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51 New Students Added at St. Mary's

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Bath—When school opened at St. Mary's Academy this year, the staff greeted 51 new students.

The new registrations marked a dramatic increase for the school, which last year in nursery through fourth grade, had 68 students. This year, fifth grade was added, and larger enrollments in the early grades resulted in a total of 108 students.

The commitment to add the fifth grade this year and sixth grade next year was the key to the growth, Sister Mary Agnes Zimmer, principal, said, as was an ambitious recruitment project undertaken by the school board last spring.

Previously students had

to go to the public schools after grade four, joining classes that had already spent a year together, sister explained. Many parents were honestly concerned with the effect of that, she said, and were sending their children directly to public school to avoid the disruption. By extending St. Mary's to the sixth grade, she noted, the school's students will be able to move into the junior-high with their new classmates.

The situation hit home immediately after the parish council voted to add the two grades, sister recounted. The next day, a woman visited the school, and commented that she had waited for the vote before registering her five children.

To take advantage of the added grades, the school board conducted an

extensive recruitment campaign last spring. Sister Mary Agnes reported contacting all parents of school-age children in the parish, and adjoining parishes. Both efforts were successful, she noted, pointing out that the school has 26 children representing 13 families who are not parishioners.

Before the parish council acted on the addition of the grades, sister said, a parish poll found that 70 percent of the parishioners favored the action.

Sister said that the success was a "combination of dedicated parents and supportive pastor," noting Father Richard Tormey "has been most supportive" of the school.

A new teacher, Mrs. Clare Crowley, was added

to the staff this year; plans call for another teacher to be added next year with the addition of the sixth grade. The school has only nine fifth graders, with most of the growth having occurred in the first and second grades.

Currently the school has a teacher of nursery and kindergarten, and then self-contained first and second grade classrooms. Two teachers, with the assistance of music and other specialist teachers, work with grades three through five on a departmental basis. Sister Mary Agnes stated that careful scheduling and volunteer mothers who work in the library have enabled them to make the most of the departmentalization.

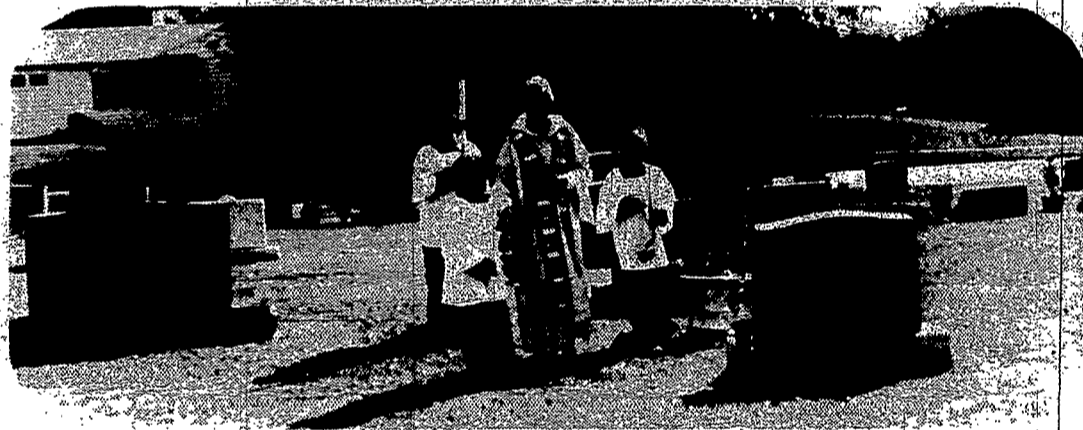
Sister Mary Agnes also commented that the teachers, one sister and four lay, are all per-



Pupils and Mrs. Crowley look over the names of the 51 new pupils on a special welcome board in the hall.

manently certified. New staff member Mrs. Crowley has a bachelor's degree in elementary

education, and a master's degree in guidance and counseling, she pointed out.



A Blessing

Father Michael Conboy, pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in Seneca Falls, blesses the graves in the parish cemetery and dedicates a new section to the Queen of Heaven, in rites Sunday, Sept. 17.



