

Legion Takes on New Ministry

By JOHN DASH

It is quite simply a quiet, gentle sort of ministry. There is nothing fancy or overtly noble or ostentatiously charitable to their work.

The small band of members of the Legion of Mary gather at the Orleans building of the Rochester Psychiatric Center every Tuesday evening. They sign in, climb the stairs to the third floor, and gather the elderly patients around for recitation of the rosary, the singing of a few songs, and as happened last week, the celebration of a birthday.

They dedicate their work to Our Lady of Consolation.

This particular band was started a little more than a



year ago by Bill Hunt, an English-born legionnaire who works for Xerox Corp.

Hunt was given a year's

leave from Xerox for community work, and he opted to spend his leave at the psychiatric facility on South Avenue.

During his sojourn there he saw the needs that could be met by establishing a praesidium of the Legion of Mary; and establish it he did, on Dec. 4, 1977.

In a report published earlier this year, Hunt acknowledges that the facility could use between a dozen and 15 more praesidia.

Such an apostolate isn't for everyone, as both Hunt and Father Thomas Hctor, the institution's chaplain, assert.

Hunt says, "It requires legionnaires with patience, a gentleness, a sense of

humor. The patients are sensitive to irritability, putting on airs and graces, aggressiveness, indifference to them — noisy, busy people."

And it requires courage. Father Hctor says, "The hardest thing is to get people to turn left off South Avenue."

The close of last Tuesday's meeting was special. Once the rosary was recited and the singing done, the little gathering feted "Mollie" on her 102nd birthday. Mollie was dressed in brilliant fuchsia colored dress, looking spry and alert, enjoying every minute of the cake-cutting ceremonies.

Mollie has been a resident at the center for nearly 32 years.

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All in the Family

By Sarah Child

Burying One's Head In Basement

We have an electric typewriter. Most of the time I enjoy having the use of it. But not now.

It hums. When the mind is working properly letting the words flow through the fingers and

on to the paper I do not hear the hum. But when the upper region stagnates as it seems to be doing on this particular afternoon, the hum is so loud as to irritate the ears. I have been listening to it for the past 15 minutes. If I shut it off, I am conceding defeat. If I leave it on there is always the chance that one of the ideas that have been crisscrossing will take form and present me with two pages of double spaced copy.

I have escaped to the basement away from the television, the stereo and the bickering of the two older children. They have walked in at 3 p.m. and I can hear the arguing before they make it all the way in the door.

Their father, at least three different so-called experts and a friend whose children are now in their late teens, all tell me it is a stage. Dear God, please let it be a stage.

I also enjoy the basement because it does not afford a view of the new house that the workmen are putting up in the bitterest weather directly behind us.

For six and a half years we have lived here enjoying the little woods and fields beyond with no curtains at the back of the house. I dislike curtains and the need for them, preferring to let as much sunshine and light in as possible, particularly during winter months. From the openings now being defined in the still very rough structure

behind us there is the distinct feeling that the newcomers will have full visual access to our glass doors and vice versa.

Upstairs, it is strangely quiet. The TV has been turned down so I can't hear it, the stereo shut off. They are doing their homework. It seems to be true, as another friend has suggested, that my presence seems to bring out the worst in them. I must remember to escape more often but some place other than the cellar.

We had a "finished" basement once, but nobody used it so there is no move afoot to convert the present cinder blocks to something less grim.

Actually it is a perfect place to write. The view (bicycles, screen doors, cobwebs and assorted junk which should have been thrown out three years ago) is enough to make one keep one's nose to the machine.

Somebody opens the door to the stairs and the dog comes racing down to check on me. I give her a perfunctory pat and go back to the work at hand.

It is now even quieter up above. I pull the paper out and turn off the light, careful to switch off the typewriter as well.

The family room-kitchen is deserted but there is plenty of evidence around. Cookie crumbs, empty tuna fish can, cereal bowls abound. There is a rule limiting after school snacks to fruit and or crackers. It is not always enforceable.

From the window over the sink I can see that the workmen have gone home and I try to figure out the cost of lining the ridge with full size evergreens. Well maybe honeysuckle bushes,

From a bedroom a trumpet sounds, then a rock station joins the fracas. The scene of activity has shifted. The youngest appears from nowhere to practice piano.

It is time to return to the basement.



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