

# Middle East Trip Opens Hearts of Area Women

By JOHN DASH

Fifteen area women went to the Middle East recently and came back with "an overload into the computer," as Sister Kathleen Kircher describes it.

The women, members of the Women's Interfaith Coalition, were led on the trip by Sister Kathleen, diocesan director of ministry to the divorced and separated, and by Helen M. Cohen, director of community relations for the Jewish Community Federation of Rochester.

The object of their visit was to "express their commitment to peace and justice for all peoples of the area," the group said in a press statement.

With that, the women also, "wanted to learn more about the lives of the people in these countries and to exchange views about the roles that women can play in bringing about shared goals."

Interviewed last week in Ms. Cohen's Main Street offices, beneath a picture of Golda Meir emblazoned with the caption, "But can she type?" the leaders and Ruth Hauser, a member of the tour, each told of changes that have occurred in her thinking as a result of the journey.

Sister Kathleen is still "pondering the impact" the visit made on her. "There is a filtering and settling process that needs to be honored," she said.

She has, however, come

to the view that there "must be Palestinian participation in the future governmental structures" of Israel.

"You shock me," Ms. Cohen interjected, realizing that, with some reservations, she too shared that view.

"The politics of the area," she said, "has created a dilemma; but now it is time to forget the past and to solve problems for five to fifteen years from now."

Sister Kathleen said that "the cry of the Palestinians to 'go back' is unrealistic," however. "My fear is that we create energy and anxiety," to force just such an issue.

Ms. Hauser summed up the sentiment by saying, "We all have an emotional and a Faith interest in the preservation of the State of Israel."

Throughout their tour, the women were disheartened to see the amount of money being spent on military procurement at the expense of the human development programs they see as necessary for the future of the area.

But "it was encouraging to see women's interfaith groups working to alleviate this for future generations," Sister Kathleen said.

In addition, Ms. Cohen said, "it is because of Israeli influence, that Arabic women are able to see a different kind of work for women." She described the

status of women in Arabic countries, and their cultural limitations as far less than those in Israel.

The technological differences between the Arabic countries and Israel also drew the women's attention. Ms. Cohen singled out living conditions in Egypt and Israel and said that "Israel has the technology, which she is willing to share, to help Egypt." She also said that Israel is at present giving Egypt this technological help "but through a third party."

She cited what she called an old saying, "Egypt must eat, Israel must sleep."

"Egypt has the lowest standard of living in all of Africa," she said.

The journey of the 15 women, however, was more than a survey of politics, conflict and technological advance. It was, above all, a spiritual experience.

This aspect was summed up in an anecdote Sister Kathleen told.

The women were on a bus in Jordan. Sister Kathleen, wearing a small cross, was seated next to a Jordanian woman. The woman turned to her and asked "Do you like Jews?" Sister Kathleen was startled and not a little afraid. "I'm trying to learn how to be a Christian. I'm trying to learn how to love everyone," Sister replied. As the Jordanian woman disembarked, she turned to Sister Kathleen and whispered, "I too am trying to be a Christian."

# Migrant Plight Discussed on March 2

In an effort to "regenerate attention" to the plight of today's migrant farmers a number of local church and social service groups, including the Office of Human Development for the diocese, have formed the Rochester Farmworkers' Rights Organization.

The group, according to Timothy McGowan of OHD's political ministry, will try to help the migrant workers in the diocese as well as keep the public informed of events dealing with the workers throughout the nation.

They hope to form a lobby group to work towards having legislation passed that will help the migrant workers (such as trying to raise the state's minimum wage) and to develop an emergency fund aimed at helping farm workers needing assistance.

As part of the consciousness-raising effort the Farmworker's Rights Organization will sponsor a talk by Serita Rios, a senior organizer of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) an organization currently involved in a dispute with the tomato industry in Ohio.

According to the Farmworkers' Rights Group newsletter, she "will recount, with the use of slides, last year's strike in the Ohio tomato fields. He will discuss continuation of the strike this summer and the national boycott that FLOC has launched against the two major tomato processors,

Campbell's and Libby-McNeil-Libby."

The discussion will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 2 at the Catholic Worker Office, 402 South Ave. The Farmworkers' group invites all interested persons.

## Election

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph will start the election process for Central Administration officers on March 1. The actual election will take place on April 1.

## Deadline!

Deadline for news copy for the Courier-Journal is noon Thursday, the week before the Wednesday publication date.

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## THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

### "Decisions To Make"

By Ed Sulewski

If you are the wife of a farmer or rancher, and your husband dies unexpectedly, many immediate responsibilities - planting, harvesting, buying and selling - may be familiar to you. With some help from friends and neighbors, these functions will probably not present any great problem.

Never-the-less, you will be faced with a number of decisions that have little to do with the everyday running of the farm or ranch. Will you have to pay estate taxes? Will the mortgage insurance retire the debt? Will you continue to operate the farm - and hire someone to help maintain it? Will you rent the land or a part of it?

These questions, and many others, are much more easily dealt with while both partners are living. Taking the time to plan together for future security can make the decisions and responsibilities at the time of death much easier. One part of planning ahead you may wish to consider is funeral pre-arrangement. If you have questions concerning this possibility, we would be glad to visit with you.

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# Mercy Chapter to Open

The diocesan Sisters of Mercy will open their 1979 Chapter with a retreat for the congregation on the weekend of March 2 at the motherhouse.

The retreat will be given by a team, Sister Emily George, RSM, former provincial of the Detroit province of the Sisters of Mercy, and Father Robert Vogelwede, SJ, vocation director and member of the formation team of the Detroit province of the Society of Jesus.

The theme of the retreat is "The Call to Religious Consecration." The Chapter will focus on spiritual renewal within the framework of the vowed life and in the context of ministerial commitment.

Subsequent Chapter sessions will be held in May, August, October and December.

Sister Mary Judith Heberle, superior general of the local congregation, said, "The transfiguring, transforming nature of our four vows - celibacy, poverty, obedience and service - and the vows' relation to the world, Church and our bonds with one another in community will be the basis of Chapter deliberations."

In addition to the 35 delegates and five alternates the elected Chapter comprises the entire congregation will be involved, at different levels, in the deliberations. This aspect is considered

unique among Chapter structures.

It is also planned that persons outside the congregation will participate in the work of the Chapter.

"It is our hope," Sister Judith said, "that our Chapter will be, in the words of Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, 'a religious experience... an event that is not only for ourselves, but for the Church and the world.'" Cardinal Pironio is the curial chief of religion.

The Chapter steering committee includes Sisters Mary Judith, Mary Ann Binsack, Mary Noreen Graney, Mary Walter Hickey, Anne Marie Lennon, Barbara Moore and Mary Sullivan.

# Hornell to Air Religious Series

Talks by Father John Powell, SJ, "Free to be Me", will be shown twice a week for five weeks on Channel 6 by Hornell Television Services. Scheduled showings are: March 7, 14, 21, 28 and April 4, 7:30 p.m.; March 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6, 10 a.m.

public-cable television for this type of program has been encouraged by the Office of Religious Education as an occasion for adult education.

Transcripts of the talks and study guides for the small-group discussions are available for \$1.50 at St. Ann's Church, 31 Erie Drive, Hornell, N. Y. (607) 324-0410. The

project is being sponsored by St. Ann's Adult Education Committee.

Plans are underway to have this and other series aired by several other cable companies in the diocese. Those in the Rochester area who are interested in having the series carried over Channel 21 should contact the station, 325-7500.

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