

Appalachian Dioceses Hold First Joint Meeting

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — Representatives of the four dioceses which constitute the state's Appalachian region met for the first time here April 1, and discussed the future for a state organization and heard from three guest speakers.

Represented were the dioceses of Buffalo, Rochester, and Albany, which all have counties designated as part of Appalachia. Observers from the Ogdensburg diocese and the Appalachian Regional Council also attended.

The assembly was addressed by Father Les Schmidt, a Glenmary priest who spoke on the pastoral "This Land is Home to Me," signed by the Appalachian region bishops, by Philip Ronan, a layman from the diocese of Richmond, Virginia, and Sister Shawn Scanlon, executive director of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia.

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan communicated his welcome to the delegates, noting that "I am very happy that you are gathering to discuss pastoral ministry to non-metropolitan areas and a

ministry that includes attention to the needs of people and questions of justice... the questions that you will be discussing are not confined to just one diocese. We share them in common and so cooperation across diocesan lines is also very exciting to see"

While considering future organization, Sister Alice McLaughlin of the Rochester Office of Human Development suggested the inclusion of other state dioceses that wished to participate in discussions on rural ministry. Other delegates concurred with the suggestion, and the ad hoc executive committee, composed of representatives from the four dioceses of Appalachia, will study the question.

Father Les Schmidt highlighted the sections of the pastoral "This Land is Home to Me," which he felt were the most important.

The pastoral, issued in February 1975 and signed by the 26 bishops in 13 states in the Appalachian region, was written from 500 pages of information from persons in Appalachia, Father Schmidt reported.

He emphasized the letter's opening, which states "we know that there will be other opinions about the truth of Appalachia, other views than those of the poor. But we must remind ourselves that the poor are special in the eyes of the Lord." Father Schmidt called the statement "profound" noting that the bishops are taking their leadership "not from the wealthy or the Brookings Institute (a Washington think tank), but from the poor."

The letter refutes the idea that coal is king in Appalachia, Father Schmidt pointed out. It states: "the kings are those who control big coal, and the profit and power which come with it. Many of these kings don't live in the region." As a result, "Maximization of Profit" has become a goal "which too often converts itself into an idolatrous power."

Looking to the future, he pointed to the letter's statement that "we have no easy answers, so this is but a first step. It must not be the last step. Hopefully, this letter, itself a product of dialogue, will start a process, wherein the



Father Les Schmidt, addressing the Appalachia conference at St. Casimir's, Elmira on April 1.

Catholic community can join together with all people of good will throughout the region to reflect on and act for a more just society."

Working for a more just society is the goal that must be striven for, Father Schmidt noted. He referred to the current J. P. Stevens Co. boycott, and related that some have questioned why they should get involved in another problem. The effort and trouble involved is "necessary, not optional," he emphasized.

Philip Ronan described some of the complex problems in the area of Virginia where he works. In one county, he said, 30 per

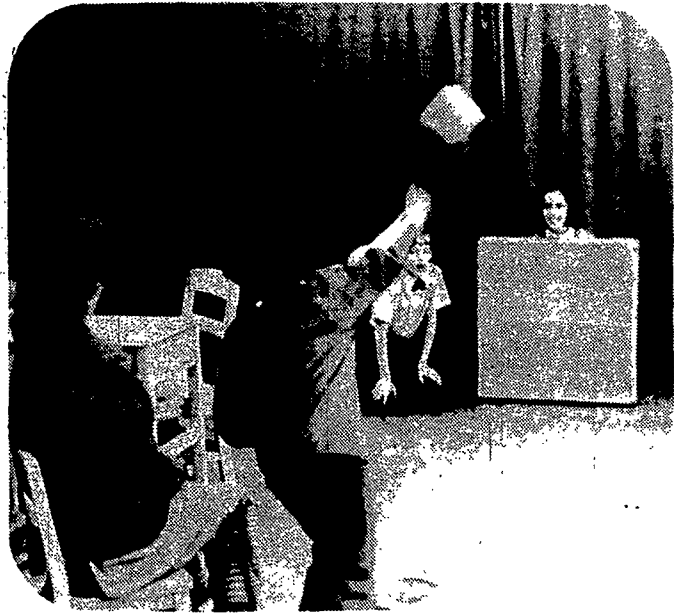
cent of the people live in poverty, and 35 per cent of the land is owned by a single coal company. The community needs a new school, he reported, but the coal company won't sell any land so that one can be built.

