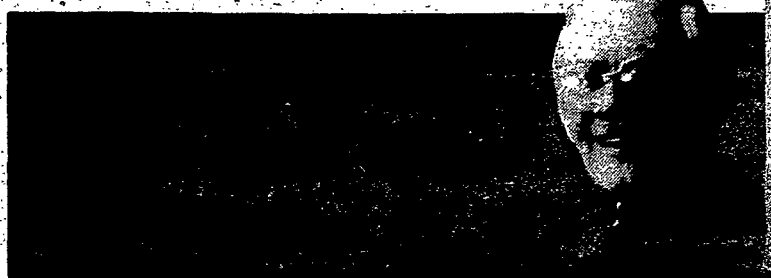


'Family of Choice'
Idea Irks
Lawmaker 9



COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

20 Pages

Wednesday, April 23, 1980

OUR 96th YEAR

25 Cents

The Religious A Life of Love Communities: History, Purpose

By John Dash

What is today known as the religious life arose quite early in the Church.

Principally in the Middle East and Asia Minor, men and women grouped together to respond more wholeheartedly to the message of the Gospel. While remaining celibate and practicing a vigorous asceticism, they devoted themselves to liturgical worship and the care of the sick and the underprivileged.

By the time of Constantine a wide variety of such religious communities were flourishing, including what we now consider the cloistered, monastic life.

In the words of a Trappist Monk of the Abbey of Our Lady of the Genesee, however, common to all was the ideal of praying always, whether by reciting psalms, silent presence to God or by simple work. "Fasting, silence and solitude were to be taken seriously and love was to be central."

The orders with which most dioceses are familiar arose in the last 500 years, principally in response to social problems caused by social upheavals.

The monastic communities, however, trace their histories a great deal further back.

Characteristic of them all is that they are groupings of people who have pledged themselves to lives of poverty, chastity or celibacy, and obedience.

Each of the different communities only "differs in accidentals," according to Sister Magdalen of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Sister Maura, also of that community, said that every Christian is called to a deeper and deeper relationship with God, "but, because we are human, we are called in different ways."

"Religious life," she said, to set it apart from the lives of everyday Christians, "offers the specific, unique witness of prayer, a specific relationship with Christ."

Sister Magdalen agreed, saying, "There are different elements, but the game is the same."

Both sisters said that the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, are really all aspects of one thing: Sister Maura explained that "following and proclaiming the Lord is more important than anything."

Sister Magdalen said that all religious commitment should be seen in the light of that end, and that all religious activity is for the sake of the kingdom.

"In a sense," she said, "religious commitment goes full



Sister Susan Schantz, SSJ, chaplain at Highland Hospital, visits a patient.

circle." Once the vows are made a real part of a person, then reciting them is simply a "codification" of what is already a reality.

No one will disagree that there have been profound changes in religious life, especially since the Second Vatican Council. The changes, the Trappist said, reflected the Church as a whole. "There was an increase in departures and

Continued on Page 14

It's Official! Kateri to Be Beatified

By John Dash

Several weeks after it was announced in the Courier-Journal that rumors were circulating in Rome that the Vatican had decided to proceed with the canonization process for Kateri Tekakwitha, Cardinal Terence Cooke formally announced that a date had been set to "beatify" the "Lily of the Mohawks," on June 22.

As the 300th anniversary of Venerable Kateri's death (April 17) approached, rumors again began to circulate in Montreal, Albany and Washington, D.C., that the Vatican had set a date, according to Father Joseph McBride, U.S. vice postulator for the cause. As it happened, some Canadian prelates, privy to the Vatican decision, announced the news to their parishioners prior to Cardinal Cooke's declaration, Father McBride said.

Beatification is the second in the Church's three-phase process for declaring a person a saint. In the first phase the Church asserts that because of an individual's extraordinary virtue, he or she is worthy of adulation or veneration. In the second, the Church asserts her certainty that the individual is among the blessed. In the third, the individual is proclaimed a saint.



KATERI TEKAKWITHA

State Welfare Increases Being Pushed by Diocese

The weekend of June 1 will be a busy one throughout the diocese as a campaign is brought to the parish level to generate support for an increase in the State's welfare grants.

On that weekend educational programs on the question will be presented to parishes, parish councils will deliberate the question and, on the ecumenical level, grassroots support for an increase will be sought.

The activities follow Bishop Matthew H. Clark's leadership in supporting a welfare grant increase which included speaking to legislators, sending them telegrams of support for a minimum 15 per cent increase, and heading an ecumenical group of church leaders also asking Albany for an increase.

Since that time the state Assembly has approved of a 10 per cent increase in the welfare payment level, and Gov. Hugh Carey has announced a change of position that he would now be willing to support such an increase.

Activities for the proposal are not limited to the diocese. Across the state, pressure is being felt from such groups as the New York State Catholic Conference, in whose name Charles J. Tobin, general

counsel and secretary, has written a letter to each legislator asking help to "alleviate the human suffering and want" which exists in the state.

Tobin included in his letter a statement issued by conference president Cardinal Terence Cooke, calling the state's needy people "without defense." He said that the present welfare payment level is based on a 1974 living level, and there is no question that the government is not meeting its responsibilities to its needy citizens.

The campaign is also being joined by the State Coalition for Fair Public Assistance. The coalition includes in its membership such organizations as the Community Council of Greater New York, the Community Service Society, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, the New York State Association of Jewish Federations, the New York State Catholic Conference, the New York State Council of Churches, the New York State National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the United Way of New York State, among others.

In a letter to priests of the diocese, Bishop Clark last month stated:

"The last time that there was a change in the basic rate of welfare was 1974. Since then, there has been some improvement, most significantly in regard to food stamps. With the present inflation, however, the position of families on welfare becomes extremely hard. I know very well the debates about the high tax structures of New York State and the desire that the Federal Government assume a greater proportion of welfare costs. The bishops however, adopted this stance because they felt that it was important that we speak up on behalf of people who are hurting."

Khomeini Reassures Pontiff

Vatican City (RNS) — Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini sent a message April 15 to Pope John Paul II asking the pontiff to "warn the American government of the risks they incur by their politics of pressure, oppression and plundering."

He coupled his criticism of the United States with the reassurance to the pope "that you need not worry about the other tensions and graver problems to which you refer."