

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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600 Attend Chemung-Schuyler Town Meeting

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Elmira — Pastoral ministry and the future of the Catholic schools were two topics discussed at the Chemung-Schuyler Town Meeting at St. Casimir's Jan. 21.

More than 600 persons participated in a Mass preceding the town meeting with Bishop Matthew H. Clark, Father Paul McCabe, regional coordinator, and Father Henry Adamski, host pastor, as principal concelebrants. Also concelebrating were priests from parishes in the region.

In his homily, Bishop Clark said that he would "like to recognize the faith that is here," and noted that the congregation consisted of "persons different from one another" but united in faith.

He reminded those attending that "however frail or sinful we may be, they can be confident the nourishment

they need is available in the Eucharist.

Nearly the entire congregation moved to St. Casimir's auditorium, where many persons asked questions of the bishop and expressed their concerns to him.

In response to a question concerning diocesan support of Catholic schools in the Southern Tier, Bishop Clark noted that he knows that the bulk of funding for the diocesan tuition subsidy program is spent in the Rochester area, and only \$5,000 outside Rochester. He "would like to find a way to increase that sum," he said.

Sister Beatrice Curran of Notre Dame commented on the tuition subsidy program, noting that the subsidy is based on the tuition at each school, which means that a school receives less aid if its tuition is kept low by outside funding efforts. Bishop Clark asked her to detail the problem in writing so he could

examine it further.

And Thomas Santulli, a member of the Chemung County General Education Board which operates the Elmira Catholic schools, noted the problem caused by mandates from the diocesan offices that are not followed up with funding for them.

Bishop Clark responded that it was not the tradition for the diocese to provide broad funding for schools, and that he didn't expect that to change. It is a simple fact, he said, that there "just is not the money" for such aid.

Asked by Robert Graham, a Notre Dame teacher, what the bishop considered to be the future of Catholic education in the country, he noted that people need to keep in mind that most Catholic students are not in Catholic schools, and that their religious education also is his concern.

And the audience applauded when he noted that he is "going to come down in a few weeks and play basketball on a donkey" to benefit the Elmira school system, which, he suggested, shows his support of Catholic schools.

The sharing of information among those present also was a feature of the evening, Bishop Clark said, and was no more evident than in an instance when a man expressed the pain he was feeling due to his recent separation from his wife. A member of the Elmira Divorced and Separated Group, Katherine Rampulla, responded to him, offering the group's support and help, and invited him to the group's activities.

Bishop Clark recounted he



The principal concelebrants for the Mass preceding the Chemung-Schuyler Regional Town Meeting were, from left, Father Paul McCabe, regional coordinator, Bishop Clark, and Father Henry Adamski, host pastor. Leading the singing was Paul Holland.

had met with several persons from the diocese working in the divorced and separated ministry and told Mrs. Rampulla that "you have a great salesman in myself." At the meeting, he said, the people "spoke of what their faith meant to them in their circumstances." It is important, he noted, to support those "going through the agony of a ruptured marriage."

Another topic was pastoral ministry. Sally Ryan of St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads, noted her role as an

extraordinary minister, and the value that has been to herself and to those to whom she takes the Eucharist. Pointing out that "we are all priests to one another," she noted that in some parishes lay ministers of the Eucharist are not allowed by priests "who feel threatened" by them.

Ray Defendorf of the same parish noted that the shortage of vocations has meant that there aren't enough priests to do all the work, noting especially the need for youth ministry. People "expect our

priests to fill the gaps and they just can't do that anymore," he said.

Bishop Clark responded that he sees it as part of his job to encourage various ministries, and he noted that "ministries that flower in the Church" come from Baptism. He said "for the record" that he "would like all ministries we have in the Church to be exercised by all persons" qualified to do so, and, specifically, he said, women "should not be barred" from such ministries.



Bishop Clark, speaking to the packed house in St. Casimir's auditorium for the Chemung-Schuyler Town Meeting.

Religious Ed Program Successful in Tioga Parishes

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Newark Valley — An unusual scheduling procedure and the use of local priests as instructors for an adult religious education program in Tioga County this month has been termed a success by its organizers.

The three-location, three-teacher program, titled "The Sacraments for Today's Catholic Family," involved those teaching the classes moving among the three sites.

Three parishes, St. John the Evangelist, Newark Valley, St. Patrick's, Owego and St. Margaret Mary, Apalachin, and three priests, Father Eugene Weis, Father Albert Cason and Father Elmer Schmidt were involved in the program.

The three priests each prepared a talk on a group of sacraments, and then delivered it at a parish on consecutive Thursdays.

The program was organized by Anne and John Daly, St. John the Evangelist parishioners, who are the



Father Albert Cason speaking at the Newark Valley session of the Tioga County Religious Education program Jan. 17.

Tompkins-Tioga Regional religious education field representatives, a post to which they were named by the diocesan Religious Education Department.

John Daly noted that the program was "a new approach for us in this area," and he has

been "very encouraged" by the cooperation of the priests involved and the support the program received.

The Dalys explained that the program grew from a full-day program in the region last spring, and the interest of several persons, primarily religious education teachers,

for more educational opportunities.

They polled the teachers to see what the subject should be, the Dalys said, and the sacraments was the first choice. An interest in using local persons to teach the programs, they said, and in cutting down travel distances

resulted in the method used to present the talks.

By offering the complete program in three parishes, parishioners did not have to leave their parish in order to participate. And the priests, who did have to travel, only had to prepare one talk to be delivered three times.

The Dalys reported that between 30 and 35 persons attended each session the first week.

Twenty-two persons heard Father Cason speak on the sacraments of vocation, Matrimony and Holy Orders, at Newark Valley Jan. 17.

The same evening, Father Schmidt was speaking on the sacraments of initiation in Owego. Scheduled to end at 10 p.m., the interest of those in Owego didn't end then. When time ran out without

the group seeing two movies Father Schmidt had brought, they expressed a willingness to stay and watch them. At 10:30, when the second movie was begun, only three persons had left.

The same evening Father Weis gave his talk on the sacraments of healing at St. Margaret Mary.

Mrs. Daly noted that they hope those attending the classes and others will make suggestions for future programs. Those suggestions and comments will be considered heavily when they plan the next program, she said.

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