

# 'To Live According to Gospel Is to Practice Christian Unity'



The second annual Anglican-Roman Catholic Conference in the Rochester dioceses was blessed with a warm, sunny day. Here, participants leave Sacred Heart Cathedral rectory to walk down to the Church of the Ascension for lunch and the afternoon.

BY MARGARET CONNOLLY

Area clergy and others interested in Anglican-Roman Catholic unity talks heard last week from a man who has taken part in the international consultations since they began.

Episcopal Bishop Arthur A. Vogel came from Kansas City to address the second annual meeting called by the ARC committee here. Bishop Vogel has been on the American as well as the world commission, and has taken part in Anglican-Orthodox talks in the U.S. He serves the House of Bishops of his church as chairman of its ecumenical relations committee.

"To live according to the Gospel is to practice Christian unity," he reminded last Wednesday's gathering, noting the Vatican II source of this declaration.

"The Church is an agent of reconciliation of men with God and with each other.

"Ecumenism is not an extra."

The meeting began in Sacred Heart Cathedral with prayers offered by Bishops

Joseph L. Hogan and Robert R. Spears Jr. About 150 attended, most of them Roman and Anglican clergy from the two roughly congruent Rochester dioceses. There were also many women religious who serve on parish staffs, and lay people active in ecumenical enterprises.

"The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord," they sang, with volume exceeding the normal Sunday output.

After the morning session in the cathedral rectory, participants walked to the nearby Episcopal Church of the Ascension and were given lunch by women of that church. The afternoon session included questions and comments from the floor and a report on the "covenant" activities involving St. Augustine's people with their Episcopalian neighbors at St. Simon's. Bishop Vogel said he had a covenant with his neighbor, Catholic Bishop Charles M. Helmsing.

The guest speaker was a professor of philosophical and systematic theology for 20 years before his election as coadjutor bishop of Western Missouri. In the

course of his remarks, he described the Eucharist as "summit and source of the Christian mission," and as the "fulfillment of Baptism."

"It is not so important how Christ is made present in the sacrament as that he is," he said.

"The first thing to say is that it's a mystery. We know that mysteries do occur. For instance, the creation of the world is a mystery; the world we know is real."

Concerning obstacles to inter-communion he observed, "It would help if we didn't really think we were dealing with our own possessions."

Bishop Vogel's occasional digressions from his serious theme led to anecdotes or wry comments that united the house in laughter. This reminded him of how comfortable he felt with the other members of the Anglican-Roman commission in the United States.

"We felt so much alike, we couldn't approach each other as strangers," he said. "We all laughed at the same kind of stories... but some of the jokes have taken a little while to ripen."



The ARC unity ideal has produced covenants between neighboring parishes that bring their people together in spiritual exercises and social projects. This Southwest Region group photographed at Ascension consists of (rear row) Father Paul McCabe, co-pastor of St. Augustine's; the Rev. Marylyle Sweet Page of St. Simon's Episcopal Church; Sister Rita Sullivan, RSM, pastoral assistant, and Mary Ellen Fischer, of St. Augustine's. Out front are Father David Simon, co-pastor of St. Augustine's; the Rev. Richard Comegys, pastor of St. Simon's, and Elizabeth Walters, a member of his parish. Said Mr. Comegys, "Part of my mandate when I came here two years ago was to live closer to St. Augustine's."



Episcopal Bishop Arthur A. Vogel of Kansas City tells the assembly how ARC talks are proceeding at high levels.

Photos by Susan McKinney



Bishop Vogel with the ecumenical team that started the ARC conferences here: Bishops Joseph L. Hogan and Robert R. Spears Jr.



The speaker poses with the people who persuaded him to come: the Rev. Jasper Pennington, who is head librarian at St. Bernard's Seminary and assistant at Ascension; Mrs. Isabel Calkins, director of ecumenical affairs for the Episcopal diocese, and Sister Kathleen Kircher, her Roman Catholic counterpart.