

COURIER-JOURNAL

Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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Bishop Clark Addresses First Steuben Assembly

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Bath — More than 300 persons overflowed St. Mary's Church for the first general assembly of the newly-formed Steuben Region March 24 for a town meeting with Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

Bishop Clark thanked those who attended for coming, noting that it was good they had come together without any specific purpose, but just to be together in faith.

In his homily, he emphasized the importance of Eucharist to the Church and its relationship to community. "There is no Eucharist unless there is a loving community," he said, and if after celebrating Eucharist "we do not serve in love our brothers and sisters" we have not been faithful to the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is not an empty ritual, he noted, but an essential part of living. It also is valuable, he said, for

members of many parishes to gather for Eucharist, as they were that evening, to remind everyone that they are part of a larger community, the Church throughout the world. He stated that he hoped everybody at the Mass "might find the gentle touch of Christ" during the evening.

At the town meeting that followed, lay ministries and youth involvement in parishes were two of the topics discussed.

William Recktenwald of Sacred Heart, Perkinsville, asked what was being done to increase the use of lay people to release clergy from administrative duties, and to encourage lay involvement in such programs as the permanent diaconate.

Following a show of hands which revealed that a majority of those present didn't understand the permanent diaconate program, Bishop Clark explained its historical basis, and noted that currently

there are no permanent deacons in the diocese, but that two classes are in training for the office.

Bishop Clark also noted that moves were being made in some areas for lay persons to take over administrative tasks formerly done by priests, and that is a trend he supports.

But, he commented, people should understand that lay ministries spring from the sacrament of Baptism, and not from the shortage of priests.

Several teenagers and a few adults raised questions concerning youth ministry, and the various programs sponsored by the diocese were discussed. Bishop Clark noted that he recently made a Teen Seminar, and called on one of the teenagers from the group who was present to explain the program.

Bishop Clark noted that youth ministry was a place where lay persons could be especially helpful.

And when a teenage girl from Corning complained of boring Masses aimed at adults, Bishop Clark commented that she is "not a voice in the wilderness" but making a comment he has heard often.

Mass, he said, is "not something adults do for the kids, but something we all do together." Therefore, he noted, youth should be involved in planning liturgies and in other parish activities. Religion classes are important, he commented, but teenagers should be offered more opportunities in their parish.

A young girl asked his position on altar girls, and he responded that it has been his "delight to have been assisted by altar girls on many occasions." But noting the lack of permission for such participation, stated that he can't promote the practice. That brought a further question from an adult as to whether or not he would tolerate the practice. His response, "I have tolerated it, yes," brought applause from the audience, as did the bishop's further comment that "you take your chances when you get in front of this microphone, don't you?"

And in response to another question, he noted that there are plans for a television and radio project in the diocese for next Lent, to be funded through the Communications Collection. "A lot of people are not in our churches, so we have to get into their homes," he stated, noting that television is one way to do that. He added that any suggestions on what type of programming would be best are welcome.



Penance Class

On Sunday, March 9, 38 second graders participated in a First Penance Service at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Corning. Shown above are the students with, in the back row, Carol Stramowski, parish religious education coordinator, Father Robert Belligotti, associate pastor, and Father Joseph F. Hogan, pastor.

Hospital Rejoins Group

Elmira — Sister Martha Gersbach, St. Joseph's Hospital administrator, has announced the renewal of the hospital's membership in Hospital Bureau Inc., one of the largest and oldest national shared service groups in the health care field, as part of the hospital's continuing cost containment effort.

Owned and operated by its membership of 1,000 voluntary, not-for-profit health care institutions, Hospital Bureau provides a variety of planning and purchasing services to its members, including its national commodity agreements with suppliers of hospital equipment and the services of an energy management program developed to reduce energy consumption.

Refugees On Way To Phelps

Phelps — Word has been received by St. Francis of Assisi Parish's "We Care II" committee that a refugee family from the mountain region of Laos, now in a camp in Thailand, will be arriving in the region in six to eight weeks.

According to the parish bulletin, the family of 10 speaks no English. Contact person for donations of housing, clothing, furnishings, and work is Gary Tyman (315) 548-2011.

Prizes Awarded

Elmira — Two St. Casimir's School third graders won prizes in a spelling contest sponsored by the Knights of Columbus March 19. Winning first prize, a \$50 savings bond, was Jonathan Kerbein. Winning second prize, \$10, was Jessica Marks. The competition, conducted by council youth director Robert Ryniker, had 35 competitors.

