

# COURIER-JOURNAL

## Southern Tier-Auburn Geneva

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### Marriage Encounter Convention Draws 300

By Martin Toombs  
Southern Tier Editor  
Ithaca — A variety of

speakers and workshops were available for the approximately 300 persons who

attended the Area Two National Marriage Encounter Convention at Ithaca College July 18-20.

family, and each person explained his or her perspective on problems that occurred, primarily with finding time for the family to be together. They told how they came to the conclusion that it was necessary at times to not let outsiders take away from family time, and to place family priorities ahead of those outside the home.

### CAP Players Present 'Superstar' Aug. 1, 2

Owego — The CAP Players of St. Patrick's Church will present "Jesus Christ, Superstar" Aug. 1 and 2 at 8:15 p.m. at the Owego Junior High School.

students would do a good job with "Superstar."

From "Marriage Anonymous" to "Couple Prayer—A Possible Dream," and from newsletter production to sexuality for teenagers, the convention offered opportunities which maintained the participants' interest despite the nearly 100-degree heat.

Presentors in a workshop on "Marriage Anonymous" said that their material is stolen from Alcoholics Anonymous and the other "anonymous" support groups. They told how they have benefited from participation in the small group, which has 60 members, including six members whose spouses refuse to attend the meetings.

The production features a 70-member cast and a 20-piece orchestra. Singers and dancers range in age from seven to grandmotherly, and two entire families are participating.

"Ironically, those people we had planned on are not the ones who ended up in the cast. We found plenty of very talented, very dedicated performers from the area."

The convention, drawing married couples and many of their children from New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, also attracted Father Gabriel Calvo, Marriage Encounter's founder, a keynote speaker for the weekend.

Couples participating in the group are seeking help with their troubled marriages. Some participants had been given up on by marriage counselors.

The production is directed by Julie Along Carr and Jack Carr. CAP (Christian Awareness Program) has presented two previous musicals, "The Me Nobody Knows" and "West Side Story."

The production will serve as a form of worship, and a way to better understand the passion of Christ. One cast member's mother remarked that her son "sure is reading the Bible a lot more lately."

Father Calvo's current emphasis on family renewal was reflected in the convention, as several workshops addressed family rather than simply couple issues.

The group, with chapters in Chambersburg, Pa., and Morristown, N. J., has had success, they reported; of those who have come to the group, only two couples have divorced.

"The original idea behind putting the production together was the fact that there are so many talented high school seniors in Owego who will be leaving the area after this summer," Carr explained. "I had choreographed 'Godspell' for Owego Free Academy," he noted, and felt that the

The production also will show members of several generations working together. Jesus is played by an 18-year old, for example, while King Herod is played by a veteran of many years of leading roles in community theaters. In one ensemble, there is a mix of high school students' a mechanic, and a corporation executive.

An example was the workshop of family priorities given by Sharon and Ted O'Toole and their children Holly and Sean from Lyons.

Other workshop sessions offered instruction in prayer, testimony from couples on

General admission tickets, with a limited number available at the door, will be \$2.

The O'Tooles, speaking to a packed room, detailed their efforts to take time as a



The O'Toole family of Lyons concluded their workshop on family priorities by teaching the participants a song about the family, with the help of the song's composer. Leading the singing are, from left, Holly, Ted, Sean and Sharon O'Toole, and Ray Repp of Trumansburg.

their spiritual lives, and dealing with the organizational issues facing Marriage Encounter groups, such as finances and publishing a newsletter.

attended. And Father James Becherer of Cleveland, Ohio, met with the teenagers to discuss human sexuality.

### Barbecue Scheduled

Rexville — The annual St. Mary's Chicken Barbecue will be Sunday, Aug. 3, at the Rexville Fire Hall. Serving will begin at 11:30 a.m.

### Insights in Liturgy Congregation And Choir

By Sister Nancy Burkin, SSJ

The word "choir" refers to any singing group whether accompanied by organ, guitar or any other instruments. In addition, it can mean one or two properly trained singers if there is no possibility of setting up even a small choir.

One of the ironies of Vatican II was the misunderstanding on the part of many choir members included, about the further need of choirs at liturgical gatherings of the people of God. Many saw "congregational singing" as though in bright neon light. Statements like: "Choirs must be assiduously developed..." (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Article 114), and "The role of the choir has become something of yet greater importance and weight by reason of the norms of the Council concerning liturgical renewal, (Instruction on Music in the Liturgy, Article 19) somehow became lost in the flurry of trying to "get the people singing."

Fortunately, our experience of the last 15 years has brought us to an appreciation of these words from the documents mentioned above and of the important role of the choir. But more than this reflection on these statements, others like them,

and on the liturgical experience itself has brought us to a realization that a choir is practically essential to the liturgical celebration.

In the past the members of a choir seemed to be apart and a bit "higher" on the hierarchal scale than the average member of the congregation. Certainly the position of the choir in the church building said much to confirm this!

A very significant recommendation of recent documents is the placement of choirs so that they appear to be part of the worshipping assembly. Choir members are first and foremost members of the congregation who gather to worship. Like other liturgical ministers, organists, choir members, guitarists, other instrumentalists come forth from that very congregation as leaders of prayer. They are sent, so to speak, by the congregation as part of itself to use their specific gifts and talents to lead others.

The responsibility of a choir, then, is to the liturgical service but also to the congregation. That responsibility expresses itself in leadership at sung prayer in two ways.

First, the choir has the responsibility of leading the congregation by actively participating in the song that is proper to the congregation. But more than this, the choir can enhance the congregational singing, decorate it with descants and

harmony, teach the importance of music as part of the assembled people's prayer by example and experience and be highly instrumental in the teaching of new music.

Secondly, the choir can lead people to prayer by singing works which motivate at atmosphere of prayer and which move people to an awareness of the purpose of a particular part of the liturgical celebration and their own response.

"At times, the choir within the congregation of the faithful and as part of it, will assume the role of leadership while at other times will retain its own distinctive ministry. This means that the choir will lead the people in sung prayer, by altering or reinforcing the sacred song of the congregation, or by enhancing it with the addition of a musical elaboration. At other times, in the course of liturgical celebration, the choir alone will sing works whose musical demands enlist and challenge its competence." (Music in Catholic Worship, Article 36).

The choir, then, is part of the congregation but with a specific function, as an eye or an ear in the human body. The specific function of the choir is one beyond that of the congregation yet one with it. It is a responsibility that requires rehearsal time and concentrated effort on prayer as well as on musical correctness. It is a responsibility that is essential to good liturgical

worship. The musical expectations of a congregation are naturally limited. A choir that experiences itself as a leader of prayer can do and is expected to do the bulk of the musical expression of a liturgical celebration. Congregations will acclaim their assent to the mysteries of salvation; choirs must add harmonies, descants etc., elaborating simple melodies that otherwise might appear boring or commonplace on the third or fourth use. Congregations will sing in response to the Word of God; choirs can ornament their response and complement it by singing the necessary verses.

Together congregation and choir make for a worshipping singing prayerful assembly. Together congregation and choir make an entity gathered as the people of God, apart, on without the other, causes a liturgical celebration to fall short of what it could be as an authentic expression of who we are and who we are called to be as Church.

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