

## Conference to Focus On Women in the Church

The diocesan Office of Pastoral Ministry will sponsor a day-long conference which will "call together women and men interested in focusing on the past, present and future of women in service to the Church," on Saturday, May 3.

The conference, scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m., will take place at the Pastoral Office, 1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, and registrations will be limited to 50 people.

The conference will include a filmstrip, panel discussions, open forums and two presentations by Sister Joan Sobala and Sister Barbara Moore. The afternoon forum will include guest panelists Dr. Jose Betancourt, International Justice and Peace Commission; Michele Daviau, Women's Theological Center; James and Pauline Dobbetin, Office of Family Life; and Sister Gratia L'Esperance, a lecturer at St. Bernard's Seminary.

For further information or for registration forms those interested may call Pat Mikols, (716)328-3210.

## Women's Retreat

Elmira — The Women's Retreat League has arranged a retreat for Mothers' Day weekend, May 9-11, at Our Lady's Villa, Mt. Pocono, Pa. Father Bartholomew O'Brien, pastor of St. Mary's Mother Church in Horseheads, will be retreat master. Any woman who would like to attend may apply for a reservation form to Marguerite Backes, 734-8308; Mary or Margaret Crane, 936-4095 or 936-4688; Pauline Kazmiski, 733-4521; or Mary Smith, 732-1080.

## Insights in Liturgy

### ALLELUIA!

By David E. Nowak

The great moments in our lives are moments of discovery. They are the turning points when a decision is finally made, when our love for another overflows into expression, or when grief erupts to point us along a way we have not been before. When changing jobs, choosing a spouse, or awaiting the death of a parent or child our lives acquire a new order. These are moments of new insight, of new potential, and, therefore, of new claims upon our lives.

Such moments involve a "letting go." New paths and new patterns require us to let go of old ones long enough to be opened outward, beyond what we already know. In these moments of discovery we are less often the agent of change than the one being changed, less the "knower" than the one being "known" in the presence of new possibilities.

For Christians the consummate moment of discovery is prayer. Authentic prayer is our moment of personal and communal self-discovery in God. It is a light piercing the fog of our self-centeredness, our prejudice and our control, to illumine new directions and untapped potential. As Henri Nouwen reminds us, praying is not one of the many things the community does... it is its very being. In fact, when prayer is no longer our primary concern we quickly degenerate into a club with a common cause, but no common vocation.

Yet, in these moments of prayer our everyday words and meanings pale before our desire for union with God. The concepts and ideals of the marketplace may lead us to the threshold of prayer, but there we are left begging. For these are moments when we are led into Jesus' own prayer, ultimately letting Him pray in us.

In prayer we need a word beyond words. We need a word beyond the burden of meaning which does not tell us about truth, but brings us face to face with it. We need a word which both renews our hope and reveals our destiny in the face of our common vocation. We need a word of presence with which we can lift up our voices to the One in

Whom we recognize both the fact and effect of our prayer. We need Alleluia!

Alleluia is our exclamation of praise, joy and adoration. It is our triumphant song evoking the hope of a people redeemed, the victory of those who are saved. It is our moment in the long history of salvation to leap instead of walk, to sing instead of speak.

Alleluia invites us to prayer not by explaining our motives, or by predicting our effect, but by expressing a state of consciousness beyond any sense the word itself can describe. It is our cry of wonder and thanksgiving in the harmony of body and spirit when we become instruments played upon with unseen skill.

Like Tobias the elder, sorrowing in Nineveh, we never stop dreaming of a new Jerusalem where the very houses would shout ALLELUIA. (Tob. 13:18) We keep watch outside the empty tomb with all the saints and angels remembering, "We are Easter people and Alleluia is our song." (St. Augustine)

