



Members of the diocesan Human Life Commission met recently to discuss the preparations being made for Respect Life Sunday Oct. 4-5. From left, Joan Mueller, Kathy Piehler, Frank and Sue Staropoli, Father James Hewes, commission chairman, Frank and Judy McKay, and Ange and Peg Turiano.

Respect Life Sunday: A Commitment Renewal

"Respect Life Sunday signifies a renewal of our commitment to the dignity of human life at all stages," said Ange and Peg Turiano, diocesan Human Life Commission coordinators. "It is an opportunity for all of us to re-dedicate ourselves to the basic rights guaranteed to all Americans, among which is the right to life."

Next Sunday, Oct. 5, has been designated Respect Life Sunday, and all pastors in the Rochester Diocese have been encouraged to preach on respect for life. In addition, parishes requesting "Life Roll Cards" have received a supply to be distributed at all Masses of obligation Oct. 4 and 5.

Parishioners will be asked to consider signing the card which calls for citizens to write, call or visit their elected representatives on a regular basis to encourage a Human Life Amendment protecting the unborn and all human life.

Peg Turiano hopes for a generous response. "Letter writing and phone calls have proven to be excellent methods for impacting on our congressional representatives. Between 1977 and 1980, 55 congressmen changed their vote from pro-abortion to protection for the pre-born. They attribute their change of heart to activities such as letter writing and personal contact."

"The average person can

St. Agnes Board Meeting Scheduled

The St. Agnes School Alumnae Advisory Board will meet Sept. 30, 7:30 p.m., in the school library. Events of the coming year will be the main concern.

Two alumnae classes have held reunions recently. The 1960 class reunion took place at the Mapledale Party House, Sept. 12. Ninety-six members were present. Each

Sister's Plea Ends Rastafarian Fast

Basseterre, St. Kitts (RNS) — Two brothers, members of the Rastafarian cult, have been saved from death by the intervention of their sister.

Vance and Dudley Brookes decided more than a month ago to go on a pure rain water diet, in the belief that the late Emperor Haile Selassie, whom

make a difference," Ange Turiano said. "One can no longer say, 'I'm opposed to abortion but don't know what to do.' A signed card will add your name to the list of volunteers willing to write their representatives. Several letters a year from you could mean life for the babies who are quietly eliminated every day."

Much of the planning for Respect Life Sunday and the distribution of the Life Roll Cards and other materials has been guided by the office of the Human Life Commission. Originally an affiliate of the Office of Family Life, the commission recently became associated with the Office of Justice and Peace.

The commission was established in 1978 to coordinate the response of the diocese to the U.S. bishops' Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities. The plan called for a threefold approach — educational, pastoral and legislative — in dealing with such interrelated issues as abortion, euthanasia, prison reform, the death penalty, and the aging.

"The purpose is to emphasize for the Catholic Christian the understanding of the sacredness of life that comes from his/her relationship to God," Peg Turiano said. "The dignity of a person lies not in what one will become or do, but in the

one received a red silk rose in memory of the roses carried at their traditional graduation ceremony. The roses were presented by a member of the class who operates a gift shop.

The class of 1970 observed an afternoon/evening reunion in August, at the Burgundy Inn, with members as far away as California present.

they worship as God, would be pleased.

Friends could not get the men to eat, and when they were finally reduced to near skin and bones they were placed in a hospital for treatment for malnutrition when their sister, a resident of Puerto Rico, learned of their plight and returned home.

fact that God is his/her origin and destiny."

Much has been accomplished by the commission in the past two years:

1. Educational programs are available on abortion, the handicapped, teenage pregnancy, capital punishment, the elderly, hunger, death and dying, and the imprisoned. These programs can be given as a series, or singly for a men's club, ladies' guild, or similar meeting.

2. The commission has helped establish, and contribute to, the Diocesan Pastoral Care Network which now numbers 12 agencies that help women with unexpected pregnancies. This past year grants from the commission to Pastoral Care groups totaled more than \$12,000.

