

Acies

Active and auxiliary members of the Legion of Mary renew their pledges during the 37th annual Acies Ceremony, held in St. Joseph's Church, Rush. Members come forward in the above photos to the hand-carved Vexillum presented to the group by an inmate of the Auburn Correctional Facility.

Puerto Rico's Status Subject of Friday Forum

A conference on the political status of Puerto Rico will be held from 6 to 10 p.m. Friday, April 22, in the parish hall at St. Michael's, 869 N. Clinton.

Whether the island should change from commonwealth status to statehood "is a very serious matter" that requires much public discussion, and a new political direction would have "an impact in Greater Rochester," according to Father William Loperena, OP.

The Dominican priest, from Aguaidilla, P.R., has been working among the Puerto Ricans in the diocese since January. He has what he describes as a loosely organized group of about 40 people doing social research here under the name of The Friends of Puerto Rico.

A featured speaker at the conference will be Dr. Ivan Silen, writer and university teacher of political science who is well known in his native Puerto Rico as a

political activist. Father Loperena will speak as a specialist in his countrymen's migrations. Also on the rostrum will be Talik Abdul Basheu Aka (John S. Walker), a black community leader who operates social service projects in the North Clinton neighborhood. Discussion leaders will include members of Father Loperena's research group and of the Fourth of July Coalition, which favors independence for the island nation. The coalition, "of

North American groups - organizations of blacks, of women, others - was started last year under the slogan 'Bicentennial Without Colonies,'" Father Loperena noted.

The conference announcement states:

"There are 30,000 Puerto Ricans in Western New York, who emigrated ... due to the Puerto Rican Labor Department's plan since the 1940s to eliminate unem-

ployment through massive migration and tax-exempt industrial investment. Therefore, any new political decision will have an impact on Greater Rochester.

"The status as Commonwealth has lost acceptability among the petroleum companies and the Congress of the United States, which is legally the ultimate decisive power in the Island.

"Statehood has now


become a more convenient status. It would give free access to the natural resources, especially oil, in Puerto Rico..."

Under the Commonwealth arrangement, Puerto Ricans are United States citizens, but they do not send representatives to the U.S. Congress. Neither are they subject, until they come to the mainland, to federal taxation, but the military draft applies in their homeland.

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