

# The Start of Something 'Grande'

By Carmen J. Vignacci

An historic first took place last Friday at the diocesan Pastoral Center. A bishop called his entire staff together to ponder action in behalf of the Hispanics of the diocese.

The occasion was the Conference on the Hispanics of the Rochester Diocese, convened by Bishop Matthew H. Clark not only to formulate programs for the some 50,000 Hispanics in the diocese but also as a symbol of the high concern he places on such action.

Bishop Clark attended and in opening remarks said he hoped the conference would mark the beginning of a new focus on Hispanic affairs.

Before four guest speakers gave their talks, Italo Rodriguez, director of the diocesan Spanish Apostolate, remarked that it was probably the first time in the history of North America that a bishop had called such a conference.

The first speaker of the morning session (the afternoon was devoted to workshops) was Dr. Francisco Zayas, director of the Bilingual Multicultural Program at the State University at Brockport.

He called for "enriched bilingual, multicultural education for all children (including Anglo-Americans), creation of a new national conscience of multicultural composition of our society, and creation of a national awareness for the requirement of a just world peace."

He left a question for those attending:

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if all parochial schools were multicultural and bilingual? Wouldn't it be wonderful if that were to start right here in Rochester?"

Pablo Sedillo, executive director of the U.S. Catholic Conference Secretariat for the Spanish Speaking, described the structure and function of his department and made some points concerning Hispanics in this country — that by 1990 Hispanics will form the largest minority; that there are 440 million in the Americas; that the U.S. is the fourth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world; that Los Angeles is the second largest Spanish-speaking city in the world (only Mexico City has more); that 90 percent of the Hispanics are Roman Catholic.

He said that Catholics must come up with a pastoral plan to minister to the Hispanics.

The next speaker, Mario Paredes, executive director of the Northeast Pastoral Center for Hispanics, told of the growth of the number of Hispanics in the U.S., from three million in 1846, to 16 million by 1975, to an expected 25 million by 1985.

The Spanish-speaking citizenry, however, is also diverse. For instance, Paredes showed on charts that there are now seven million Mexicans in this country; 2 million Puerto Ricans, one million Cubans, 1.5 million Central and South Americans, with the remainder from other countries such as the Philippines, Spain and Brazil (where Portuguese is the language).



Mario Paredes, executive director of the Northeast Pastoral Center for Hispanics, speaks on the growing number of Hispanics in the U.S. as Bishop Matthew H. Clark, among others, listens.

He voiced concern that among Puerto Ricans, almost 30 percent of the families are headed by a woman parent while among white Americans the figure is less than 10 percent.

He further said that 40 percent of the Puerto Ricans are below the poverty level.

The final speaker was Roberto Burgos, executive director of the local Puerto Rican Youth Development and Resource Center. He spoke of his personal experiences growing up in Rochester. He told of the growth of Hispanics in Rochester, both in numbers and facilities.

He pointed out that the Puerto Rican festival, 10 years old, is the oldest ethnic celebration in the city; that in 1969, Rochester got its first Puerto Rican police officer; that a Puerto Rican got elected to ward office and another to the city school board.

But he also indicated that a long road lay ahead for local Hispanics.

Five percent of the Puerto Ricans are high school dropouts, he said. He added that unemployment is high and that "politically speaking, our community now has no presence or representation on any level."

He also said that the Hispanic community has "no adequate source of communications; we have no newspaper, no radio station — only one program on television regularly."

Burgos said that the community, church and government must work together to meet the growing numbers and needs of the Spanish population.

He sounded the theme of the day-long conference, "Let us help each other."



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## A Special Anniversary

Although the threat of rain was in the air, there was nothing in the world that could dampen the spirits of the Hugo Kellner family of Caledonia last weekend.

Some 110 friends and members of their family, including seven who came over from Germany for the affair, gathered Saturday to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Dr. Kellner and his wife, Magdalena.

The day's events included dinner in the hall at St. Columba's Church, followed by a prayer service and renewal of vows officiated by their son, Father Winfried, in the Kellner's own chapel they built several years ago.

Fifty years ago, the occasion was marked with great happiness but also with great sorrow.

The morning of the wedding in Germany, Dr. Kellner's father died after a long battle against cancer. With the plans so near, it was decided not to cancel the wedding, which in fact was a double wedding. Magdalena's sister Toni married Martin Meyer the same day, and they also celebrated their 50th anniversary Saturday, but did not make the trip to Caledonia.

Celebrating another 50th anniversary is Dr. Kellner's brother, Lothar, a Franciscan monk, who was ordained the same day in 1930. Lothar was unable to make the trip from Japan where he is a missionary because he is recovering from a recent stroke.



Father Winfried Kellner congratulates his parents, Hugo and Magdalena, at the end of the prayer service that included the couple renewing their marriage vows last Saturday.

The Kellners expressed their happiness that their family and friends could come together for the celebration. Then moments later, they were treated to a musical interlude featuring members of their family singing folk and religious songs.

Also on hand for the festivities was Dr. Kellner's aunt, Emma Kuhn, due to celebrate her 94th birthday

tomorrow. All in all, it was a whale of a day for the happy family who planned to continue the celebration into the coming week.

The Kellner family emigrated to the United States from Friedberg, Germany in 1949 with their nine children. All returned for the celebration Saturday, plus the couple's 27 grandchildren.

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