

# Variety of Proposals Raised in Hearing

By Martin Toombs  
Southern Tier Editor

**Horseheads** — The need for support from the Church at times of separation and divorce, and for the Church to sponsor programs which both would make it possible for couples to spend time together, and for families to be involved as a unit, were raised at the Family Life hearing at St. Mary Our Mother Sunday, Sept. 28.

The hearing was one of five occurring in the diocese at the same time. The other four

were at St. Mary's, Auburn; St. Augustine's, Rochester; St. Francis, Phelps and St. Pius X, Rochester.

Two additional hearings have tentatively been scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 12, with one session to hear the concerns of black Catholics, and the other those of Hispanic Catholics.

Five members of the 15-member Family Ministry Task Force conducted the Horseheads hearing: Susan and Frank Staropoli, directors of the Family Life Office;

Frank Vassar and Mary Ann Rivoli of Rochester and Beverly Aleo of Hammondsport.

The task force was commissioned by Bishop Clark to determine directions for the diocese in serving families. Following the hearings, they will study the testimony, and compile a response which could help shape family ministry in coming years.

About 25 persons attended the Horseheads hearing, and several personal stories were told as illustrations of the need individuals felt.

One woman described the difficulty during her separation, now resolved, noting that she had a friend during that time, Jesus, and she urged the Church to do more to tell the faithful of the support they can receive through a personal relationship with Jesus.

Another woman, attending the hearing with her husband, noted the difficulty of their separation, and the financial problems and isolation it caused. She urged parishes to provide child care to help both single parents and young parents who need time to be together as a couple.

One suggestion was that there be permanent deacons specializing in family ministry, making home visits and working closely with families.

Another speaker called for education of the clergy so they will be more sensitive to the divorced and separated persons in their parishes.

The need for adult religious education was raised by a speaker, to which another responded by describing her work visiting mothers with young children during the day and conducting religious education on a one-to-one basis.

Father Paul McCabe, Our Lady of Lourdes pastor, noted the continual call to parish meetings, and wondered if they weren't a disruption of family life.

Noting that she was a member of the 17 percent of American families described as "traditional" (a father supporting his wife who stays at home with their children), she noted that at times she feels left out, and called for parish programs to be "more family oriented" — and that includes the kids.

Those attending and the panel also discussed the problem of low attendance at the meeting, and it was pointed out that Sunday afternoon, the time of the meeting, is family time for many people.

## New Work

Sister Mary Wehner, SSJ, former director of formation for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, has taken up work as a member of a three-person team at the Canadian Oblate's Institute for Personal, Spiritual Renewal. Sister Wehner's contract extends to May 1981. She will direct retreats and workshops, and give presentations and spiritual direction to the 25 participants who will be attending the Institute from various provinces in Canada.

## Franciscan 40 Years A Priest

Father Charles F. Adams, OFM, will offer a Holy Mass of Thanksgiving for the 40th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood at 10 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 12, at St. Boniface Church, Rochester.

All of his relatives and friends are invited to the Mass and to St. Boniface School Hall for coffee and doughnuts, following the Mass.

The son of the late Deputy Chief and Mrs. Edward C. Adams, Father Charles was graduated from Holy Apostles School, the Aquinas Institute and St. Bonaventure College before entering the Franciscan Order in 1936.

He studied for the priesthood at Holy Name College, Washington, D.C., and was ordained Oct. 13, 1940. He has taught at Siena College, St. Bonaventure University. Now retired, Father Charles retains a Franciscan residence at St. Stephen's Friary in Croghan but lives at the home of his brother-in-law, Harold R. May, in Rochester.

## Youth Conference

"Youth Workers Care," a day-long conference on the role of the youth work profession in the 1980s will take place at the Rochester Chamber of Commerce Oct. 31. The conference will be sponsored by the Rochester Youth Directors Council. Further information is available from Rudy Rivera, 546-1700.

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## Insights in Liturgy

### Baptism At Mass: Why, When, How?

By Father Robert J. Kennedy

It is becoming more and more commonplace in parishes to celebrate Baptism at the Sunday Eucharist. Some parishes do this once a month at a particular Mass; others schedule it at a different celebration each month, on a kind of rotating basis; still others leave it open for the convenience of the candidate or family.

Along with this growing practice have been a growing number of complaints: "Mass is too long when there are baptisms," "people are just showing off when they have their baby baptized at Mass," "why have baptisms at Mass anyway?" These and others may or may not be legitimate complaints, but they miss the point.

The first question to be answered is: why Sunday? Baptisms should be celebrated ordinarily on Sundays because this is the day the Church commemorates the Lord's resurrection. And above all Baptism incorporates one into the risen life of Christ. (In the case of adults, Baptism, Confirmation and first Eucharist should be celebrated at the Easter Vigil, after a period of catechumenate, or on some other day appropriate for the sacraments of initiation like Pentecost or Epiphany).

The second question to be answered is: why Sunday Mass? The answer is that Baptism does not have to be done at Sunday Mass, and the Rite of Baptism of Children doesn't even encourage it too strongly. "On Sunday, baptism may be celebrated even during Mass, so that the entire community may be present and the necessary relationship between baptism and eucharist may be clearly seen; but this should not be done too often." There is obviously a tentative and cautionary character to these words, and nowhere is it indicated that Baptism should be celebrated at a regularly scheduled parish Sunday Mass. A special Sunday Mass for those families with candidates for Baptism could be scheduled.

A third question inevitably arises: "why,

then, are parishes scheduling baptisms at the usual Mass times on Sunday?" The answer has already been mentioned above: it is so the "entire community" may be present, and they are present at the Sunday Eucharist. Baptism is not a private or quasi-private affair for families or groups of families who have someone to be baptized. Baptism instead is an event of the whole Church: the People of God help, in various ways the preparation of the candidate for Baptism, they renew their own faith along with the parents and godparents, and are strengthened in joy that a new member has been added to the Body of Christ, the Church. "Through the ministry of the Church, adults are called by the Holy Spirit to the gospel, and infants are baptized and brought up in this faith." (Christian Initiation)

So it is important that baptisms be done on Sundays, the Lord's Day, in the presence of parish community. It is important that it be done occasionally (although not infrequently) at the celebration of Mass, whether specially or regularly scheduled.

The final question then is: "how can baptism be done at Mass gracefully and within a reasonable amount of time?" Paragraph 29 of the Rite of Baptism for Children outlines the answer. The rite of receiving the child(ren) replaces the penitential rite. The Liturgy of the Word is of the Sunday, and the homily is drawn from those texts but take into account the baptism that is to take place. The creed is omitted in favor of the baptismal promises to be made. And so, the general intercessions are made and the rite of Baptism follows (prayer of exorcism, blessing of water, renunciation of evil and profession of faith, the baptism and other rites). Mass continues as usual, but the blessing at the end may include one of the special baptismal formulas. Parishes might also consider having the prayer of exorcism and the anointing with the oil of catechumens as part of the preparation program. Also, the water could be blessed beforehand, and the rites of the white garment, candle and ephaphata be done following Mass.

In any event, if a parish is reasonable about scheduling baptisms at Sunday Mass, complaints should be minimal, because, after all, to bring people into the saving life of Christ is the most important thing we do.

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