

Rural Ministry Provides A Different Challenge

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Lansing — Rural ministry usually means one priest covering two or even three churches, and a very large area.

Recently, however, sisters and lay people, often working in teams, have become increasingly important in rural ministry, with emphasis on home visits and organizing community groups among scattered rural residents.

Sisters working in a rural parish are not new to the parishioners of All Saints Church, Lansing, and Our Lady of the Lake, King Ferry. The parishes were first served by three sisters in 1968, along with three rural parishes to the north. The two parishes are now served by a single pastoral assistant, Sister Elaine Theresa Mulcahy.

Father Richard Stanton, pastor of the two parishes since 1962, remarked that the job description for a pastoral assistant, "has turned into what I wanted in the beginning."

Father Stanton and Father Robert Egan, pastor of the three parishes in Genoa, Fleming and Scipio Center, arranged with the Sisters of St. Joseph for three sisters to live in a farm house in King Ferry and work in the five churches' religious education programs and do home visits. Father Stanton explained that he thought the sisters could be effective in many instances

with home visits when the priests could not, or did not have the time to make the visits.

Increased costs ended the three sister experiment, and Sister Elaine Theresa, who had joined the parishes in 1970, moved to the Immaculate Conception convent in Ithaca and continued working in the King Ferry and Lansing parishes.

Nine years after that first involvement in a rural parish, there still are no other pastoral assistants in the diocese who work exclusively in a rural area. When she was a member of the Diocesan Sisters Council, Sister Elaine Theresa often raised the need for more sisters to work in rural ministry.

The two parishes cover an area 25 miles from north to south, along the east shore of Cayuga Lake. The north, King Ferry, is prime farm land, with several large and prosperous farms. The south, Lansing, is hilly countryside with many new residents as well as long time residents, often going back several generations.

Sister Elaine Theresa is involved in activities similar to other pastoral assistants, but everything is doubled for the second parish. Her duties include coordinating the religious education programs, working with parents on sacramental preparation, and planning the music and leading the singing at the three weekend Masses.

Lansing parish activities include an active cooperation with the Lansing United Methodist Church. The two parishes conduct a summer Bible school, and have cooperated on other programs such as a Lenten world hunger supper.

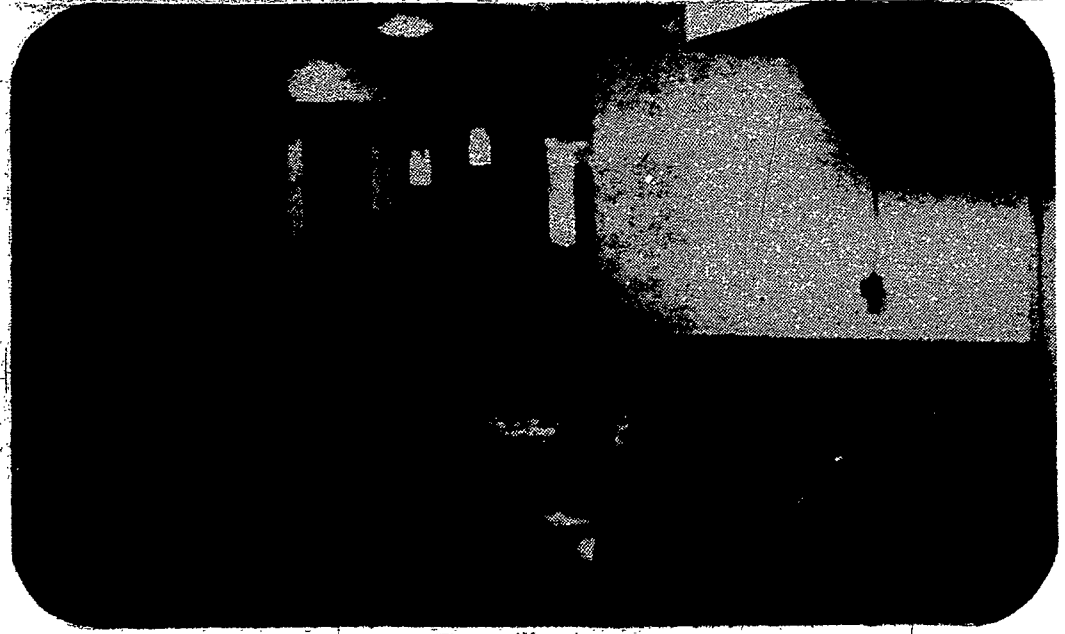
Sister Elaine Theresa includes widows and widowers among her home visits, as well as shut ins and new families.

After seven years in the area, sister has become well known. She noted that sometimes when she meets people for the first time, they already know who she is. A trip through the Lansing High School revealed that many of the staff and students were accustomed to seeing her around visiting people.