3. In late August and early September, meetings were held to organize Congressional District Action Committees (CDAC). Earlier this year, Bishop Matthew H. Clark termed the initiation of CDACs as "a matter of serious priority."

In describing the CDAC meetings, Peg Turiano said, "I'm encouraged that people in our diocese will have the chance to become part of this national network of citizens seeking a human life amendment. An amendment will be realized because average people pray unceasingly and also take pen to paper to express respect for life and demand it of their elected representatives."

"It's likely that the decisions which society makes regarding abortion will have grave implications for related issues — for example, infanticide, euthanasia, and the denial of adequate care for the elderly and the handicapped. The commission's concern is that life at all stages be protected, nurtured and respected."

The work of the Human Life Commission is supported solely by the contributions made on Respect Life Sunday, and 50 per cent of the funds collected go to the Pastoral Care groups in the diocese.

Tomorrow night, Sept. 25, at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Brighton, Father Euclid Marier of the Ogdensburg Diocese Office of Family Life will speak on "The Value of Human Life." The public is invited to the program which begins at 8 p.m.

Fr. Albert Shamon

Word for Sunday



A Ten Foot Fork

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 16:19-31. (R1) Am. 6:1, 4-7. (R2) 1 Tim. 6:11-16.

Sunday's gospel about the rich man and Lazarus has been heard so often that perhaps the shock value has been lost — even though our Lord clearly speaks of an eternal hell.

So listen now to another parable.

There is a legend from long ago of a warrior who died bravely in battle. For his prowess and courage, he was given the choice before the gates of heaven of going either to heaven or to hell.

In order to make the best choice possible, he decided to take a look at hell first. When his guardian angel whisked him to hell, he saw that everyone was seated at banquet tables loaded with foods — with all kinds of luscious, succulent, lickish foods. Yet everyone seated at the sumptuous tables was lean and hungry, glum and gloomy. The brave warrior was puzzled. "Why this hunger in the midst of plenty?" he asked his angel guardian. "Why are the banqueters so depressed, so doleful and despondent?"

The angel answered, "Hell has only one rule: all the food on the tables has to be eaten with forks. 10 feet long. And no one can get any food into his mouth."

That is why everybody is unhappy and miserable."

The brave warrior didn't like what he saw in hell, so he asked his guide to wing him to heaven. When transported there, the warrior discovered that heaven too had a banquet like that in hell. Only with this difference: here everybody was happy and well-fed. The warrior asked his guide how this could be. "Is the rule for eating here different than in hell?"

The guide said, "No, the rule is the same; everybody in heaven also has to eat with a 10-foot fork. Only in heaven everyone has learned to feed one another across the table instead of trying to feed himself."

What is hell? Hell is selfish people, people who don't care about anyone else but themselves. The rich man in the gospel went to hell not for what he did to Lazarus, but for what he didn't do for Lazarus. He didn't kick him in the face. He didn't sweep him off his doorstep. In fact, he didn't

do anything to him, or for him, and that was precisely the trouble.

The rich man's trouble is often our trouble. What is the Church constantly trying to do now? Is she not trying to break down the walls of our selfishness? And is she not trying to goad us into building up bridges — bridges, by reaching out to others? For instance, why do so many marriages break up? Is it not because the husband or the wife is thinking only about self?

Why is the Church getting so few converts? Is it not because Catholics are not practicing Catholics? But just as self-centered and unconcerned about others as the rich man was about Lazarus?

Go around any parish and you will find countless Lazaruses on the doorsteps: the aged, the lonely, the shut-ins, those starving for the truth of the gospel, those hungering for a smile, a friend, a kindly word, the sick with no one to visit them.

At Sunday Mass, I think, we ought all to pray — all of us — for all of us are guilty of being a little bit like the rich man. We ought to pray to God to open our hearts, to give us all both the knowledge and the will to help others, especially the Lazaruses on our doorsteps.

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