

Southern Tier:
Martin Toombs
268 W. 13th St., B-1
Elmira Heights, N.Y. 14903
(607) 732-3371

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

Auburn-Geneva:
Mary Ann Ginnerty
294 1/2 South Street Rd.
Auburn, N.Y.
(315) 253-2171

Tioga County Project:

County Has Many Poor, Unchurched

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Owego—Sisters Carol Wulforst and Kathleen Flaherty will be spending the next year working in one of the diocese's poorest counties, and also the diocesan county with the lowest percentage of Catholics.

The two Sisters of Mercy, teachers at St. Joseph's School, Penfield, last year, began a one-year commitment to work among the poor of primarily rural Tioga County on July 5. With the population only 7.3 percent Catholic, and with 64.2 percent of county residents considered unchurched, their work also will be ministry to the unchurched.

Their project has been made possible through the

cooperation of the Tioga County Catholic parishes and the Sisters of Mercy. (See accompanying article.)

The sisters are being aided as they begin their work by Father Albert Cason, Tompkins-Tioga Regional Coordinator, and by Sister Mary Kruckow and Father Neil Miller, regional staff of the Office of Human Development. The sisters have an office in St. Patrick's rectory in Owego, a central point in the county.

Lacking specific precedents, they have no overall plan, Father Miller explained. "They're going to chart their own path." They should be able to get closer to the Tioga County people, he said, than he and Sister Mary Kruckow could in their five-county OHD ministry.

Father Cason pointed out that the project "fits in with Bishop Hogan's focus" on efforts to reach the unchurched.

He said that with widespread parish responsibilities, and the shortage of clergy, priests are not always able to find time to work with the poor of their parish. He said that the sisters can be "contact persons" working with the "powerless poor," helping to "give them the strength or power to change" their situation.

During their first two weeks in Tioga County, the sisters met with local priests, sisters, and Protestant ministers, and with local social agencies, to familiarize themselves with the community's needs and resources. They also began door-to-door visits.

The visits have been an educational experience for them, the sisters noted. "Some people were very polite," Sister Carol reported, but others were not.

The sisters noted that they expect that being sisters will help them to get the trust of those they want to help.

Sister Carol noted that visiting the poor will "be the biggest part" of their work in the county.

Sister Kathleen reported that they "hope to work closely with human development committees" in the parishes. They will be asking the committees for ideas for projects and information concerning community needs, she said, as well as for their assistance in carrying out projects.

Father Cason pointed out that "they're not here to do the work of the human development committees" but to supplement it.

Sister Kathleen noted that they also hope to improve the availability of emergency food and clothing. Some efforts are being made, she noted, but they hope to coordinate them to provide services for the entire county. She emphasized that she and Sister Carol will be trying not to duplicate existing services.

Other responsibilities listed in the job description prepared for the sisters are to educate parishes concerning poverty in their areas; to make themselves personally known to those in need; to be visible in the county's communities.

by attending parish functions; and to make referrals to social agencies.

Sister Carol commented that they will "have to evaluate ourselves" as the year progresses. They plan to keep logs of activities in each parish, and also are recording the results and impressions from meetings with community leaders and social agencies.

During the year, the sisters will be responsible directly to Father Cason, as regional coordinator, but they also will report to the pastors and parish councils sponsoring the project, to the regional Office of Human Development staff, and the Sisters of Mercy Executive Council.

French Visitor Likes Baseball, American Food And Corning Family

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Corning—Skateboarding on Fourth Street in Corning, Jean Luc Labat doesn't look like only a visitor to the United States. Dressed in cut-off blue jeans and a T-shirt, and sporting a Los Angeles Dodgers batting helmet and a scraped knee from falls from the skateboard, only his accent gives away his French nationality.

Jean, a 12-year old from Bordeaux, France, spent the month of July with Joseph A. and Helen Bavisotto and their children Michael and Marie, parishioners of St. Mary's Parish. Mrs. Bavisotto noted that they have enjoyed having Jean, and said that they have become supporters of the exchange program. She encourages other families to open their homes to the French students, noting that "if it's anything like our experience, they'll never forget it."

Mrs. Bavisotto said she was surprised to find that they were the only Corning family participating in the program. Operated in the Rochester diocese by Stephen and Alice Murphy of Webster, the North Atlantic Cultural Exchange League brings French students to the United States each summer.

