

# COURIER-JOURNAL

## Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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### Social Ministry Proposal Aired at Hearings

By Martin Toombs  
Southern Tier Editor

The proposal to establish a Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry drew 100 persons with a variety of questions to hearings across the Southern Tier.

General support for the extension of those diocesan-sponsored programs not now operating in the Southern Tier was expressed at the hearings; most of the discussion dealt with how it should be done, and the effectiveness of the proposed method.

The hearings began Jan. 17 in Bath, continued with three sessions in Elmira Jan. 24 and ended with a meeting in Newark Valley Jan. 29.

The proposal calls for a Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry that would encompass all the functions of the various departments in the diocesan Division of Social Ministry. That would include functions performed by the Office of Human Development (OHD), the Campaign for Human Development, the Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation, Catholic Charities, and the prison, jail and hospital chaplains. Currently only the OHD has staff members in the area; the OHD positions would become part of the new office.

A Southern Tier board would oversee the operations of the office, and be accountable directly to the diocesan Director of Social Ministry.

Appearing at the hearings to explain the proposal and listen to comments were Father Neil Miller and Giovina Carosio, OHD staff members; Father Charles Mulligan, director of the Division of Social Ministry; Maurice Tierney, Catholic Charities director; William Privett, Catholic Charities associate director; and Lourdes Perez,

coordinator of the International Justice and Peace Commission.

Three parishes and two institutions were represented at the hearing for pastoral staffs in Elmira.

Father Robert Kanka, St. Patrick's associate pastor, questioned the need to establish a family and individual counseling service in the area when a few years ago Catholic Family Services was merged with another local agency.

Father Mulligan noted that the new office would include other functions in addition to counseling, and the new office would cover the entire Southern Tier, and not just Elmira.

Father Miller pointed out the concern that he had heard from priests and others that a counseling service with Catholic values is needed in the area as another reason.

Father Paul McCabe, Our Lady of Lourdes pastor, questioned the proposal's intention to begin with a five-county responsibility, wondering if it was too large an area.

Father Mulligan responded that OHD has been working on a five-county basis, and he stated that the new services would not immediately be effective everywhere, but would build and eventually would be available throughout the area. The proposal is not to start "a branch office," of the Rochester departments, he noted, but to form a local board that will determine the directions the office will take. Currently, he stated, "our relationships are weak, scattered, and centralized too far away."

Father McCabe asked whether a one-county plan to begin might be more feasible; Father Mulligan stated that it would

not be fiscally possible to provide the staff for a one-county effort.

Father Daniel Holland, St. Patrick's pastor, noted his agreement that a Catholic counseling service is needed, but suggested that it could be established without involving a re-organization of existing programs.

Forty-two persons attended the evening session in Elmira, and when a one-word reaction to the plan was asked from each, nearly all were positive comments.

Speakers did foresee difficulty for the one staff member hired for the individual and family counseling section of the office to be effective in five counties.

Privett pointed out that government funding is available for many programs envisioned for the office, and it would be the job of the person hired to secure funding which would make it possible to hire more persons who actually would provide the services.

Responding to questions in Newark Valley, the panel pointed out the need and the value of a functioning board that would determine what projects should be pursued, and then seek funding for them.

Many questions at the hearings were for clarifications of the proposal, and for information concerning what the future of the office could be.

At the hearings, Father Miller also expressed a willingness to present the program to parish councils, and urged those at the hearing to go to their parishes and see if the parish council would like to have the program explained.

### Women in Church Topic

Horseheads — "The Image of God: A Day of Reflection about Women in the Church" is a program that will be presented Sunday, Feb. 17, from 2 to 9 p.m. at St. Mary Our Mother Church.

Described as being "for women and men who wonder what God is calling us to be and become in our day," the

program is being sponsored by the Chemung-Schuylar Regional Education Committee, and will be presented by Sister Joan Sobala, SSJ, and Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz.

Participants, who are asked to bring their Bibles, may attend part or all of the talks.

The program will begin at 2 p.m. with a discussion of current experience, including the concepts of laity and ministry that have come from the second Vatican Council, and the experience of those present.

There will be a break at 3:30. The program will resume at 4 p.m. with a talk on the history of women in the Church.

A supper break will take place from 5:30 until 7 p.m. At 7 p.m. a study of Scripture will be presented. A final prayer service at 8:30 will conclude the program.



SISTER JOAN SOBALA

Participants should bring a brown-bag meal for the supper; coffee and tea will be provided.



Sister Arlene Semesky, left, helps Beth Wisniewski and Don Michalko place the class posters for the "Hall of Fame." The two students are from the homeroom that sent invitations to the class of 1961, one member of which is Sister Arlene.

### Notre Dame's 25 Years To Be Celebrated Sunday

Elmira — A "Hall of Fame" should be an attraction for those attending the Mass of Thanksgiving marking Notre Dame High School's 25th anniversary at the school, Sunday, Feb. 10 at 4 p.m.

The Mass is being celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark. More than 3,000 invitations have been mailed to graduates of the school, persons in the community who have aided the school, and parents of the current student body. In addition, the public is invited to participate.

The school's student council organized the "Hall of

Fame" which consists of a poster for each of the school's current faculty, and the 25 graduating classes. The large posters feature pictures of class members and a list of names.

The Mass is a major event in the year-long celebration of the school's first 25 years of service to the area. Currently, the school draws students from Chemung, Steuben and Tioga counties in New York, and Bradford County in Pennsylvania.

During the weekend other

events will honor the school's current faculty, and the 25 graduates who are pursuing religious vocations. Sister Judith Heberle, superior of the Sisters of Mercy who operate the school, also is giving a reception to honor many of those who have supported the school during its 25-year existence.



ADA MARIA ISASI-DIAZ



### March for Life

Marchers pass in front of St. Patrick's School, Elmira, on their way to the church for a prayer service marking the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. The march, sponsored by the Notre Dame Human Development Committee, began at the high school and concluded with a prayer service at St. Patrick's. Local persons as well as Notre Dame students participated.

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