



COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

24 Pages

Wednesday, November 8, 1978

OUR 96th YEAR

20 Cents



John Paul II: Two Facets

At left, Pope John Paul II caresses a baby as he walks past a crowd gathered to welcome him at the papal residence at Castelgandolfo, south of Rome. More than 5,000 cheered him as he arrived at the town and typically reached out to the crowd. A shopkeeper said, "It's

extraordinary. We haven't seen anything like this since Pope John XXIII." At right, the new pope kneels in prayer at La Mentorella, a tiny mountaintop church maintained by a Polish religious order about 20 miles east of Rome. He flew to the spot by helicopter. (RNS)

Busy Agenda Awaits Bishops

From National Catholic Office for Information

Washington -- A pastoral on the handicapped, a statement on the Middle East, proposals to extend the occasions for the reception of the Eucharist under both kinds to Sunday and to widen the possibilities of receiving Communion more than once a day, a proposed annual collection for diocesan and national use of media, and the subject of church-state relations will be on the agenda at the fall general meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference.

More than 250 bishops from throughout the country will attend the meeting Nov. 13-16 here.

The proposed pastoral letter on the handicapped was prepared by the USCC Office of Domestic Social Development working in conjunction with the USCC Advisory Committee on Handicapped Individuals. It calls for an attitude of understanding and love and affirms the

Church's commitment to welcome handicapped people into full participation in the Christian community.

The Middle East statement is being prepared by a committee headed by Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati. It is to take into account developments since 1973 when the bishops took note of the legitimate claims of all parties in the Mideast dispute, including both Israel and Palestinian Arabs.

The liturgical proposals concerning Holy Communion were prepared by the bishops committee on the liturgy. This committee also is proposing use of the Apostles' Creed as an optional alternative to the Nicene Creed in Masses celebrated with the people. The Nicene Creed involved difficult theological statements while the Apostles' Creed is generally considered to assert the faith more simply. If approved, the proposal would require subsequent confirmation by the Holy See.

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CHAPTER:

By JOHN DASH

For the first time in their history, the three major groups of religious women in the diocese are holding their chapters concurrently.

Chapter, according to Sister Noreen Graney, RSM, aims to inspire attitudes and values among religious women and to legislate congregational policy.

Sister Mary Louis Whalen, SSND, reported that the School Sisters of Notre Dame of the Wilton, Conn., province are conducting an on-going chapter which will next meet Dec. 8-10. The province numbers about 695 religious women, of whom about 40 are working in the Diocese of Rochester.

Sister Mary Louis is one of the three delegates from this area to the provincial gathering.

Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley, SSJ, said that the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph will open its chapter on Nov. 18. The congregation numbers 660 members.

Sister Noreen noted that on Saturday it was decided to open the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester chapter on March 2.

Three Sisters' Groups To Meet Concurrently

There are about 310 Sisters of Mercy in the diocese.

Both Sister Elizabeth Anne and Sister Mary Louis said that the sessions this year for their respective congregations will be concerned with their governmental structures. Sister Mary Louis said the December gathering will work on "updating the provincial directory on government." She explained

that since hers is an international group, such a process, on the international level, has already occurred, "but the provinces are somewhat autonomous," and it is the provincial chapter's current task to provide a further explanation of the sisters' rule.

Sister Elizabeth Anne said that the November sessions of her congregation's chapter will "evaluate the central

government structures." A spring session, she said, will tackle the question of future directions for the sisters, and congregational priorities.

The Sisters of Mercy, Sister Noreen said, will examine the constitution of the group.

Both she and Sister Elizabeth Anne observe a

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Sisters Elizabeth Anne, Noreen and Mary Louis.

Photo by Terrance J. Brennan