SOUTHERN TIER
AUBURN-GENEVA

NFP CLASS

Corning — A class for engaged and married couples in Natural Family Planning will be held on Sunday, May 1, at St. Patrick's Church here. Books will be available. Information and registration are available through Pat Beiswenger (607) 936-4019 or Barbara Kennedy (607) 936-3439.



Passover Meal

More than 100 persons participated in a Passover supper at St. Mary's, Elmira March 31. The program included explanations of the Passover ritual, and an opportunity for those attending to participate.

Committee Cooperation Is Topic

Bath—A workshop for parish Education, Human Development and Liturgy committee members in Steuben County has been scheduled for May 14 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Mary's School. Keynote speaker for the day, concentrating on committee cooperation, will be Father Charles Mulligan, diocesan Director of Social Ministry.

Morning workshops will be led by a person knowledgeable in Human Development, Education or Liturgy, and will include time for sharing experiences and projects. The afternoon session will be spent solving an assigned project which involves all three committees.

The workshop is being planned by Steuben County's Education, Liturgy and Human Development coordinators, Father Lewis

Brown, St. Ann's, Hornell, Father Stephan Kraus, St. Vincent's, Corning, and Sister Mary Kruckow, Human Development Appalachian Tier staff person.

Registration fee is \$1; participants are asked to bring their own lunch. Further information can be obtained from Sister Mary, 108 Griffith St., Corning, 14830, 936-6176.

ND Festival Set May 14

Elmira—The annual Notre Dame Parents Association Spring Festival has been scheduled for Saturday, May 14 at the school. Plans for the event include a remote radio broadcast, a chicken barbecue and live entertainment.

The festival committee are: Mr. and Mrs. Roy Tenny, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Zelko, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Lapple, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Lagonegro, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Agan, and Mr. and Mrs. Bob Gamer.

All proceeds from the festival are used in the operation of Notre Dame.

A children's play will be presented continuously all afternoon in the school's auditorium, and the popular

"dunker" will be back. John White, a local artist and art instructor at Notre Dame, will sketch activities and persons during the day.

A large menu featuring Father Richard Murphy's crepes and Bob Agan's chicken will be available.

The festival committee are: Mr. and Mrs. Roy Tenny, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Zelko, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Lapple, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Lagonegro, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Agan, and Mr. and Mrs. Bob Gamer.

SISTERS OF MERCY INFIRMARY APPEAL

How little they ask . . . who have given so much

March 28 - May 28, 1977



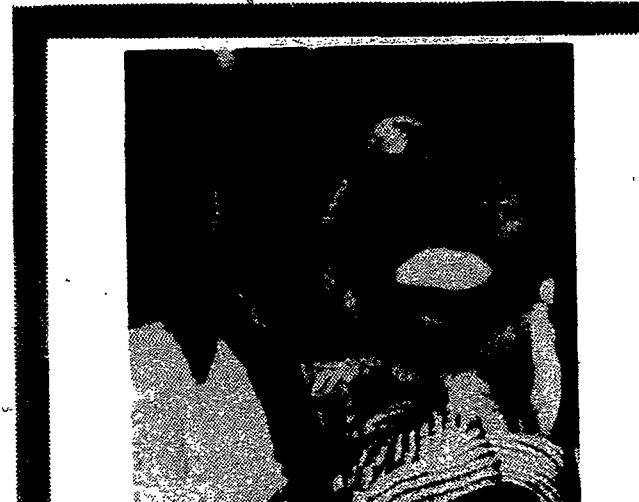
Father Terence Fleming, chaplain of Mercy Motherhouse, anoints the hands of Sister M. Helen Casey. With her is Sister M. Adolphine (at left) and her own sister, Sister M. Constance Casey. Sister Adolphine taught for 50 years in Rochester, Corning and Hornell; Sister Constance—48 years in Rochester, Corning, Elmira and Auburn; Sister Helen—50 years in Elmira and Rochester.

THE NEED: More adequate infirmary facilities for the retired and infirm Sisters of Mercy.

THE SOLUTION: A \$325,000 renovation of a section of the Motherhouse on Blossom Road.

THE RESPONSE: The generosity of thousands who have been served by the Sisters of Mercy.

Contribution pledges are payable over a two-year period.



Sister M. de Pazzi Connor (left) and Sister M. Gabriel Oster spend a few quiet minutes together. Sister de Pazzi served 53 years in the Rochester, Corning and Elmira schools; Sister Gabriel was 48 years in Rochester, Corning, Auburn and Hornell.

**Southern Tier Kick-Off
April 24th!**

For more information write or call:

Sisters of Mercy Infirmary Appeal Office
1437 Blossom Road, Rochester, New York
(716) 288-3014

Notre Dame High School
1400 Maple Ave., Elmira, New York 14908
(607) 734-2267