RTL Promotes Ed. Materials Alumni Dinner Scheduled

Auburn — The Cayuga County Right to Life Committee reviewed a film

and discussed an educational program at its most recent meeting.

Retreat Sign-Ups Continue

Corning—Registration is continuing for the Women's Retreat at St. Patrick's Parish Hall, Tuesday, Oct. 10, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with Ms. Rosalie Mushcal-Reinhardt as the retreat leader. Those interested in attending may contact Ann Manning, 936-8351, Lola O'Dell, 962-3401 or Sally Walter, 524-6524. Registration also will be possible at the door.

Members saw "Very Much Alive," a movie suitable for study and discussion by middle school and high school groups. Mary Ann Tefft of the committee's speakers bureau also presented "The Littlest Person," a program on the growth and development of the unborn baby for elementary grade levels.

The committee is making both educational tools available to schools and organizations. Persons interested in either of the programs are asked to contact Mrs. Tefft at 14 Kearney Ave., Auburn.

Hornell—St. Ann's Alumni Association will sponsor their third annual banquet-dinner-dance Oct. 7 at the Ponce deLeon Restaurant, Hornell. Joseph Mattie and James Mooney are co-chairman. This year's event will honor all graduates of the eighth and ninth grades from 1953, and those of the eighth and ninth grades of 1928.

Sister Patricia Flynn, a former St. Ann's sixth grade teacher, will be the main speaker. Toastmaster will be Philip Patti, a St. Ann's alumnus.

Dr. Janet Fox:

Children With Divorced Parents Need Understanding, Stability

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

Horseheads—Within the next few years half of all school children will be living with only one parent, Dr. Janet Foy told the Southern Tier Catholic school teachers at a teachers conference on the children of divorced parents Sept. 29 at St. Mary Our Mother School.

With such large numbers of children affected, it is important that teachers understand the special needs and problems children of divorced and separated parents have, Dr. Foy told the teachers.

Dr. Foy, a therapist with the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries' Pastoral Counseling Service, spoke of the stages children undergo when their parents divorce, and offered suggestions on handling the situation in the classroom.

In an emotion-filled section of the day's program, three divorced mothers spoke, pleading for support from teachers for their children, and for the children of other divorced parents.

The teachers also heard a local lawyer and Sister Kathleen Kircher, diocesan coordinator of ministry to the divorced and separated, who spoke on the Church's attitude toward the divorced.

Dr. Foy noted that teachers have the opportunity to see children grow—and to see them suffer. Today, she said, a major cause of such suffering is parental separation.

Conflict and uncertainty are most troublesome for children, she explained, noting that "in many ways, the pre-separation period is the most unstable for the child."

After the separation the "immediate reaction of the child," she said, "is intense feelings of stress and anxiety." Then a child often will try to "reconcile the parents," and "reverse the loss." This period also includes guilt feelings, as the "child very often feels responsible" for the separation, feeling that they have committed "some naughtiness (which) caused the marriage to break up."

A study of the effects of divorce on children revealed that "most children have recovered fully within a year" of the separation, Dr. Foy said, adding that "some of the children were seen to have benefited from the separation and divorce," probably resulting from increased stability in the home.

There are five stages that most children pass through following a divorce, she said. The first is a stage of denial, when the child will deny that the situation exists. The next is the anger stage, when "a child comes to realize in fact that a loss has occurred," and usually lashes out at those around him or her, "overt hostility" can be observed during this period, she said.

During the third stage, the bargaining stage, the child tries to solve the problem by being perfect, believing that if they do everything correctly their parents will get back

together. When this doesn't work, they move to a period of depression, and "in effect, enter a true mourning stage." At this point, Dr. Foy said, the "child is moving toward a final acceptance of the situation."

Acceptance is the last stage, when the child realizes that the new way of living is permanent, and accepts his or her new role in the now-divided family.

As with every model, Dr. Foy said, "there are exceptions," and children often will not proceed through the steps in order, and sometimes "jump back to an earlier stage."

Something for teachers to remember, Dr. Foy pointed out, is that research has determined that "children from two-parent homes are not psychologically more healthy than children from one-parent homes."

The critical element for the child is a stable home with little conflict, she said, and this is often true of one-parent homes.

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