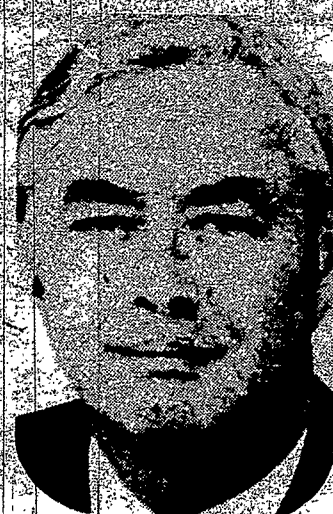




REP. HORTON



SEN. MOYNIHAN



REP. CONABLE

BSHF Lauds Area Reps

The Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation last week lauded the efforts of Congressmen Frank Horton and Barber Conable and Sen. Daniel P.

Moynihan in clearing up a tangle of red tape hindering the foundation's work in helping provide decent housing for its clients.

According to Dianne Moonan of the foundation, the legislators were responsible for persuading the local office of the Federal Housing Administration to insure mortgages even though the foundation was providing down payment and closing cost money to applicants for those mortgages.

As a rule the FHA would consider such money as "secondary financing" and would not insure the bank mortgages.

Mrs. Moonan said last week that FHA mortgage insurance could now be obtained even though recipients of the foundation's aid are asked to sign a "moral pledge" to repay the foundation for its help.

Insights in Liturgy

By FATHER ROBERT J. KENNEDY

Altar Girls: The Right Question?

Let me state my position from the beginning: I have nothing against altar girls. In fact, I positively encourage the involvement of women in all forms of liturgical and Church ministry. Why, then, raise the question?

The problem is twofold: altar servers are boys and girls, and not men and women; and they perform only half of the ministerial function of the acolyte.

To start with the second problem, first, what is the ministry of acolyte? "The acolyte is instituted to serve at the altar and to assist the priest and deacon. In particular, he/she prepares the altar and the vessels and, as an auxiliary minister of the Eucharist, he/she gives communion to the faithful." (General Instruction to the Roman Missal, #65) As an official ministry at the Eucharist, the acolyte combines the roles of what we now know to be servers and eucharistic ministers.

The ministry of the acolyte specifically includes leading processions with cross and candles, preparing the altar and gifts while the priest remains at the chair, assisting with incense, distributing communion, and helping to purify the vessels. (Gl 142-147) The ministry is an act and symbol of community service.

Given this understanding of the role of acolyte, it is legitimate to ask whether it can be adequately filled by children. Obviously, the reply is negative, for it is a role that requires maturity of faith and reverent handling. Besides, children are not meant to wait on adults; adults are meant to serve adults as an example of the Christian mandate to love one another. We lose a powerful symbol of our responsibility to service when we have children

exercise the ministry of adults.

One perhaps could argue that the experience of serving at the altar would form an attitude of Christian service in the children. However, much more powerful are the examples of service given by adults to young people, examples that will be much more long-lasting.

The further objection could be made: if we replace children with adults in the ministry of acolyte, the children will have no means of participation in the liturgy, and this could lead to a retardation of growth in faith. This whole question of assisting the maturing in faith of young Christians is too large to be treated adequately here. However, these observations might be helpful.

The celebration of the liturgy is primarily an adult affair, involving many elements not readily intelligible to children. Further, the Sunday celebration is for the whole community's participation and benefit, not just that of children. Still, the presence of children should not be ignored, and they should be invited to participate in the ways they can. Key in this will be the example of participation of the parents.

The children can be spoken to directly in the introductory remarks and the homily; if the space permits, there can be separate celebrations of the Word and they can rejoin the families at the preparation of the gifts; they can assist in bringing forward the gifts, and sing parts of the Mass. And of course, Masses can be adapted on occasional Sundays, but especially in other circumstances when the number of children is large, so as to better respond to the particular needs of children.

Children should never take the place of adults, but should participate with and be nourished by the examples of faith of their parents and other adults.



SR. NANCY

Vows Professed

Sister Nancy Kelly has made her first profession of vows in the Congregation of the Rochester Sisters of Mercy. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Kelly of Dansville entered the congregation in 1975 and taught physical education at Mercy High School before making her canonical year last year. Presently she is teaching girls' physical education and coaching girls' Varsity basketball and J.V. volleyball at Notre Dame High School in Elmira. This summer she will be co-director of Camp Stella Maris.

Talk Scheduled

Sister Kathleen Kircher, coordinator of the diocesan ministry to divorced and separated Catholics, will be a principal speaker at the first annual New York State Conference for Separated and Divorced Catholics, slated for April 28 through April 30 in Binghamton.

At Sexuality Lecture

Physician Attacks 'Sex Ed'

Dr. Eugene F. Diamond, a Chicago pediatrician for 23 years and the father of 13 children, told some 300 guests that in matters of teenage sexuality "parents are not only the best teachers, they are probably the only teachers."

Dr. Diamond spoke on "The Casualties of the Sexual Revolution — Teenagers and Parents" last week at the Academy of Medicine on East Ave. The event was sponsored by the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild.

He called upon parents to teach their children "the difference between love and sex."

Diamond said that today's sex education, taught in schools, stresses biological functions and contraception but "avoids the aspects of real love." He feels that liberalized attitudes toward sex don't necessarily solve problems of venereal disease, illegitimacy and abortion.

As an example of how this ideology has failed he described progressive laws, dealing with sex in Denmark. The laws were geared to curb

sex crimes, venereal disease, etc. Denmark, Diamond explained, enjoys a high standard of living, and a good school system much like the U.S.

He said that pornography, in Denmark, was legalized in 1967; sex education began in 1970 and abortion was allowed in 1973.

Instead of solving problems, Dr. Diamond said, "today forcible rape is up 300%, venereal disease for those under 20 rose 250%, illegitimate births doubled, the divorce rate doubled and abortions rose 500%."

"The only things that declined were the birthrate and the age of first intercourse," he said, and added that these trends were much the same in the U.S.

He continued saying this "promiscuity" has also resulted in increased cases of cancer of the cervix and could lead to a "whole new generation of infertile women."

Diamond suggested that instead of showing children

the biological functions and making contraceptives "readily available" to them, parents should encourage chastity and "counsel them not to fall to peer group pressure."

Diamond blamed a variety of "social engineers" for today's problems with teen sex. He spoke of "the pornographic press, sex education which ignores youngsters who practice chastity" and aspects of the "emancipation" of women.

Dr. Diamond said that "nature has equipped women with an intuition to look beyond orgasm to the deep mysterious significance of sexual activity."

"She who was once his superior in this most intimate area has demanded to become his equal and in doing so she has relinquished some of her most cherished advantages," he said.

He concluded saying that today's sexual revolution is "really a fad and cannot survive" but that people should try to end it now with an era which stresses the positive aspects of chastity.

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