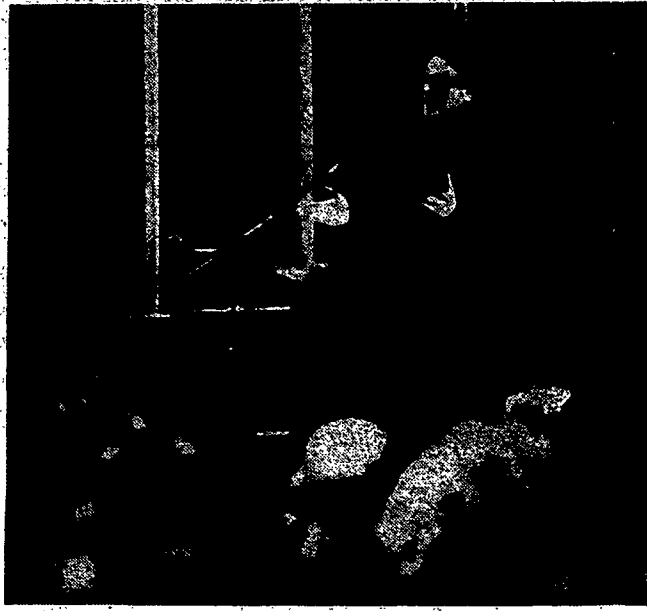
Just as without Easter there are no Christians, without Alleluia we cannot pray. Alleluia is the breath of new life singing in our lungs, like the cry of a newborn child lifted from his mother's womb. It is the universal chant of the pain and triumph of our rebirth thrilling all who have long awaited a sign of new life.

Amos Wilder has written, "It is at the level of imagination that the fateful issues... must first be mastered... before the message there must be the vision, before the sermon the hymn."

Alleluia is not an intellectual message, but a vision of deliverance from our own inner darkness. It is not an ideal toward which we strive, but a song of hope we utter en route to sustain our effort and to lighten our fears.

Our Alleluia offers us a glimpse into the overwhelming truth of our inheritance: we have been restored by the One who lives to die no more — the Word of victory is accomplished in us.

ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!



Father Raymond Brown delivers his lecture at the University of Rochester's Interfaith Chapel.

## Scholar Explores Religious Tensions

By John Dash

Without explicitly stating his case, Father Raymond Brown, the noted Bible scholar, last week examined the evidence of anti-Christianity in first century Jewish writings and the evidence of anti-Semitism in the Fourth Gospel, a document, in his words, of a "community which highlights the awkwardness of Jewish-Christian relations in the first century."

Father Brown addressed about 125 in the University of Rochester's Interfaith Center last Friday as part of the Genesee Valley Theological Lectures for this year, on "The Relation of the Johannine Christians to the Jews as Portrayed in the Fourth Gospel."

On the question of anti-Semitism in the Church, Father Brown said, "John's peculiar relation in some ways gets the most attention, principally because of its 'view of the Jews.'"

"The gospel tells as much of the history of the community as of Jesus of Nazareth, by the way they present Jesus of Nazareth," he said.

He said that in the Synoptic Gospels the revelation that Jesus is the Son of God is a "secret held to the end," but the Fourth Gospel, "picks up where the others left off."

Establishing Jesus as the Son of God is explicit in the first three chapters, he said,

and the idea of the "Son of Man" is carried beyond where other Christians have reached."

Not only that, he said, but the gospel consistently refers to Jewish customs, Jewish lineage, and Jewish feasts, in such a fashion that "clearly the Jews are another religion."

And conversely, he said, it is difficult to discern in Jewish writings of the period whether there are references to Christians or pagans.

Christians were expelled from the temple and synagogue, he observed, because there was a widespread understanding they held: a "ditheism," a belief in two gods as opposed to a belief in monotheism, or one God.

By the end of the first century, Father Brown said, "ditheism became the real issue between the Jews and the Christians and pagans (those who worshipped the Roman emperor as 'Lord and God')."

The language of the Fourth Gospel, he said, was as "highly offensive to Jewish ears," as was the Jewish interpretation of Jesus offensive to Christian ears.

Father Brown cautioned his audience against assessing the data he presented "too generally, too simply."

But he did acknowledge that current scholarship in the Fourth Gospel "poses problems."

## MDC Confirmation Scheduled

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate Confirmation at 7 p.m., Monday, May 5, at the Monroe Developmental Center. The Mass will be followed by a reception, offering the opportunity for parents and relatives of MDC clients to meet Bishop Clark.

confirmation of a group of clients living at Monroe Developmental Center who have been participating in a confirmation program led by the Rev. Mr. George Norton, a seminarian at St. Bernard's.

The program will be assisted by the Folk Group from Holy Family parish.

A highlight will be the

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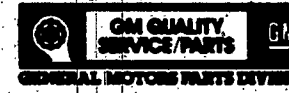
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## Regional Meeting Set

The Spring meeting of the Seneca-Cayuga Regional assembly is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Alphonsus cafeteria hall, 95 Genesee St., Auburn.

The main purpose of the meeting will be to elect laypersons to the Diocesan Pastoral Council and four officers and three delegates to the executive Committee.

Father Elmer Heindl, regional coordinator, will also give a brief report on the State of the Region.

## CELEBRATION!

A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM WARFIELD