



Father Robert Kennedy (seated), looks over liturgical plans for the ordinations of the class of 1978 with Deacons (left to right) Werth, Horan, Celso, Bausch, and Huerter.

# You May Have Seen Father Before



Deacon Celso learns techniques for rescuing infants from choking.

Aside from the fact they're somewhat older, by average, than the usual ordination class at St. Bernard's Seminary, the five men in the class of 1979 share another distinction: for each of them the priesthood is more or less a second calling.

Thomas Celso, for instance, has worked as a sculptor; and for several years could boast that his statue of Camena, on the grounds of Monroe Community College, was the largest such structure in upstate New York.

Deacon Celso will be ordained on March 9. Three things in his life have brought him to this point: a Teen Seminar, an automobile accident "that made me realize how short life really is," and a peculiar deadening of nerves in his hand as a result of sculpting.

He tells of being a "seminary kick-out," explaining that he had attended the minor seminary between 1964 and 1966. The years which intervened between then and his re-entry in 1973 saw him studying and working at MCC and with Wendell Castle at the State University at Brockport.

Following ordination, Father Celso looks forward to "working wherever I'm placed. There's always a need for the priesthood," he said.

The class calls Michael Huerter the "baby of the group." He's 28 years old and a former brakeman with the New York Central Railroad.

"I was the typical John Henry type," he said.

He entered St. Bernard's as a result of being told "Try it, try it, try it," by friends. From his con-

versation, it doesn't seem that his decision to enter was all that difficult — staying at the school was, however. He liked being a brakeman and had to keep telling himself that he would keep at his theological studies "for just one more year."

His conviction that the priesthood was his vocation came gradually, he said. "I was gradually coming to know Christ. I'm not saying a brakeman can't be spiritual; but it's easier when you're reading theology everyday. It's easier than someone who doesn't have the luxury of time to develop the spiritual life."

Like his classmates, after ordination Father Huerter will take whatever assignment comes. "It's up to the Holy Ghost, I'll live with whatever comes," he said.

And yes, he does have a model railroad system.

Michael Bausch is a former personnel manager, and self-admittedly "spoiled" youngest of five boys.

"Seeing the Church in action in crisis was what brought him to the priesthood.

He explained that back in 1970 he took a job with the Boy Scouts of America in Steuben County. When the disastrous flood hit the county some years back and a priest was working to help its victims, "it was like the coming of a savior," he said.

He said he saw the Church serving the needs of the people in a more powerful way than social agencies were able to do "on the psychological and spiritual level." He lauded the work of social agencies, "but the people there needed the Church — that's the message of the Bible," he said.