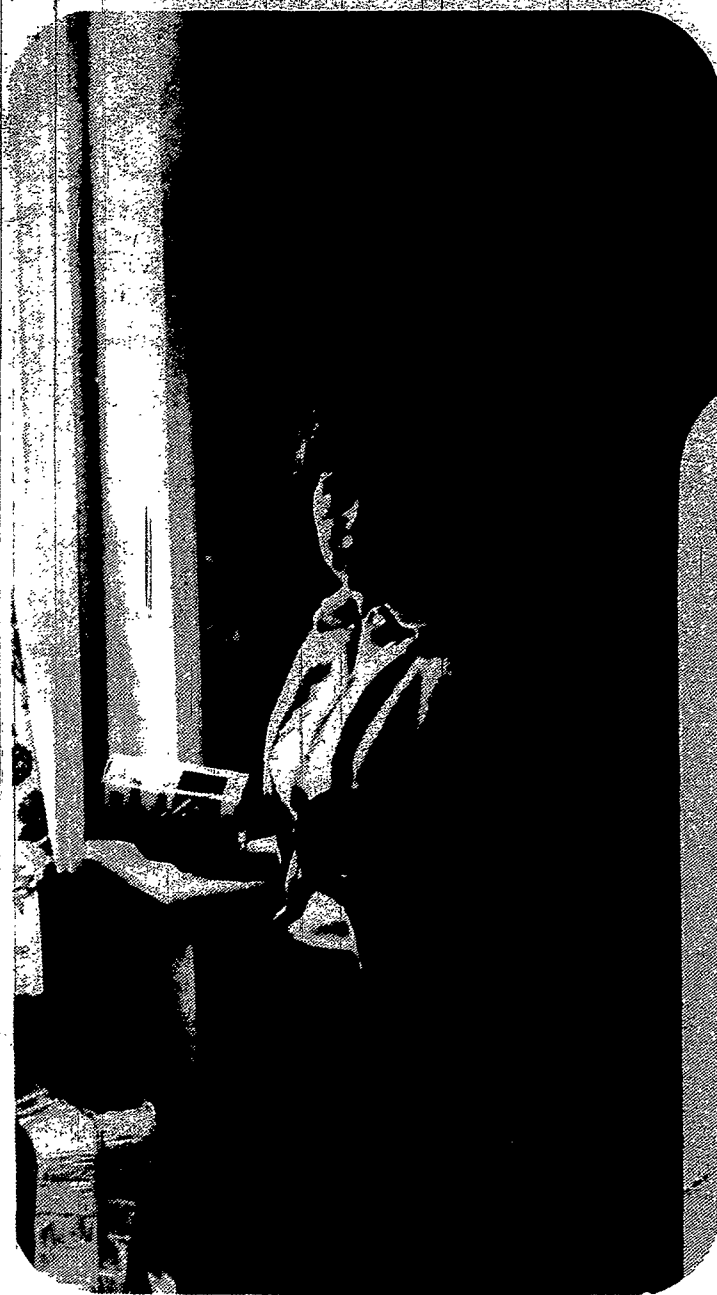




Bethany House; on the porch, Mercy Sisters Mary Alice O'Brien, Karen Kenrick and Kate Vaeth, the latter one of two fulltime staffers; Jean Jesserer, the other fulltimer, and Lee LeCuyer a Catholic Worker visitor from New York City.



Jean Jesserer checks the larder.

Bethany House

'A Service to Women by Women'

Because, in the words of writer Sidney Callahan, "women need to help produce new cooperative strategies, new ways of diocese," some Catholic women in this diocese have instituted Bethany House at 169 St. Bridget's Drive.

Under the sponsorship of the Rochester Catholic Worker, Bethany is for women who seek temporary shelter. Often they are

referred by community agencies and groups, and some come through St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, according to Sister Kate Vaeth and Jean Jesserer who now run Bethany.

Actually the center was begun by Sister Claude who was pastoral assistant at St. Bridget's and Charlotte Williams.

But more women than

those are involved.

"Other Sisters come in to help," said Sister Kate. "But we also get personal support from other women who have stopped to offer their services. And the women helped often become our biggest supporters."

What kind of women are helped? Battered women, women from Rape Crisis, young pregnant women, generally any woman with a problem in need of help.

"We had to establish a maximum stay of 14 days," said Sister Kate, "because women who come here want to live here; they want to stay."

Although such a time limit may be necessary, the staff sometimes extends the period for women in particular need of staying longer.

The center does not exist just for those in financial difficulty. "We also help

people with means," said Sister Kate.

The staff itself, however, receives no salary beyond living allowances.

But Sister Kate and Jean Jesserer think beyond merely physical or material matters.

"We feel prayer is a part of life," Sister Kate said. For that reason the center is planning to offer prayer meetings every Sunday beginning in the fall.

Miss Jesserer, a senior at Nazareth College, said that the center also takes part at discussion meetings held two Fridays each month at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality.

Bethany which tries to avoid "the system" is casual in its approach; as its brochure describes the project, "A service to women by women."

Further information may be obtained by calling Bethany at 454-4197.



Helen Hartter is one of the Bethany House volunteers; her specialty is sewing.



Sister Kate straightening up.



Jean Jesserer, Sister Kate in quiet discussion.



Mercy Sisters Karen Kenrick and Mary Alice O'Brien stop by to help paint.