

Catholic Theological Committee: Woman Priests OK

Milwaukee (RNS) — A three-year study commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society concludes there is no valid reason why women should not be ordained priests.

Prepared by three nuns and two priests, the report issued at the society's annual meeting here rejects arguments advanced in a 1977 Vatican declaration reaffirming an all-male priesthood.

Father Edward H. Konekman, CTS secretary, commented that "the bottom line of the report is that there is no good reason not to ordain women."

The 51-page report rebuts customary arguments that "women are equal but different" and their roles in the Church are important, but not priestly; that if women were supposed to be priests Christ would have named a woman as an apostle and also that tradition mandates men to be priests, but not women.

A forward in the report states that although the

society authorized the three-year study and printed the committee's findings, it was not taking a position on the report.

The report argues that unless divine will settles the question of whether women should be ordained, it becomes a matter to be settled by human judgment. It states "that arguments based on human judges ... are incontrovertably in favor of ordination of women."

The official reasons from the Vatican and Church leaders against ordination are outlined. Arguments against the validity of these positions follow in the report. For instance:

The report states that it was true that a woman was not among the 12 apostles, but that fact, it said, must be weighed against the cultural circumstances of the day.

Further, the report says, "The gospels do not bear out the assertion regarding Jesus' exclusion of women from apostleship. Women were among the original disciples of

Jesus and were primary witnesses of the Christian kerygma (early Church doctrine), of his ministry, his death and his resurrection."

The Church has said that women cannot be priests because of tradition and the because of tradition.

"On the other side, however, it is argued that many traditions of great theological import are changing — participation in ecumenical dialogue, the power of bishops, the local church, and the like. Is there not a precedent here for change on the role of women in the Church?" the report asks.

The report states that tradition is essentially a weak argument in view of changing times. "Women's ordination," it says, "is a question never before addressed to the Church in a comparable set of circumstances. It demands a new effort at self-understanding, and an openness to new practices under the guidance of the Creative Spirit."



Catholic Membership Number of Priests

Vatican City (RNS) — A look at the Roman Catholic Church's statistical yearbook, released here, reveals among other things that the number of Catholics and the Catholic percentage of the world's population have risen sharply.

The yearbook, a statistical study of the world's Catholic

population as of 1976, says there were 732 million Catholics in the world. This is a rise of 15 million recorded in 1975. The yearbook states that Catholics comprised 18.3 percent of the world's population an increase from 18.2 percent recorded in 1975.

It is also reported, however,

that the number of priests dropped in 1976 by 3,615 from 1975. As of Dec. 31, 1976 there were a 401,168 priests around the world. The greatest decrease was in Europe, where the number of priests dropped from 244,271 in 1975 to 241,379.

The number of seminary students rose slightly, however, from 201,409 in 1975 to 201,807 in 1976, an increase of 398.

The yearbook contains a special survey on the "age distribution" of diocesan priests which finds that the average age of these priests worldwide is 51 years and seven months.

Commenting on its findings, the yearbook editors said that "Africa, Asia and Oceania, which have some of the highest birth rates, present the highest proportion of diocesan priests in the younger age groups, while America and Europe, which have some of the lowest birth and death rates, present a higher relative figure for the older age groups and a lower one for the younger groups."

On every continent the number of middle-aged diocesan priests floats between 62 percent and 71 percent of the total number. The most noted extremes, again, are in Europe and Africa. In Africa, young diocesan priests constitute 28.6 percent of the total number. In Europe, they represent only 11.6 percent of the total.

The yearbook is the seventh annual volume of what is called in Latin the *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae*. It is published by the Central Office of Statistics for the Vatican State Secretariat, and is published in three languages: Latin, English and French.

Father Anthony, OSB Says First Mass Here

Father Anthony G. St. Pierre, OSB, a former resident of Rochester, was ordained to the priesthood May 27 at St. Vincent Basilica in Latrobe, Pa. He celebrated his First Mass Sunday afternoon, June 4, at the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus, Greece.

Father Anthony joined the Benedictines in 1973 and has been teaching mathematics at St. Vincent College. Last year he was awarded a master of divinity degree with highest honors by St. Vincent Seminary.

