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'Superstar' Marks Celebrate Life's 10 Years

By MARTIN TOOMBS
Southern Tier Editor

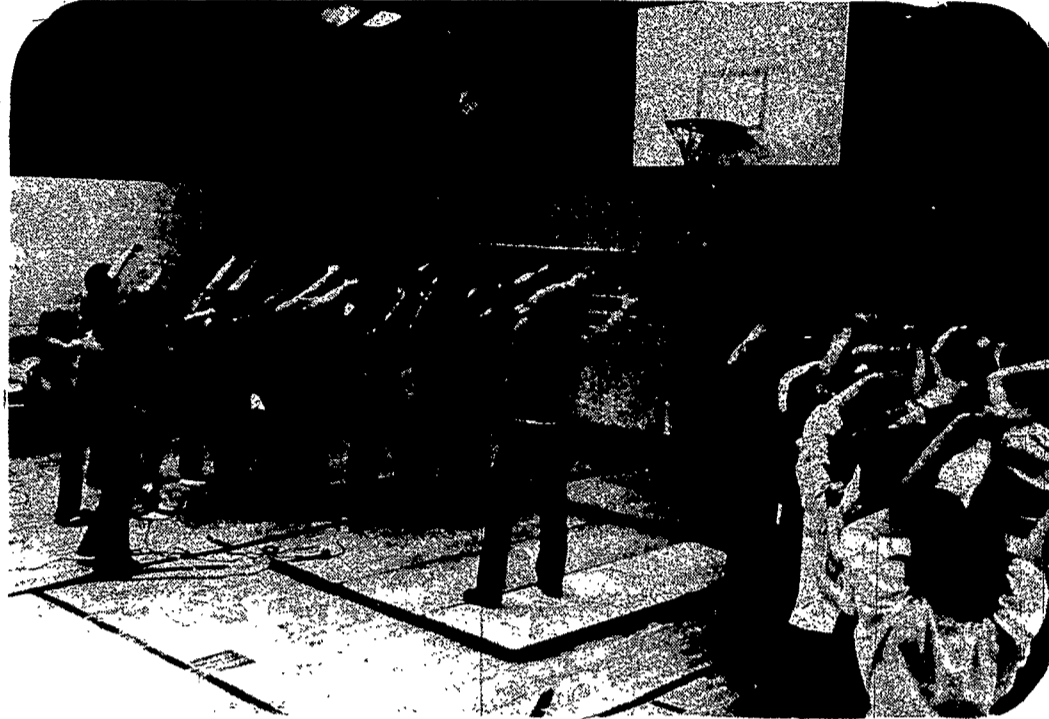
Horseheads—An awareness of their age, and a view of their own teenage years are two results reported by the former members of Celebrate Life who have returned for the singing group's new production of "Jesus Christ, Superstar."

The performance will mark the St. Mary Our Mother Parish's singing group's tenth anniversary, and will feature some members of the original group. Most of the former members are playing the same roles they did in the group's last "Superstar" in 1975.

During the past 10 years, Celebrate Life has performed throughout the Southern Tier and in other states. They are known especially for their visits to nursing homes and other institutions, and for their productions of "Godspell" and "Superstar."

Those returning include at least two married couples who met while group members. One couple, Debbie and Mark Seburu, now live in Arkport, and have traveled to Horseheads for the group's weekend practices preparing for the show.

Interviewed before a



Ray Defendorf, Celebrate Life director, putting the cast of the group's upcoming "Jesus Christ, Superstar" performance through its paces at a rehearsal recently in the St. Mary Our Mother gym.

rehearsal, Seburu commented that "its a pain driving down here" for the practices, but "its just a good feeling to be back." During the week, he noted, he has been looking forward to the practices.

Mrs. Seburu noted that she "forgot how much I enjoyed" working on the shows, and working with their friends. She noted that when it's over, they'll probably wish it wasn't.

Seburu, one of the original members in 1969, has returned to his role as Caiaphas; his wife will be playing an apostle. She was active in the group from 1971-75.

As a result of a not-too-unusual problem, a shortage of males, several male roles are being played by females.

Rob Lowe, returning to his role as Judas, noted

that "the novelty is back" and "I'm enjoying" the work on the new production "very much." After being away from music, he noted, he's found that "the bug is still inside you." Lowe, a member from 1969-75, also noted that the practices have been "almost like a class reunion."

Dale Allen will repeat his performance as Jesus, and his wife of five

months, Mary Anne, will be playing an apostle.

Among the other returnees is Diane Schurr, a freshmen at Bucknell University, who belonged to the group throughout high school. She also is playing an apostle.

Lowe noted that working with the teenagers now in the group has made him feel "much, much older." Seburu said, with some wonder, that at 26, he is now as old as the group's director, Ray Defendorf, was when he founded the group.

After watching the current members, "you wonder if you were ever that carefree and giggly," Mrs. Seburu said.

