in Spencer, Mass., and at St. Benedict's.

The latter institution was relieved two years ago of censures invoked in 1953, when Father Feeney, its founder, was excommunicated for refusing to stop preaching that "there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church."

Father Feeney, now in his 80th year, was restored to full com-

munion in the Church Nov. 22, 1972, as were 29 of his followers, on March 4, 1974, on their "simple profession of faith." Not all members of the community sought reinstatement.

The "pious union" of celibate men and women who work a farm at Still River will function under the aegis of the Order of St. Benedict, whose traditions have regulated the life of the community.

The decree published Nov. 19 by Bishop Flanagan bestowed "all the favors, privileges and indulgences granted now or in the future by the Holy See to such associations." The chapel of the commune's St. Therese House is to be a semi-public oratory.

Residents of the house — 26 men and 19 women — follow a rigorous daily schedule of prayer, study and manual labor. A prize dairy herd developed at the farm is the principal source of income.

Some of the members are survivors of the notorious "Boston heresy case" that grew around Father Feeney and the St. Benedict Center he had established at Harvard in the early 1940s. The Jesuit priest was a professor at Boston College at that time and had achieved recognition as a writer. His followers, known to the world as "Feeneyites," included families as well as celibates when they formed the farm community in 1957. As "slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary," some went forth in groups to distribute pamphlets on

city streets. About 18 of them avoided reconciliation with the Church and have moved to another building on the 180-acre farm, St. Anne House. There is little contact between the two groups, although Father Feeney ministers to both.

The ordination of Father Gibbs will take place in St. John's Church, Clinton, Mass., at 11 a.m. Dec. 11. On the following day, another member of St. Therese House will be ordained in the Maronite Rite. He is Father Cyril Karam, a native of Lebanon, who, like Father Gibbs, is 50 years old and a Harvard alumnus.

Their decision to seek ordination was ratified by the entire community, which makes all major decisions by vote.

Sacrificing for Others

One of the most fundamental tenets of Christianity is that we love each other. Christmas time seems appropriate to demonstrate this belief.

The early response to the Courier-Journal Christmas Fund supports this supposition. Money received by Catholic Charities already is in the thousands, with hundreds of people contributing. Some have made unusual sacrifices.

For example, many families are sending the money they usually use for Christmas cards. One couple donated the money they were going to spend on each other for Christmas.

For the past several weeks the Courier-Journal, with Catholic Charities help, has presented a sampling of the poverty of our brothers and sisters here in the diocese.

And, it should be noted that in

detailing the neediest cases in these pages, the Courier-Journal has simply turned the spotlight on the misery that Charities workers encounter day in and day out.

Though all cases are true and are within the diocese, contributors are asked to understand that particular cases which appeal to them may attract a lot of money while others may not. Catholic Charities therefore must use its discretion to help as many people as possible with the fund.

The Catholic Charities office is not able to accommodate gifts of clothing, food or toys. Non-perishable food items and toys may be left at St. Michael's, 869 N. Clinton Ave., and at Immaculate Conception, using the Edinburgh Street side of the school, non-perishable food at Mount Carmel, 60 Woodward St., but call in advance to arrange your delivery.

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100 Neediest Cases

51 Mrs. M. has five children, disabled husband left her. She is unable to work due to varicose veins and receives small disability check (\$220 monthly). Family has small rural 4-room home and no car.

52 Mrs. I. has four children at home and two in college. Father does not support the family — lives away from the home. Mother has to work to give minimum support to children and to keep the home together.

53 Mr. and Mrs. V. have six children — live in a trailer. Father works only part time. Most of family have been sick this winter. They have much difficulty keeping up with family expenses.

54 Mrs. J. is struggling to maintain a home for herself and her 10-year-old son. Mr. J. deserted in 1974 and left the family heavily in debt. For the past two years, Mrs. J. has been paying off those debts and supporting her son and herself. During the past year, the son has had a number of skirmishes with children in the neighborhood, school teachers and police officers. Mrs. J. attributes this to the loss of his father and the fact that she (Mrs. J.) must work many hours overtime to get enough money to support her family.

55 Mrs. M. is a widow attempting to rear five boys ranging in age from 11 through 19. The three younger children are mildly retarded and attend special classes provided by the Board of Education. The two older boys have dropped out from school and are unemployed. Mrs. M. is overwhelmed by her problems. In the past, she sometimes spoke of committing suicide. Recently, her

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An Ounce of Prevention

Temple Sharkey winces as he gets a swine flu shot at a clinic in Watsonville, Calif. Public demand for swine flu vaccine soared after a case of the disease was reported in Missouri. The vaccination program had faltered after a number of elderly people died, mainly from heart attacks, following their receiving swine flu shots. (RNS)

Defining Death Emerges As Hot Hearing Topic

By JOHN DASH

Assemblyman Alan Hevesi went home to Queens, N.Y., last week surprised by the reaction of up-staters to the proposed bills on death that his Subcommittee on Health Care is developing. So surprised, in fact, that he told reporters he might be in the process of changing his mind.

At question are proposed bills which fall into three categories. The first would legally establish death as the "total and irreversible cessation of brain function." The second would give legal sanction to the so-called "Living Will," whereby a person indicates that he does not wish to have his life sustained by extraordinary means and is willing to donate his organs for transplantation following his death. The third would promote educational programs for persons who deal with the terminally ill.

But most of the controversy which was aired last week at a public hearing in Rochester, which Hevesi chaired, was aimed at the State's attempt to make legal a definition of death — an attempt scored by members of church, medical and legal groups.

At one point in the hearings, Hevesi interrupted the proceedings to note, "This question is either going to be handled in the courts or the Legislature," implying that the physician's certification of death needed specific legal sanction.

He later softened his remark, indicating that he might be changing his mind.

Among those testifying against the State's proposal to define death were attorney William Polito, neurologist Dr. Charles Salamone, the Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Rice, geriatricist Dr. Nino Trunfio, Dr.

Joyce McChesney, the Rev. Betty Bone Schiess, psychologist Tony Schlitsey, and the head of the State Catholic Committee, Charles Tobin.

Seated with Hevesi for part of the hearings were Assemblymen Thomas Frey and Thomas Hanna.

Dr. McChesney, the first to speak to the assemblymen, said, "No amount of legislation can make death or dying any easier."

Tobin informed the group that the State Catholic Committee is

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Bishop on Radio

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will talk on the topic of Christmas in a special radio broadcast over station WSAY as part of the Family Rosary program at 7 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 18.