The Courier-Journal has instituted a new system in the Auburn-Seneca Falls-Geneva area in the hope of providing expanded news coverage.

Any parish or organization publicist is invited to send news items to John Dash, News Editor, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

The newspaper can also use photos of newsworthy events, provided they are black and white and in sharp focus.

Any news events requiring further news or photo coverage should be discussed with Dash, 1-716-454-7050 (collect).

Longtime correspondent Mary Ann Ginnerty is also still available for assignment. To expand area coverage, however, we have added the home office staff to past capabilities.

Seminar to Address Cardiac Care

Elmira — "Trends in the Care of the Cardiac Patient" will be the theme of a teaching day Wednesday, April 23 at St. Joseph's Hospital. Sponsored by the hospital's nursing alumni association, the program is designed to provide nurses with a knowledge of care of the cardiac patient.

Advanced registration for the all-day program is \$5 and includes lunch and should be sent to Thomas Costello, RN, St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, NY 14902 by April 15. The registration fee at the door will be \$7.50.

The Wiz

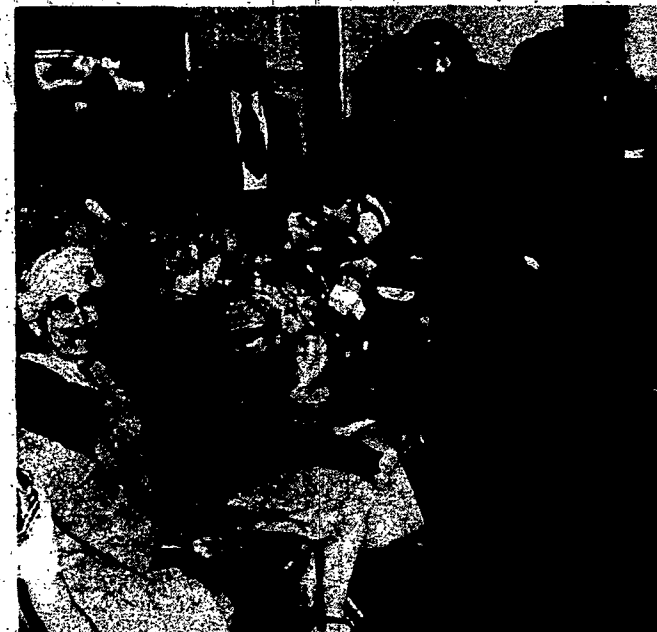
Auburn — Children in grades 5-8 of Blessed Trinity School will stage a production of the Broadway hit "The Wiz," April 28 and 29 at 7:30 p.m. in the CCC Auditorium.

Council Seminar

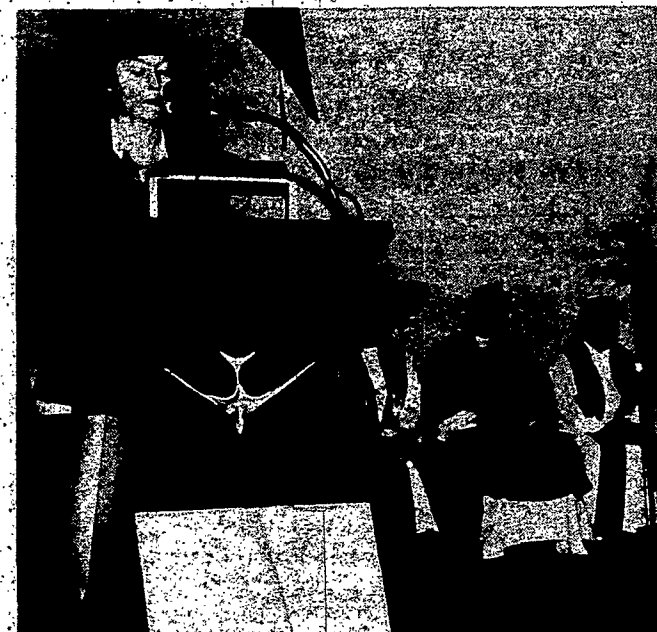
Auburn — Father Louis Hohman and Sister Jean Rodman will conduct a seminar on parish councils at 7:30 p.m. on April 27 at the Blessed Trinity School Cafeteria.

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Bishop Clark at gathering.



Lenten Service

Bishop Clark participated in a Tompkins-Tioga regional lenten service at St. Patrick's, Owego, March 21, which drew more than 400 people despite bad weather conditions. Shown are Beth Stefano, regional DFC delegate, presenting a reading during the Mass, Father Albert Cason, regional coordinator, Bishop Clark and Father Thomas Watts.