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# COURIER-JOURNAL

## Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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### Novices Learn About Rural Poverty

By MARTIN TOOMBS  
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira—Three weeks working with the Office of Human Development in the Southern Tier has been "a lot to take in and absorb" for two novices of the Sisters of Mercy.

For the first three weeks in June, Sister Dorothy Wilson and Sister Margaret Comin, Sisters of Mercy novices, worked with Sister Mary Kruckow, a Sister of Mercy on the Southern Tier Human Development staff.

The novices' participation is part of their canonical year, preparing them for their future as Sisters of Mercy.

Sister Margaret said that the three weeks have been busy, and that she and Sister Dorothy plan to wait before completing a report so they will have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences.

Much of their time was spent visiting organizations and agencies in the Southern Tier that work with low-income families. They also helped Sister Mary with her home visitations, checking with families and reporting on

what they found. They also spent some time in the storefront operating under Human Development sponsorship in Elmira.

Sister Dorothy said that one difficulty in the Southern Tier is the distances that must be traveled; "it takes hours just to go to one home," she commented.

Sister Margaret also noted that it has been "difficult to keep up with Sister Mary."

The experience increased their understanding of rural poverty, they said. Sister Dorothy explained that previously, she hadn't understood why victims of rural poverty simply didn't move. Now, she said, she understands the situation better, and realizes that "rural poverty is so much different" from urban poverty. Programs to aid the rural poor are either not available or not utilized completely, she noted.

Families that were "struggling to maintain their dignity" despite their poverty were impressive, Sister Margaret noted.

The experience prepared the two sisters for what

they will be doing later this summer, they noted. For three weeks, they will live on a Catholic Worker farm at Tivoli, near the Hudson River. Sister Margaret explained that living in the subsistence community will be a new experience, helping them to understand the day-to-day lives of those in poverty.

Although noting that they can never completely know what it is to be poor, Sister Margaret said that the experience should "help us to understand what our needs are," and what are merely wants.

Until three years ago, the novices couldn't have forseen themselves as Sisters of Mercy. At that time, Sister Dorothy was living in her native Scotland, and Sister Margaret was not a Catholic.

A legal secretary for nine years in Scotland, Sister Dorothy moved to the United States three years ago. It was during her canonical year that she first taught children, she noted, second graders in the religion program at St. Helen's, Gates. She "fell in love with teaching kids," she said, and requested that she be allowed to go to college for elementary

education and religious education. She will be entering Nazareth College in September.

Sister Margaret, who has her Bachelors degree in nursing, said that she will be seeking a nursing job in Rochester beginning in September. The granddaughter of a Presbyterian minister, she reported that she converted to Catholicism three years ago, and joined the Sisters of Mercy two years ago. She said that she came to know some sisters while she was at Roberts Wesleyan College, and she "was impressed with their lifestyle and their lives."

The canonical year has been a busy one for the novices. Beginning last September, they have been taking courses, participating in a national program for novices to their order, and doing volunteer work.

Sister Dorothy noted that in addition to teaching at St. Helen's, she was a member of the Human Development Committee at St. Anne's, Rochester, and did visitations at Rochester General Hospital.

Sister Margaret worked at Geneseo State College,



Sister Dorothy, Sister Mary, and Sister Margaret look over the reports the novices will be submitting to Sister Mary about their work and experiences in the Southern Tier.

and helped out in the Sisters of Mercy Infirmary for a time, she noted.

Their canonical year will end in September, they explained, after which they

will continue as novices until they are professed. There is no specific amount of time before their profession, they noted.

### Food Pantry Issues Plea For Help

Auburn—A sudden drain on the ecumenically sponsored Emergency Food Pantry, housed at St. Peter's Episcopal Church here, has caused a serious shortage of food, according to a pantry spokesman.

Food donations are badly needed.

Canned soups and powdered milk are needed most. Macaroni products and sauces, cereals, tuna,

mayonnaise, baby foods, one pot dishes, canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables and juices can also be used.

The pantry has no facilities for perishables except for small amounts of hamburger or hot dogs which can be stored in a freezer at the pantry.

Donated items can be brought to St. Peter's Parish Center, 173 Genesee St. on weekdays.

### Right to Life Officers Named

Auburn—The Cayuga County Right to Life Committee announced the election of its officers for the coming year recently.

Elected were Mrs. Judy McKay, chairperson, Robert Perfetto, vice-chairperson, Mrs. Geri Pelc, secretary, and Mrs. Kathy Mahar, treasurer.

Mrs. McKay called for the organization to "continue to educate the public to the horrors of abortion so that people of the United States will vote for life."

She added that "politically, it is most important to work

for and elect pro-life candidates to all factions of government on the local state and national levels."

Outgoing chairperson Frank McKay told the assembly about the new Birthright organization now working in the county.

He said "Now that there is a Birthright organization in Cayuga County, which has accepted the responsibility of helping women with problem pregnancies, we can now concentrate, once again on education and legislation. Only through this means can we stop the slaughter of our most innocent children."



Photo by Martin Toombs

### Time to Reap

During Catholic Schools Week earlier in the year students at St. Patrick's Junior High in Elmira planted beans as part of a program "Everyone Grows." Each homeroom cared for plants and last week at the final Mass of the school year, celebrated by Father Neil Miller, the plants were placed before the altar.

### HD Project Under Way

Hornell—A concerted effort to reach every person in the city who is in need of some type of assistance is being made by St. Ann's Human Development Committee.

Volunteers are visiting each home in the city to determine the number of persons who require some kind of help. Parishioners then will deal with problems that they are able to others will be referred to the proper agency.

Josephine FitzGerald is Human Development Committee chairperson. Louis Bellanca is vice chairman and Sister Mary Jude, secretary.

Other members of the committee evaluating the questionnaires are Sister Katherine Ambrose, Sister Mary Alphonsus, Sister Mary Colette, Josephine Ciancagini, Mrs. Jack Morris, Peg Griswold and Philip Palmisano.

### 'Sharing' Theme Of Children's Mass

Hornell—"Sharing is Caring" was the theme of a children's Mission Mass Monday June 19 in St. Ann's Church. Young parishioners in the first four grades of the public schools joined the pupils of St. Ann's School for the special liturgy.

Father Robert C. MacNamara, pastor, celebrated the Mass and gave the homily, advising the young people to show their concern for youngsters everywhere by sharing their faith and their possessions generously.

Father Donald Schwab, associate, was master of ceremonies. He also led the large group in the singing of hymns emphasizing love of God and neighbor.

Several youngsters, bearing symbolic gifts, formed the offertory procession. One carried a candle, indicating the need for enlightenment to

appreciate the goodness of God; another the Bible to show the importance of the Good News, and another a globe, signifying the desire to reach out to everyone in the world.

Following the Mass, films expressing the theme were shown to the youngsters.

### Talk Scheduled

Hornell—The Hornell Chapter of "Make Today Count" will meet Wednesday, June 28 at 7:30 p.m. in DeSales Hall at St. James Mercy Hospital.

Guest speaker Dr. Edward Auringer will talk on what is available in the Hornell area in diagnostic and radiation treatment.

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