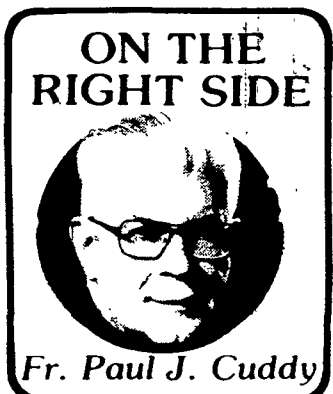




Summer School

St. Margaret Mary Parish in Apalachin conducted a summer school recently, with 80 children participating. Above, Rita Nossal assists some students with an art project. Below, Sister Kay Heverin, SSJ, teaches the children a series of movements that illustrate the sung Our Father, with Father Elmer Schmidt (right), St. Margaret Mary's pastor, joining in.



When the Vietnamese refugees began pouring into the United States in 1975, fleeing the deadly government of Hanoi, two families settled in our Holy Trinity parish in Webster. They were sponsored by the local Council of Churches. Vietnamese in this vicinity are religiously, Catholics, Lutherans, but for the most part a kind of Buddhist.

The first Sunday of their Webster arrival I noticed a full pew of 11 Orientals: father, mother, seven sons, two daughters, ranging from 17 to about one year. They knew no English. I know no Vietnamese. But we were fellow Catholics, united, as the catechism teaches so succinctly, "in our common profession of Faith, partaking the same sacraments, and governed by our lawful pastors under one visible head, the Holy Father."

So I went to the long pew, and in the best language of communication, smiled broadly, then said in an English they did not understand, "Welcome. We are glad you are here," and shook hands cordially with the father, mother and each of the nine children. They responded with a few words of Vietnamese and broad but timid Oriental smiles.

About the same time another family came: father, mother and five smiling children. They moved into

our nearby housing project, Philips Village. They received the same hearty welcome.

For two years now, these two families have come to Mass every Sunday without fail. They come to Mass to worship God with us who are their fellow Catholics but who speak a foreign tongue and have customs strange to them. The whole outfit comes to the altar to receive Christ's Body, the sign of love and unity, with unaffected devotion.

Often I wonder what kind of religious training did these people get in Vietnam that they are so faithful? How many of our American families, driven from their country, enduring terrifying experiences, separated from loved ones, including those in their cemeteries, destitute of money and goods, immediately dependent on the goodness of foreigners who speak an unknown language and who have customs strange to us— I wonder how many would persevere in the Faith, in fidelity to Mass and the Sacraments— What kind of religious training did these people get in Vietnam?

Last April I filled in for Father Schwartz at Rochester General Hospital for one week. On Tuesday a young Vietnamese man came smiling into the office and said, "I work in the hospital and at 10 each morning Father Schwartz gives me Holy Communion." The vision of myself and everyone else guzzling coffee at coffee break time made a contrast to this man's using his coffee break to receive the Body of the Lord. Since the chaplain brings the Blessed Sacrament to the office to be available to the sick, I gave him Holy Communion. He received devoutly.

After the prayers I said, "Sit down, please." He speaks English quite well. He sat. I told him: "For over a year I have been trying to get cassette tapes in the Vietnamese language— tapes of Vietnamese hymns, prayers, the Mass; perhaps some sermons and lives of saints, and especially the catechism. A young Mr. Ray Loyer, who is president of our Monroe Curia of the Legion of Mary and a Xerox patent lawyer, has been trying to rouse some action from Philadelphia friends, but no success yet." I nearly fell off my chair when he replied, "I have a cassette of the Mass and Easter hymns which I brought from Vietnam. I will bring it to you."

Sure enough, the next day he came to receive Our Lord, and he gave me a well recorded tape— about 90 minutes of the Mass and Easter hymns in Vietnamese. The religious cassette apostolate is another of my apostolic enthusiasms, and I have reproduced half a dozen of this tape for distribution among the Vietnamese people.

But again the thought comes: What kind of training did these people get to have such a devotion to Our Lord in the Eucharist and in the Catholic Church?

(Next week: The Rochester Vietnamese Catholic Community.)

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# Birthing Room Provides Home Comforts in Hospital

By MARTIN TOOMBS  
 Southern Tier Editor

Elmira—Home births using natural childbirth methods are becoming more common today; couples seem to be avoiding the hospital atmosphere and the drugs that usually accompany a hospital delivery.

But births at home present extra dangers for the mother and the baby. Some hospitals, including St. Joseph's, are responding to the situation by providing a home-like atmosphere within the hospital, insuring availability of any necessary medical assistance.

St. Joseph's "birthing room" began operation the past two months within the obstetrics unit. The room looks like a bedroom rather than a hospital room; it's brightly decorated with hanging plants and a rocking chair. More furniture is on the way. Sister Mary Roch Basso, maternity supervisor, noted, that will allow the father to rest in the room as well.