This is Jean's third trip outside France, he said; he previously spent three weeks in England, and two in Germany. His 11-year old brother also visited the United States this summer, staying with a family in Williamson.

The immersion into English is an important part of the program. Mrs. Bavisotto pointed out adding that Jean's spoken English improved considerably during his stay.



Jean Luc Labat, demonstrates his skateboard technique on the Bavisottos' front walk. Marie Bavisotto is watching the family's French visitor.

Reluctant to speak English when he first came, he became much more confident, she said. He also had difficulty at first with the American accent, and American meanings for words, Jean said, noting that in France they learn English as it is spoken in England.

Talking about his stay in Corning, Jean had some difficulty finding words to describe his experiences, but had less of a problem understanding what others were saying.

Jean reported that he enjoyed his stay in Corning, especially "this family," and the baseball, basketball, swimming and tennis. He became a baseball fan sup-

porting Michael Bavisotto's Little League team during the playoffs, although he had never seen the game played before.

He found the Corning Glass Center "very, very good," he said, and the Rockwell-Corning Museum "very interesting." The latter exhibits art and artifacts from the old American West, material not entirely new to him, he said, as he has seen shows on television about the West.

As for American television, Jean said that he was surprised most when he discovered that the Bavisotto's television has 13 channels, noting that in France there are only three. He also said

that French television doesn't have game shows and that American television also has many more cartoons.

While he has found that American food "is not like French food," Jean said that he likes the food he has had, including that served at McDonalds. He pointed out that breakfast is different in France; at home, he said, he would have milk, coffee, some bread and butter and possibly some pastries.

Jean, who attends a boarding school run by Vincentian fathers 10 miles from his home, reported that he began taking English lessons when he was nine, and also takes Latin. In two years, he will be able to drop Latin and take Spanish instead, but for the future, he plans to continue his study of German, with the goal of becoming a German language teacher.

He liked best his stay in Germany, he said, pronouncing it "a good country" where he "had plenty of friends." He stayed with a family in Alhen, near Dusseldorf.

Mrs. Bavisotto reported that Jean had responded well to the pressure to speak English, pointing out that no one in their family can speak French. She added that language was never really a problem.

Mrs. Bavisotto said that Jean's visit "has been a wonderful experience for all of us." "He's just been so adaptable," she said, adding that he has shown an awareness of the moods of others that she found surprising in a 12-year old.

She also noted that the experience has been good for their children.



Outdoor Mass

A Mass celebrated in a park by Father Thomas Watts, co-pastor of St. Patrick's, Owego, completed the parish's week-long summer religious education program July 21. Ninety-three students participated in the program, reported Sister Miriam Nugent, who coordinated it. Their families were invited to the final Mass and refreshments afterwards.

Cay-Sen Region Meets in Auburn

Auburn—The word parochialism should go out of our vocabulary as parishes look beyond their boundaries, explore their resources and expand their ministries to all people. This is an age of faith in which all are called to strive singly and collectively towards Church. If there is one theme that calls us together, it is that our vision of the Church will expand and grow," said Andrew Malloy, outgoing chairperson of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC). Malloy addressed the Cayuga-Seneca Regional Assembly during a Mass of Thanksgiving, July 8 at St. Alphonsus here.

Gordinier, St. Patrick, Cato; and Father Hubert, OFM, chaplain at Mercy Hospital.

In other regional news three newly elected officers for the assembly will join Barbara Arthur this year. They are John Williams (St. Patrick's, Cato) president; Mary Ann Ginnerty (St. Mary's, Auburn) vice-president; and Maureen Pacitto (St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls) secretary. Mrs. Arthur will return as treasurer.

The next regional assembly is scheduled for October 17 in Seneca Falls.

The special Mass was celebrated by nine priests involved in the region. They are: Fathers Douglas Hoffman, director of the Office of Pastoral Ministry; Elmer Heindl, regional coordinator; Clarence Gardner, St. Alphonsus pastor; John Hayes, St. Patrick, Aurora, St. Michael, Union Springs pastor; Louis Sirianni, Sacred Heart, Auburn; Felix Mazue, St. Hyacinth; Robert Gaudio, St. Alphonsus; William

Gerould's Pharmacies

S. Main St. and
Church & Hoffman
Elmira

Delivery Service
733-6696