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# COURIER-JOURNAL

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## Bishop Commissions Chaplaincy Team

By MARTIN TOOMBS  
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — "Any time we have any doubt about Christ's love for us" we should "meditate on the crucifix," Bishop Joseph L. Hogan said in his homily at the Elmira Correctional Facility.

The cross "tells us that God loves us" with "unconditional, absolute" love that is available to everyone, he said.

Bishop Hogan visited the prison and commissioned the facility's chaplaincy team Sunday, Feb. 25. He told the 100 inmates at the Mass that the chaplains, Sister Josepha Toomey, SSJ, Michael Stanley, and Father Daniel Tormey, are "people who will be His healing ministry among you."

Following the homily, Bishop Hogan commissioned the chaplains, after getting verbal acceptance of them from the congregation.

Concelebrating the Mass

with Bishop Hogan were Father Tormey and Father Charles Mulligan, who as Director of Social Ministry, heads the prison chaplains.

The Elmira prison has two sections, the Correctional facility, and the Reception Center. Formally, the two sections had single priest chaplains; now the three chaplains serve both facilities, as well as Camp Monterey in Schuyler County.

The team is setting precedents in state prisons, and not only as a team ministry. Sister Josepha is believed to be the only woman working full-time in a men's facility, and Stanley is believed to be the only Catholic layman to be a full-time chaplain.

In an interview a few days before their commissioning, the team members reported that they feel the new arrangement is working.

Stanley reported that he feels "comfortable as a

layman" in a ministerial position, and has been accepted by the inmates and staff; inmates often address him as "chaplain," he said. He also noted that being married, he might be able to relate better to the problems of the married inmates.

He added that some inmates have asked about working in ministerial roles after they are released; he noted that his example is showing them that "you don't have to be ordained necessarily" to minister to others.

Sister Josepha reported that she has received no lack of respect from the inmates. She noted that often when she passes a group of men, one will whisper "this lady is a sister" to the others.

A daughter of a corrections officer at Auburn prison, Sister Josepha stated that her work among the inmates has been more of a "problem when I first began, and it still is, with some of the officers."



Bishop Hogan blessing the three chaplains at the Elmira Correctional Facility and Reception Center during the commissioning ceremony in the prison chapel. Looking on is Father Charles Mulligan, who, as diocesan Director of Social Ministry, heads the prison chaplains in the diocese.

Some are concerned for her safety, she said; others are not accustomed to seeing a sister in contemporary dress.

Father Tormey, chaplain at the Reception Center for two years before the team's formation, noted that any reluctance to accept the lay chaplains has been because

"people don't yet grasp" the place of lay ministry. What Sister Josepha and Stanley do "is specifically pastoral in nature," he said, and is "a function in the Church that has to be recognized more and more."

"The three of us complement each other very well,"

Stanley noted, commenting that they represent the whole Church: lay, religious and ordained. Sister Josepha noted her agreement.

Stanley reported that he feels the team has "presented a good image of Church in the

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## Labor Organizer:

### Migrants Are 'Miserable'

By MICHAEL GRODEN

Sarita Rios, a Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) member, told a well attended meeting at the St. Joseph's House of Hospitality that the plight of today's migrant farmer in the U.S. hasn't changed much over the years, their lives are miserable.

Low wages, squalid living conditions in the farm camps, and back breaking work keep the average life span of migrants at 49 years. They often suffer from diseases supposedly conquered years ago; tuberculosis, rheumatic fever and others. And, according to Rios, not much has been done about the problem.

"It is hard to believe that in America today there is a group of people forced to live like this, but there is," she said. Rios likened the

plight of the migrant farmer to modern day slavery.

Her presentation was sponsored by the Rochester Farmworkers Rights Organization, a newly formed association made up of local church and social service groups. The Farmworkers' Rights group hopes to make the public more aware of the migrant farmer problem as well as lobby for legislation to help them and to start an emergency fund for the migrants.

Rios spoke on a dispute between the canneries and the migrants in Ohio, a leading producer of processed tomatoes.

Her organization conducted a strike last year in the tomato fields of Ohio and is now conducting a boycott of products from Campbell's and Libby-McNeil-Libby,

A film and slide presentation graphically depicted how the migrants are forced to live. Rios said that little has been done to improve these conditions despite Ohio state legislation that demands it.

She explained that when FLOC began to organize the workers they directed their efforts at the farm owners. However, when they found that only 17 percent of the profits from the tomato crop went to farmers and migrants combined, they turned their attention to the canneries.

What FLOC wants is a "three-way negotiated contract" (farmers, canneries and migrant farm workers) that will guarantee better living conditions and a decent wage.

Rios also urged local efforts to help the migrant

farm workers who come to New York State. She had just returned from a farm camp in Williamson and said the conditions there "were horrible."

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee so far has some 2,000 farm workers and 1,500 former farm workers now active in Ohio. They have also been supported by the local teamsters union, meat cutters union, the West Coast International Longshoremen, and the United Farm Workers of California, headed by Cesar Chavez. The boycott will continue and has shown some signs of success, Rios said, even though the companies have given no official response.

She urged those in attendance to join the boycott of Campbell's and Libby-McNeil-Libby, which is a subsidiary of Nestle corporation.

## Liberation Is Tied to Truth, Pope Stresses

Vatican City (RNS) — Emphasizing the centrality of truth to Catholicism, Pope John Paul said, "liberation" means recognizing social injustice where it exists as well as proclaiming the importance of religion and spiritual transformation.

Addressing his weekly public audience at the Paul VI Hall, the pontiff recalled the Latin American Bishops' Conference, at Puebla, Mexico. During the conference, Latin American prelates and theologians debated "liberation theology," which binds social activism directly to religion and which has often come under attack for being too political. Latin America is regarded as the home of liberation theology.

"Christ Himself," the pope said, "ties liberation to the consciousness of

truth in a special way: 'Seek the truth and it will set you free.' This phrase attests above all to the intimate meaning of the liberty to which Christ frees us.

"Liberty means man's internal transformation, which is the consequence of his knowledge of the truth. Service to the truth as participation in the prophetic service of Christ is a duty of the Church, which seeks its fulfillment in different historical contexts."

"It is necessary," the pontiff said, "to call by name every social injustice, discrimination, violence inflicted by man against the body, the spirit, the conscience or human convictions. Christ teaches a special sensitivity towards man, towards human dignity, towards human life, towards human spirit and body."