

Confirmation Class Busy With Christmas Project

Some 90 teenagers, all eighth graders, who are candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Thomas the Apostle next spring, were busy last week sharing the peace and joy of Christmas throughout the West Irondequoit community.

The pupils visited 3,500 families, parishioners and others, leaving at each home a 13-page pamphlet, "What Everyone Should Know about Christmas," the pamphlet was donated by the parish Altar and Rosary Society.

It includes such topics as What Is Christmas?; Christmas — a Holy Day; Christmas, a Holiday; The First Christmas; Palestine, Land of Christ's Birth; Exactly When Was Christ Born?; The Star of Bethlehem; The People in the Christmas Story.

Father Daniel Holland, in preparing the pupils for the project, told them, "Nearly a billion people in the world will celebrate the birth of Christ with joyful prayer and thanksgiving. The birth of Christ reminds us of our own rebirth in Baptism, and our desire to live our own lives in a Christlike way. A



Father Holland with three of the 90 youngsters planning to receive Confirmation in the spring. From left, Kevin Curran, Linda Spindler, Sharon Ferriter.

Christian's Christmas list includes the reminder to help those in need; to remember the true spirit of giving; to give oneself — in loving concern for others."

In addition, the pupils have been actively involved since October in various other service projects, coordinated by the parish Human Development Committee — at Lakeshore Nursing Home, nursery babysitting, and a monthly food project which involves the

year-round collection of food for the poor each Sunday from parishioners. Another project, already completed, was participation in packing clothes by the parish in the diocesan Thanksgiving clothing drive.

Coordinating the projects have been Sharon Weber, Tim Voigt, Cindy Iapaola, Maureen Farrell, Jenny Herzog, Sandy Schoepfel, Joe Ventura, Darlene Merzke and Liz Tarzia.

Do Not Convert Jews In Dialogue

New York (RNS) — The Diocese of Brooklyn will publish new guidelines for interreligious relations which emphasize that "efforts to convert Jews to Christianity, whether overt or subtle, or the implication that Judaism is an 'incomplete faith' are unacceptable for dialogue."

In addition to Catholic-Jewish relations, the guidelines also encourage better understanding of the Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu faiths.

The guidelines will be published in connection with the twin celebration in St. Andrew Avellino Church here, of the 10th anniversary of Bishop Francis J. Mugavero as head of the diocese and the 10th year of the Queens County Catholic-Jewish Relations Council.

The guidelines update directives on Catholic-Jewish relations published in 1968, with sections added for the first time on relations with other non-Christian religions.

The directives state that "in certain instances the faith of Islam has been a victim of oversimplification and even inaccurate caricature." The guidelines mention belief in a monotheistic God, identification with the Prophet Abraham and reverence for Jesus and Mary as points of Islamic convergence, with Christianity.

Noting the significant presence of Asians in the Brooklyn area, the guidelines lament that dialogue with Buddhists and Hindus is "still in its infancy" and encourages more contact to increase understanding.

Rochesterian Faces Big Mat Test

A press release from Bucknell reveals that Rochesterian Rick Salamone, now a junior at that Pennsylvania university, has an ultra-important wrestling match on Dec. 22.

Salamone, a graduate of McQuaid, has been chosen to represent the East in the Amateur Athletic Union East-West meet in Phoenix, Ariz. He is facing Billy Rosado, a member of the U.S. Olympic team, in the 105.5 pound class.

Salamone has placed third in the AAUs in each of the last two years and last year won the 105.5 championship in the U.S. Wrestling Federation championships.

Salamone has never beaten Rosado. "It was 14-10 last time," Salamone recalls, "I've done better each time I've faced him. I'm hoping I can catch up to him."

Bishops Vote Eucharist Change, Institute Media Collection

Absentee voters in the National Conference of Catholic Bishops have supplied the weight needed to carry two proposals that narrowly missed passage at the bishops' November meeting. One permits a liturgical change. The other institutes a national collection for media use in evangelization.

Bishops Start Group To Dialogue With Ordination Advocates

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — The president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) has mandated a bishops' committee "to assume responsibility for dialogue with those advocating ordination for women" to the Roman Catholic priesthood.

But Archbishop John R. Quinn explained to the NCCB's Committee for Women in Society and the Church that "the purpose is not to question the Church's teaching (banning female ordination) but to examine the large issue of women's role in ministry."

In a letter to the nation's bishops announcing followups to their November national meeting, Archbishop Quinn also announced the formation of two special committees to examine NCCB organizational questions.

Archbishop Quinn's qualified reply was the first official response by the bishops to many American Catholics who have been asking the bishops to study the question of women's ordination despite a 1977

declaration by the Vatican reaffirming the Catholic Church's traditional ban on female priests.

At their November meeting, several prelates, while not questioning the Church's present position, urged dialogue on the question.

Accordingly, it will be possible for the ordinary of a diocese and the pastor concerned to allow the reception of Holy Communion under both species at Sunday Mass. This privilege has been reserved for special occasions since it was introduced in 1970. Mail ballots for the Sunday extension brought the total affirmative vote to 187,

one more than the number needed. The negative vote was 82. The mail poll was taken among the 31 bishops who did not attend the Washington, D.C. meeting last month.

When the communications proposal was rejected at that meeting, for the second consecutive year, it was said that there was little likelihood of a reversal. There are 279 bishops eligible in general to vote, but on fiscal matters voting is limited to heads of dioceses. The vote was 115-50, with 113 votes needed.

The first collection will be taken next spring, and it is anticipated that it could amount to \$7 million, according to the announcement from the United States Catholic Conference, the bishops' action arm. Half of the money will be administered through that agency, the other half by the dioceses. Local and national television and radio programs are envisioned, as well as subsidies to diocesan newspapers.

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph R. Crowley of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Ind., headed the USCC committee that handled the proposal. He is quoted in the release as calling its acceptance "a step in the right direction."

"I see the bishops' approval of the collection as basically a response to the people's request that we use the media creatively and constructively, and their generosity can be counted on," Bishop-Crowley said.

"But this development will put to the test as never before the depth of commitment and the degree of skill of Catholic communicators. I am certain they will rise to the occasion."

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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

"Favorite Things"
By Ed Sulewski

Each of us has a wealth of warm and beautiful memories we associate with the Christmas Season . . . our own "favorite things." Delicious warm smells from the kitchen . . . the fun of surprising those we love . . . mistletoe . . . holly . . . caroling . . . colored lights and all the dozens of special feelings we enjoy so much this time of year.

The beauty and warmth of the season can be even more meaningful to us if we share it with someone who may very much need our love and friendship. If someone you know recently lost a loved one, the Christmas season will be especially difficult for them. The rest of the world glows with a special warmth — at a time they feel they have lost much of their love for life and hope for the future. Your concern — and sharing of the season — can help them find renewed faith in life.

Sharing, giving, loving — these are a few of our "favorite things," and we wish them for you now . . . and during the coming year.

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