

Court Features Counseling Effort

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira—An unusual counseling program has been established to aid families of persons who come before Elmira's Recorders Court, through the efforts of Recorders Court Judge John Frawley.

The Recorders Court Family Support Program began operations last August, with two staff persons designing programs and working with the families of persons who come before the court.

Judge Frawley, a parishioner of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, is known in the Elmira area for his efforts to help persons who come before him, especially for his efforts with alcoholics.

Aware of the need for family counseling, Clarence Tiffany, the coordinator of the program said, Judge Frawley sought out funding, and received a grant for approximately \$19,000 to establish the counseling program, from Elmira's Urban Renewal Agency.

Tiffany and Sister Dorothy Becker, the program's other staff member, explained the goals of the program at an alcoholism seminar at St. Joseph's Hospital recently.

Sister Dorothy explained that the program was designed with a three point plan, to provide individual

counseling, group therapy sessions, and community outreach. The outreach effort has yet to begin, she said, due to lack of staff, but the other phases, along with general social work, are operating.

As its funding is through Urban Renewal, Tiffany explained, the program is restricted to clients who live in the Urban Renewal district.

The program takes referrals from Judge Frawley, Tiffany explained, some of which are participating in a diversion program. The agency works on the problems of the family involved, he said, through individual counseling and group therapy.

Sister Dorothy explained that often persons the agency deals with have little understanding of interpersonal relationships; "a very basic, transactional analysis, type of education is needed" by many clients, she said. The aim, she noted, is to help families resolve conflicts "constructively rather than destructively."

Tiffany noted that they have changed their methods of operation in certain areas already, and are continuing to look for the best way to accomplish the job they have set for themselves.

The program often is part of a diversionary program used by the court, he explained, especially for first time offenders. Arrested

persons enter into a contract with the court, which requires specific actions by the offender for six months. If the six months are completed successfully, charges are dropped, he explained.

For some participating in the Family Support Program as part of a diversionary program, the therapy and counseling are uncomfortable, he said, but they feel unable to drop out because they would then have to go to trial. Resolving the conflict has been a problem, Tiffany said.

Difficulties also have occurred with the group therapy, as often members of a group know each other, and feel uncomfortable about speaking frankly, he said. To avoid problems, they are currently using a variety of groupings, they explained.

The program also is set up to help the parents of an arrested teenager, Sister Dorothy pointed out. Noting that "the bulk of our work" is with teenagers, she explained that the effort is towards helping parents deal with their children. In one case, she noted, a mother they are working with has had three sons who have been in the Chemung County Jail at various times.

A future source for referrals could be the Family Court, Tiffany said, as a Family Court Judge can require participation of the offender's parents in a program such as theirs.

For the future, they noted that the program's grant is for just one year, and that they will have to apply for more funding. Tiffany noted that he has an idea that the program is going to become more academically oriented in the future, teaching people about interpersonal relationships.

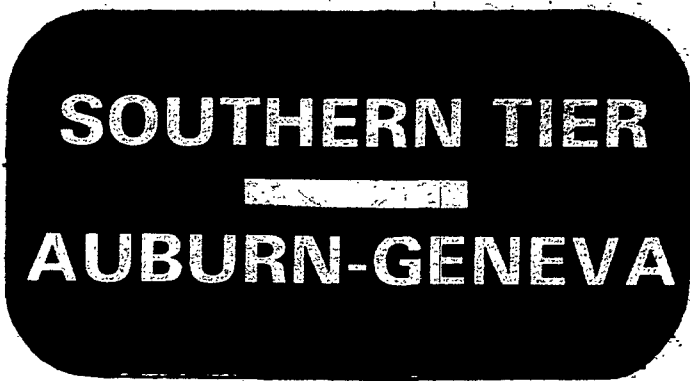


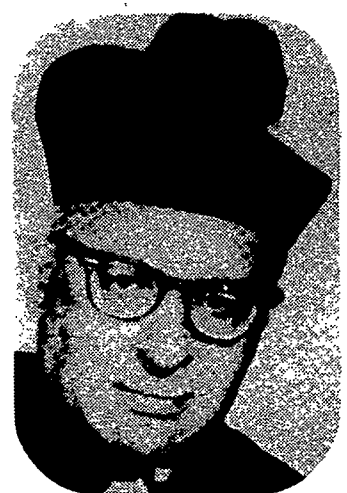
Photo by Martin Toombs
Father O'Neill during his talk at St. Patrick's, Elmira.

St. Aloysius Pastor to Have 35th Anniversary Celebration

Auburn—This Sunday, Dec. 4, St. Aloysius parish will celebrate the 35th anniversary of ordination of a native son—the pastor, Father Edward Aloysius Shamon.

After the 12:15 p.m. Mass, there will be a reception, 2-5 p.m., in the parish hall. Guest speaker at the liturgy will be Father Albert Shamon of St. Mary's, Waterloo, twin brother of the Auburn pastor.

The two are from a family of eight children, seven of whom are living, six of them in Auburn. Like his twin, Father Edward is a prolific writer and popular lecturer.



