



Sister Anne Michelle presenting a workshop.

Photo by Terrance J. Brennan

Religious Development Focus of Two Seminars

The Diocesan General Education Department sponsored two teacher in-service conferences last week. Sister M. Edwardine, assistant superintendent for Curriculum, along with the Diocesan School Music Committee, coordinated a three day conference on music as a vital part of the total education of children.

A junior high teachers in-service seminar regarding the religious development of the Adolescent Child was coordinated by Sister Anne Michelle, SSJ, assistant superintendent for Administration/Religion. The

conferences were held at Sacred Heart, Christ the King, and St. Patrick's in Seneca Falls. Topics included: Praying with the Adolescent, by Sister Christine Lloyd, SSJ; The Sacrament of Reconciliation, Father David Mura; and Praying with the Adolescent, Sister Maureen Dinalofo.

The music workshops included a session on "Music as a form of prayer," given by Sister Nancy Burkin, SSJ, of the Diocese Office of Liturgy. Sister is a contributor to the new Diocesan Music Resource Book that was

issued to all schools and was the focal point of the conference day.

National consultants addressed the teachers on general music instruction. They included: Dr. Eunice Boardman, professor of Music at the University of Wisconsin; Dr. Sue Gilvan music consultant for Silver Burdett Publishing Co., and Dr. Celeste Doherty, music consultant for the American Book Company. A special session for pre-kindergarten in relationship to cognitive development was also presented.

Fr. John Reedy



Looking for the Lord

What Bishops Are Saying

News coverage of the Synod of Bishops got off to a flashy, though shaky, start with the AP's unbalanced report of Archbishop John Quinn's comments on birth control.

Anyone who knows Archbishop Quinn — or who knows the attitude of the American bishops — had to be skeptical of that first report which suggested that he was asking for a substantial change in the teaching set forth in *Humanae Vitae*.

In spite of this early confusion, a number of the initial interventions carried a significant common theme.

That theme was a call for a major change in the style of pastoral teaching regarding sexuality, marriage and family life.

As I understand these statements, they were saying something like this:

• In its pastoral teaching, the church must be more sensitive to the social reality in which men and women try to live their lives well.

This reality includes a great many social pressures which, regardless of good motives, create a climate which is hostile to the traditional church teachings on sexual relationships, marital fidelity, birth

control.

• It is pastorally unacceptable — contrary to the spirit of the compassionate Christ — for the church to simply proclaim its code of conduct and give the impression that those who feel they cannot live up to it are totally excluded from the life of the church... that, for example, the only recourse for the divorced-remarried is to leave the second spouse and live a celibate life as long as the first spouse lives.

• All of the interventions I have read thus far insist that the church must be faithful in teaching the truths and values it finds in revelation. I've seen no one, for example, maintaining that there should be a blurring of the Gospel teaching that marriage should be permanent, faithful, open to the generation and nurturing of life.

• Without offering very specific solutions, the bishops are saying: The church can, however, find a more compassionate style which accepts the faith and good will of people who have not been able to live up to these ideals, which accepts and encourages the goodness and yearning that is present in their lives, which urges them to a more faithful response to Christ without insisting that all participation in the life of the church requires conformity to a specific standard of conduct.

• The bishops seem to be

saying that, with real effort, the church must find ways of reaching out to these people, which more faithfully reflect the compassion and love Jesus showed to men and women who sinned through weakness but who were of good will.

Can there be this kind of pastoral openness to some of the people who are locked into a second marriage which the church cannot recognize? Or to some couples who, after very serious consideration, conclude that they must resort to contraceptives?

The fact is that many priests, often with the support of their bishops, are finding ways of reconciling and encouraging such people.

In its public posture, however, the church has said little about this course of action. It fears, very reasonably, that it would be extremely difficult to do so without seeming to compromise its convictions that marriage should be permanent, that contraception does involve a moral disorder, that full sexual expression is appropriate only within the context of a permanent marriage commitment.

It is a very delicate, difficult balance to maintain. However, the original statements in the synod seem to be saying: We must take the risk. The harm being done by the legalistic style of the past seems greater than the potential damage which might come from a confusion of compassion with laxity.

I don't know how church leadership will respond to these pleas, but I judge these early interventions to be right on target.

Arafat Invites Pope

Rome (RNS) — Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yassir Arafat has renewed his invitation to Pope John Paul II to visit the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon so the pontiff can see first-hand "the suffering of a people in exile," PLO emissary Afif Saffieh said here.

Arafat's second invitation was brought to the pontiff in the form of a hand-carried message by Saffieh, a member of Arafat's staff who met briefly with the pope at his Wednesday general audience Sept. 17.

Saffieh told reporters afterwards that "the pope, by welcoming me in public at St. Peter's Square, wanted to testify to his preoccupation for the fate of Palestine and the Palestinian people."

"Palestine, the Palestinians, and Jerusalem are part of my principal preoccupations," Mr. Saffieh said Pope John Paul told him at Wednesday's open-air audience.

Saffieh, a Catholic, also told reporters that Vatican Archbishop (Achille) Silvestrini gave the task of referring to Arafat the Holy See's categorical condemnation of the Israeli parliament's unilateral annexation of Jerusalem as its indivisible capital." Saffieh met twice with Archbishop Silvestrini, secretary of the Vatican's Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, a department in the Vatican Secretariat of State, during his stay in Rome.

Saffieh also said that a new relationship had been born between the PLO and the Holy See and added that future contracts will be carried on, either with the help of special emissaries or through the apostolic nunciature in Beirut, Lebanon.

The Vatican announced the meeting between Saffieh and the Pontiff after the Sept. 17 general audience.

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