Land resources must be protected "for the good of all," Ronan noted; "the motivation of the economy" should be "not profit, but need." He recommended land use and land reform as topics the new state group could address.

Sister Shawn Scanlon described the organization of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia, and noted that other organizations

similar to the New York one are forming. Sister Shawn also noted that the Catholic Committee works closely with the Commission on Religion in Appalachia, which includes 18 denominations interested in the "dignity and level of human life."

The program also included time for discussion among the diocesan groups, and reports on activities and future plans. Diocesan delegation leaders were: Sister Eileen Primrose, Albany; Father Donald Bauer, Syracuse; Father Neil Miller, Rochester, and Pat Fogarty, Buffalo, representing Father Robert Williamson.



Missions Carnival

The students of St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, recently conducted a carnival for the missions, raising nearly \$200. Pictured is one of the booths; the students contributed by allowing their classmates to throw wet sponges at them, for a price. Above, Mike Dimon takes aim at Maria Rampulla. Taking tickets is Monica Smith, and Mark Palinkas is ready to retrieve the sponge.



Lenten Play

"It's Cool in the Furnace", a play performed by students of St. Patrick's School, Seneca Falls, captivated the audience with its portrayal of the story of Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego. The play, especially fitting for Lent, was directed by Claude E. Lester. The 5-8 graders who made up the cast Melissa Benassi, Eric Bergamo, Nadine Berretta, Daniel China, Maria DeSarro, Jerry Fay, Lisa Furano, Francis Giovannetti, Heather Koch, Kim Koch, Patricia Li, Lisa Millis, Michele Perdicho, Lisa Polsinetti, Mary Porto, Debbie Povero, Maureen Rogers, Raymond Rutz, Jay Same, Anne-Marie Shipley, Barbara Shipley, Beth Sipos, James Toni, and Timothy VanArsdale.

SOUTHERN TIER AUBURN-GENEVA

Housing Conference April 21

Horseheads — Cushing Dolbeare will be the speaker at a Housing Conference sponsored by the Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation and the Tri-County Action Council on April 21. The program will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the New York State Electric and Gas Service Center Auditorium in Horseheads.

Ms. Dolbeare is nationally known for her work in low and moderate income housing. She will speak on housing in rural America.

The public is invited.

POETRY WINNERS

Horseheads — Two students of St. Mary Our Mother School received prizes in the annual Stelle Memorial Library poetry contest. Winning first prize in the elementary division was Carmel Gallagher. Beth Crowley won an honorable mention award.

Assembly Meets

Auburn — the Seneca-Cayuga Regional Assembly will meet at 7:30 p.m., April 17 at Sacred Heart Church, here. The agenda will include election of officers and planning for the June assembly.

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Missions Featured

Sister Rosalma Hayes showed slides and explained the work at the Sisters of St. Joseph mission in Brazil recently to the students of St. Mary Our Mother School, Horseheads. The program was part of the school's mission awareness week.

King Housing Fund Guidelines Issued

Individuals interested in developing low and moderate income housing in the Rochester area now have a set of guidelines for making application to the Community Chest's Martin Luther King fund.

The guidelines outline the types of housing development and rehabilitation projects which would qualify for support from the King fund.

Begun in 1968 with a \$250,000 gift from Joseph C. Wilson, the fund is administered by the Chest's housing committee.

According to the guidelines, individuals wishing to rehabilitate both owner-occupied and rental properties or develop new low and moderate income housing in this area

would be eligible for "loans" from the fund. Funds also are available for housing development and rehabilitation demonstration projects and for new or innovative housing programs and services.

Fred Buse, chairman of the housing committee, said he hoped the guidelines would encourage the use of the King Fund to improve

the housing situation in Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, and Orleans counties. He said that profit and non-profit organizations interested in developing low and moderate income housing may apply for loans from the fund. Information may be obtained from the Chest's housing planner, Margaret Barcher at 454-2770.

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