FR. E.A. SHAMON

He was schooled at his present parish and at East

High before entering the diocesan seminaries. Ordained 8 to the priesthood on June 6, 1942, he celebrated his first Mass on the following day at St. Aloysius. Early appointments were at St. Michael's, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and Our Lady of Lourdes, all in Rochester, and St. Mary of the Lake in Watkins Glen, where he conducted a successful campaign for a school of religion. While at Watkins Glen, he served as chaplain for the Grand Prix Association and for Camp Monterey, a state correctional facility. Currently, Father Shamon is chaplain to a number of local organizations. He has served as president of the Cayuga Community Council, for which he obtained a \$90,000 Federal grant to subsidize a social planning program.

Father Shamon was founding pastor of St. Lawrence Parish in Greece, which was dedicated in 1961. He has been here since 1962.

A highlight of his priestly career, as he sees it, was a tour in November, 1974, of the entire diocese with the world-famous image, the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima. He has visited Europe five times, has studied in Palestine and makes lecture tours in the United States, talking of the Marian shrines of the world and of the Shroud of Turin.

Former parishioners from other places will be especially welcome at Father Shamon's Sunday afternoon reception.

Terence Almon Ordained In Maryland

Terence Michael Almon, formerly of Corning, was ordained to the priesthood last Saturday by Archbishop William D. Borders of Baltimore. He celebrated his first Mass Sunday in the parish where he works, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Woodlawn, Md.

The ordination took place in St. Ursula Church, Parkville, Md.

Father Almon moved from Corning to Baltimore with his family in 1952. He is a graduate of St. Mary's Seminary, Catonsville, and recently completed four years at the University of Louvain, Belgium, with an M.A. in religious studies. As a student, he traveled among the missions of South Africa and Tanzania.

Christmas Fair Nov. 30, Dec. 1

Auburn—The Mercy Auxiliary will sponsor a Christmas Fair on Wednesday, Nov. 30 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Thursday, Dec. 1 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Mercy Health and Rehabilitation Center on Thornton Avenue. Proceeds from the fair will buy equipment "to add comfort and pleasure to the center residents," according to Merna and Elizabeth Barry, co-chairpersons of the event.

Auxiliary committee members who will work at the Christmas Fair booths are: Dorothy Busch, Marie Bohman, Josephine Anderson, Helen Neverin, Carol Bauso, Bridget Iocolano, Thersa Davis, Margaret Whitaker, Dee Pettigrass, Jane Geherin, Carline Rattigan and Mary Ellen Shamon.

Divorced, Separated Hear Annulments Explained

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira—"Divorce has become a major, major problem," Father Robert F. O'Neill, officialis of the diocesan tribunal told the Elmira Divorced Catholics group Nov. 20.

"When nearly 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce, something has got to be done," he said.

The question, he noted, is what should be done. Various programs have been suggested, he reported, but meanwhile a significant change has occurred in the administration of Church law on marriage in the past few years.

The 65 persons attending the meeting listened intently to Father O'Neill's hour-long talk, and kept him busy during a coffee break answering individual questions before he fielded questions from the group.

In 1972 the diocesan tribunal completed nine cases, Father O'Neill told the group, granting four annulments, and refusing five.

Now with the changes in place, he said, "at least 400" cases will be taken to a judgment hearing this year, and "we will grant them all."

He was quick to add that not all cases are placed before a judge. Instead of rejecting requests, he explained, the tribunal drops the investigation when insufficient evidence to warrant an annulment is found. He noted that about one-third of the tribunal's cases are abandoned for lack of evidence, meaning that the 400 annulments will come from about 600 applications. A loss of interest

by the petitioner and the inability to locate witnesses are the most common reasons a case is abandoned, Father O'Neill explained.

"The change has been dramatic, to say the least," he commented.

The changes were the result of two actions, he noted, the first being the temporary approval of the American norms for annulments in 1970, which allowed streamlining of tribunal procedures, and a reduction in the number of cases which must be appealed to a higher court.

Father O'Neill noted that the support for the norms has been extensive. When the issue of their continuance came before the nation's bishops in 1973, they voted unanimously for continued use, he said. The vote was unusual, Father O'Neill commented; "if the bishops were here in this room," he told the group, "you couldn't get a unanimous vote that it's dark out."

(At their meeting earlier this month, the nation's bishops again approved a request for continued use of the norms, by a vote of 212 to 11.)

Another significant change occurred when the Roman Rota, the Church's highest court, defined marriage as "an intimate partnership of life and

love," he said, a change from a contract-style definition. The precedent established, Father O'Neill emphasized, as grounds for annulment "an inability of a couple to establish a community of their whole lives," the reason most annulments are granted, he said.

Father O'Neill also outlined the tribunal process, noting that he suggests persons wishing to apply for an annulment first consult with a local priest for an initial interview. Much of the information needed is acquired by mail, he said, gathered as deemed necessary in each case.

Father O'Neill emphasized that he did not see the granting of annulments as a matter of giving up on the ideal of permanent marriage. We must continue to view the "indissoluble marriage as an ideal," he said, but remember that people are human, and will make mistakes.

"I see marriage as a much more lofty state" which not all couples are capable of establishing, he explained. If persons are unable to reach that higher level of relationship, he said, the marriage should be dissolved. "We hope we are doing good for people by doing so," he commented.

M. L. ALLEN & SON
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