The new service has been made available while discussions concerning the continuation of obstetrics at St. Joseph's are being conducted. The regional health planning agency, the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, has recommended that St. Joseph's unit be closed. Whether or not to impose fiscal sanctions against St. Joseph's to force the closing is now up to Dr. Robert P. Whalen, state Commissioner of Health.

Use of the room is on the patient's request, with the agreement of her doctor, sister noted, and has been well received. At first some of the doctors weren't enthusiastic about natural birth procedures, she noted. But that has changed "as they've seen how the patient was relaxed," making the birth easier for everyone, she explained.

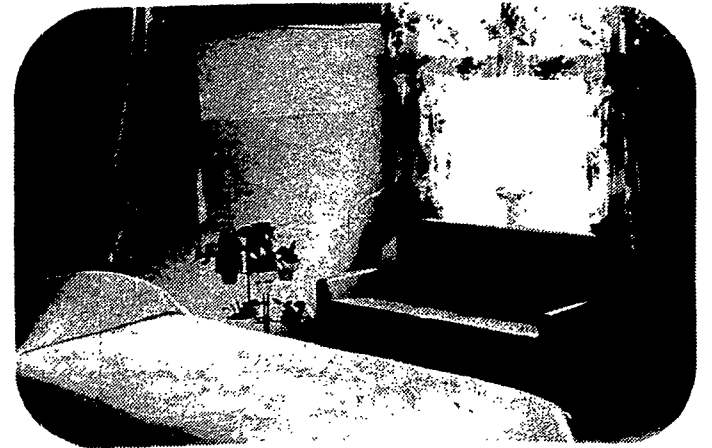
The presence of husbands in the delivery room is not new at St. Joseph's. Sister Mary Roch guesses that it has been 20 or 25 years since husbands first began witnessing the birth of their children, even though other area hospitals prohibited the practice as late as five years ago.

Use of the birthing room for labor, delivery and recovery also eliminates the need for moves each time. Some experts say that the

## Administrator Honored

Elmira—Vincent Joseph, assistant director of St. Joseph's Hospital's Planning Services has been admitted to nomineeship in the American College of Hospital Administrators. The announcement was made by Richard J. Stull, president of the Chicago-based professional society.

In his new affiliation, Joseph will join an organization with more than 11,000 of the leading chief executive officers and their administrative colleagues serving hospitals and health service facilities. The group was founded in 1933 expressly to elevate and assure high standards of competency in hospital and health service management.



The "birthing room" in St. Joseph's obstetrics unit.

one-room method could be safer than a hurried move to the delivery room, at a critical point for the baby.

Sister Mary Roch noted that even if the birthing room is not used for the delivery, it can be used to provide a relaxing atmosphere during labor and recovery.

Doris Holleran, RN, an obstetrics nurse, noted that recently a woman trying to decide which hospital to have her baby in visited the unit. Mrs. Holleran said that she was "so delighted" when she found that the birthing room was available that she decided on St. Joseph's.

Both nurses pointed to the use of natural childbirth classes by new parents as the cause for the interest in the birthing room. Mrs. Holleran estimated that 70 per cent of the mothers now giving birth in the unit have completed childbirth classes. Not all are able to give birth without the aid of anesthetics, she noted, but they all benefit from the preparation and training. She also pointed out that the nurses in the unit have received the training, and are able to help a couple, or fill the husband's role if he is not available.

Sister Mary Roch, a nurse in the unit for more than 20 years, is in favor of the birth education classes and the emphasis on natural childbirth. She noted that

the mothers-to-be who have attended the classes aren't "afraid when they come in," making for an easier birth. She also noted that many women who are taking the classes also visit the unit, and therefore are familiar with the surroundings which can make them feel more comfortable when they give birth.

New parents' reactions to the method are also favorable, they noted. Mrs. Holleran commented that "they're both so happy that they're able to do this." Sister Mary Roch added that "it's something very good" for the couple.

Another aspect of natural childbirth that St. Joseph's is becoming involved in occurs after birth. Pediatricians now believe that it is important for the newborn infant and the parents to spend as much time together as possible immediately after birth, Sister Mary Roch explained. This process, called "bonding," is done at St. Joseph's whenever possible, she said. Sister explained that newborn infants have a low body temperature and need to have it raised, which is usually done in an incubator. To facilitate the bonding process, the hospital is getting a warmer, purchased by the local Junior League, that will cover the mother and the baby so that the warming process can occur without removing the baby from the parents.

## SOUTHERN TIER

## AUBURN-GENEVA

## K of C Elects New Officers

Elmira—Elmira Council 229, Knights of Columbus has elected new officers for the coming year. James Howland was elected grand knight; his deputy will be Ronald Lewis. Father Henry Adamski will serve as the unit's chaplain.

Other officers recently elected were Robert

Ryniker, chancellor, Clement Knuth, recorder, Frank Beligotti, financial secretary, Joseph McCluskey, treasurer, Edward Rehwinkel, lecturer, Tom Sullivan, advocate, Robert Pautz, warden, Harry Ryniker and John Keeley, guards, and Cliff Benedict, Edward Rehwinkel and Tom Ritter, trustees.

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