He was born in Gardner,

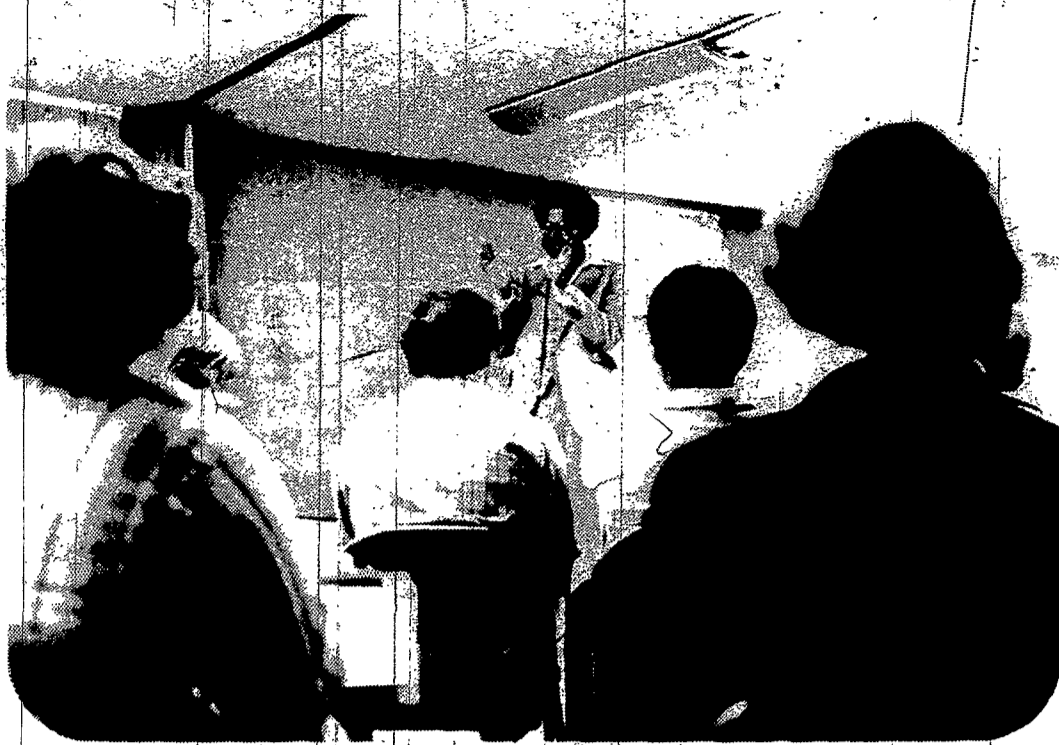
Mass., but reared in Rochester. He is a graduate of Aquinas Institute. Before entering the novitiate, he completed undergraduate studies at Holy Cross College, served two years as an officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve and earned a doctorate in physics at Pennsylvania State University.

Concelebrants of his First Mass included Father Thomas M. Reddington, Holy Name pastor, and Benedictine Father Simon J. Toth, who also gave the homily. Father David Fedor was organist.



Spina Bifida Picnic

Members of the Greater Rochester Spina Bifida Association enjoy an outing at Camp Haccamo one day recently. Clowns, horse-shoes, bocce and plenty of good food were featured. Spina Bifida is the second most common congenital birth defect in this country. Further information is available through GRSBA, Box 3, Fairport, N.Y., 14450.



Photos by Terrance J. Brennan

Workshop

A workshop stressing community organization through pastoral ministry took place last week at St. Monica's Church. Keynote speaker Lawrence J. Payne, (right), executive director of the Office of Black Ministry for the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, Texas, emphasized the need for churches, civic clubs, neighborhood organizations and other small associations to form a coalition to give the citizens a greater voice in local government. The two-day event, which attracted participants from parishes across the city, was sponsored by the Rochester Office of Black Ministries.



McCurdy's



Jo Anne
Hartman
Sings
"May I Introduce
You to a Friend"

JoAnne Hartman, famed throughout the Catholic diocese as a singer and leader in Church music, this week has released her latest album, "May I Introduce You to a Friend", a collection of the most inspiring songs and hymns in her repertoire. The album, JoAnne's first to contain entirely religious music, includes, besides the title song, Prayer of St. Francis, Listen to the Children, and the Bach-Gounod Ave Maria, among others. JoAnne considers the album to be produced by God, with her help. A co-sponsor of May I Introduce You to a Friend is the Courier-Journal. The album is now on sale for \$6.98 at all McCurdy's Stores.



McCurdy's Record Department

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