

Divorced, Separated Catholics Attend Toronto Program

Representatives of divorced and separated Catholic groups from the Rochester diocese spent the weekend of April 22-24 in Toronto, attending a talk by Father James Young, national chaplain of the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics (NACSDC), and participating in an exchange with Toronto divorced and separated groups.

Among the 35 men and women who participated were members of the St. Charles, St. John the Evangelist, Humboldt St., St. Joseph's, Penfield and St. Monica's groups, who were accompanied by Sister Barbara Jones, St. Agnes, Avon, Sister Diane Branch, St. Joseph's, Penfield, and Sister Kathleen Kircher, diocesan coordinator of ministry to the divorced and separated.

Father Young's talk emphasized the historical and Biblical background surrounding the Church's attitudes toward marriage, the present day compassion being felt for those with troubled marriages, and the human needs of persons in troubled marriages for understanding and comfort from the Church rather than rejection and judgement. Continued reception of the sacraments by those divorced and separated can

give strength and comfort at a time when they need it most, and should be encouraged, he said.

Father Young referred to a talk by Father Andrew Greeley who said that the greatest pastoral problem facing the American Catholic community is the wide spread phenomenon of divorced and remarriage among Catholics. Statisticians put the number at eight million Catholic men and women divorced, four million of whom have remarried. Father Greeley's 1971 study insisted that Catholics no longer differ significantly from the American mainstream, so we can assume today that Catholics marry, separate, divorce and remarry at the same rates as the American population at large, Father Young pointed out.

In the relatively brief time of five years, a ministry to and by divorced Catholics in the United States and Canada has begun to take shape, Father Young noted, to deal with the problem.

The exchange weekend between the Rochester and Toronto groups was arranged as a result of friendships formed at the Fifth Annual Conference of NACSDC at Notre Dame University in October 1976. Rita Lewis, co-leader of the

St. John the Evangelist group, planned the weekend with Mary Ann Farquharson, member of the National Board of NACSDC.

During the weekend, Ms. Lewis acted as recording secretary at the quarterly meeting of the National Board and as an alternate from New York. She noted that the timing for the National Board meeting and the exchange allowed more than 300 persons to attend the talk by Father Young.

Following the talk, the Toronto group hosted a reception for the Rochester group so they could meet the members of the National Board as well as Father Young. "We will have a difficult act to follow when we entertain the Toronto group in Rochester next September," Ms. Lewis commented.

Food Program A Success

The Maplewood Edgerton Emergency Kupboard (MEEK), a six-month ecumenical food shelf program conducted by six churches in the northwest section of Rochester has begun to show results. Periodic food collections for the needy are held at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Lake Avenue Baptist, Dewey Avenue Presbyterian, Grace United Methodist, Wesley United Methodist and the Church of the Ascension.

MEEK was an outgrowth of a leadership conference on world hunger at Keuka College which was attended by Mr. and Mrs. Richard DenDunne from Ascension.

After the conference they called all the area churches and organized the MEEK program.

Volunteers take food to a central storehouse, sort and shelve the food then bag it according to family size. To date 25 families have received emergency food supplies.

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Women's Unit Slates Confab On Ministries

An ecumenical conference of women ministers is slated to be held at Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/Crozer Seminary next Saturday, May 7, beginning at 9 a.m. The conference, sponsored by the 150-member Organization of Women Ministers, is entitled "The Exercise of Power in the

of the Church: Biblical, Theological and Spiritual Perspectives."

The sponsoring organization, now more than a year old, is made up of Protestant clergy and Roman Catholic women serving as pastoral assistants and religious educators. This is the second major conference for the group.

The keynote lecture, Nonviolent Dynamite: the power of the Cross, will be given by Dr. Marianne Micks, professor of Biblical and Historical Theology at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va.

Afternoon workshops, one on Authority and Group Dynamics and another on Psychological Aspects of Power also are featured.

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