Ms. Schurr remembered "good retreats and prayer meetings" as being more important in past years, and commented that the group's work on "Superstar" could cause a return to that. She recalled that "being a religious play," "Superstar" was meaningful for her.

Other members recalled being affected by the musical itself. Allen stated that "at this point, four years later," working with "Superstar" is not as moving as it was the first time. He noted that during the first production, he did spend time considering the meaning of the play.

Seburu noted that the "excitement is still there," but that he has found this effort with the play less moving than his first experience. His wife disagreed, saying that she felt a greater emotional effect this time.

The reunion for the "alumni" also gave them the opportunity to recall their years in "CL," as they call it. Mrs. Seburu said that it was "nothing to do three shows a week," when she was a member, and she also remembered the difficulty of getting out of the house for all those shows. "That seems so long ago," she said, "asking permission" to go to the shows.

They also recalled a show at a summer camp, when someone put a snake in a guitar case; and one outdoor show when the audience peppered them with cherries.

The returnees also reported that they have enjoyed working with the current group members, pointing toward the Sunday, Feb. 11, performances at the Clemens Performing Arts Center in Elmira. Shows will be at 3 and 8 p.m. Adult tickets are \$4; tickets for students and gold card holders are \$3, and are available from Celebrate Life members or the Clemens Center box office.

Sisters Continue Service As Visitors

By MARTIN TOOMBS
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Their ministry may not be widely known, but two sisters in the Southern Tier who have completed careers of service have continued working past the usual retirement age.

The two nuns, Sister Cornelia, a Sister of Mercy, and Sister Rose Eileen, a Sister of St. Joseph, are now working as parish visitors, visiting the homes of shut-ins, praying with them, and taking them the Eucharist.

Sister Cornelia is in her second year at St. Patrick's, Owego, where she visits shut-ins and

recent hospital patients in the village by walking from home to home.

Sister Rose Eileen has been at St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, for four years, and she visits about 50 persons regularly, being taken to their homes by volunteers.

Sister Cornelia came to St. Patrick's after 27 years as a nurse at St. James Mercy Hospital in Hornell. She also spent a year working in the motherhouse infirmary, and five years at St. Mary's House of Prayer in Corning.

Sister Rose Eileen began her work at Corpus Christi

School, Rochester. After two years there, she spent 23 years teaching at Nazareth Academy, and then 21 years at DeSales High School in Geneva. She also spent two years at her order's prayer center near Highland Hospital in Rochester before moving to Horseheads.

Sister Cornelia's activities have been restricted lately; she was injured in an automobile accident Jan. 7, and suffered a broken bone in her leg, and broken ribs. Speaking of the accident three weeks later, she made light of her injuries, saying that she was thankful that she was the only one injured.

She visits St. Patrick's shut-ins, and also is involved in her order's apostolic ministry, a ministry of prayer, Sister Cornelia explained. She receives room and board from the parish for her work.

She doesn't get to the hospitals often, she noted. There is no hospital in Owego, meaning that the parish routinely has members in six area hospitals. She does try to visit persons when they return from hospital stays, she noted.

The persons she visits are important, she noted, commenting that "sometimes they can teach

us a lesson" as they are "so kind and patient."

She also pointed out that the Mass broadcast by a local radio station from St. Patrick's Church every Sunday is a special event for the persons she visits.

Both sisters report that the Eucharistic portion of their ministry has been well received by the shut-ins.

Sister Rose Eileen emphasized the assistance she gets in her ministry from the volunteer drivers who take her around the sprawling St. Mary Our Mother Parish.

She visits "many elderly people who are just waiting for someone to come in and talk with them," she explained.

"I get much from" the persons she visits, sister said, "because of the way they are accepting the crosses" that God "has allowed to come into their lives." When you see them "accepting without complaints" their situations, she said, she wonders if she ever can complain.

She usually visits about seven people each day, she noted, and she also has gotten involved in other duties. Currently, she is instructing a woman who wants to become a Catholic.

Schools Week Being Observed

Elmira—The Chemung County General Education Board began its observance of Catholic School Week last Sunday with a Family Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Anthony's Church.

Activities are continuing this week in the schools.

At St. Mary's School, Sister Marilyn Reeves, principal, will be conducting prayer services in each grade during the week. Tonight, Wednesday, Feb. 8, a Salute to Disney will be presented by the students at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium. The musical tribute is being directed by Geraldine Schultz.

School, classroom activities stressing the awareness of the value of Catholic education are underway. There also will be a book exchange for the students, to stress sharing and growth, and an open house today.

St. Casimir's students had a McDonald's Day lunch today as part of their celebration. St. Casimir's teachers will be participating in a prayer service at which they will rededicate themselves to Catholic education. On Thursday, Feb. 8, there will be an open house during the day. The students also are scheduled to compete in a snow sculpture contest.



Children's Mass

Children of St. Patrick's Parish, Corning, gather around Father Andrew Teuschel and offer their intentions for the Prayer of the Faithful at a special children's Mass Jan. 28. Mary Lu Walker lead the congregation in singing some of her original songs as part of the special event.

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