

# OHD Launches Workshops On Welfare Assistance

The diocesan Office of Human Development, as a member of a coalition formed by the New York State Catholic Conference, has begun holding a series of workshops throughout the diocese to motivate the Christian community to lobby for an increase in the public assistance basic needs grant. Sister Anne Urquhart said last week.

"Using scripture and the social teachings of the Church as a background, the workshops are designed to explore the structural causes of poverty, examine the economic system, and study the issue of the inadequacy of

the basic needs grant in New York State," she said.

The issue has been of some concern in the diocese for more than a year. In 1979 Bishop Matthew H. Clark asked priests for support in promoting the efforts of the NYSCC to increase the public assistance basic grant level.

Several times in 1980 he has taken action in the lobbying effort.

Workshop participants will be encouraged to lobby with state representatives for an increase in the grant which has not been raised since 1974.

In the state bishops' 1980 legislative program it is stated:

"The rising cost of goods and services has placed severe financial burdens on many segments of our society. For those on public assistance, however, the problem is most acute. While over the past several years, the cost of living has steadily increased, the cash grant to assistance recipients has not. The grant level today is based upon a standard of need established in 1972. The Conference calls upon the State to take immediate steps to increase the level of assistance while placing no increased burden on local governments to increase their share."

Remaining workshops slated for December are:

Dec. 4, St. Stanislaus Church, 8-10 p.m.

Dec. 11, Our Lady of Mercy High School, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Dec. 13, St. Francis DeSales School, Geneva, 10 a.m. to noon.

Dec. 18, St. Pius Tenth, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Further information is available by calling Carol Schwartz, Office of Human Development, (716) 328-6400.

## Eucharist

Focus on the Eucharist will begin at St. Boniface, 330 Gregory St., with an evening prayer service, 7:30 p.m., Thursday Dec. 4. Father

Donald Murphy will celebrate Mass at 8 p.m., which will be followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

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MONTHLY MEETING: Sunday, Dec. 7th  
ST ANN'S HOME — Portland Avenue  
MASS: 3:05 P.M.  
VISITORS WELCOME  
FOR INFORMATION: 244-5329

Fr. John Reedy



Looking for the Lord

## Bishops' Meeting Encouraging

Thank God I don't have to do a straight news report on the recent meeting of the American bishops.

There was no single dramatic issue which gave focus to the three-and-a-half days; the lobbying that was present was low-key, without the angry confrontations of past years.

The bishops simply did a

fair amount of good, solid work on a number of issues which they felt they had to address.

Though they won't be run out of town for their action, they deserve credit for approving a well-reasoned statement which says why they regard capital punishment as morally unacceptable for American society today.

It's an unpopular position, but that's why they put forth reasoning they regard as just and Christian. Not bad for a group which dislikes making waves.

On a second try, they approved changes in liturgical language which is offensive to many who are sensitive to the concerns of the women's movement. Personally, few bishops showed much anxiety over the existing language. But they had listened to their people and they responded to their concerns.

They showed restraint in avoiding a heavy-handed approach to some of the inevitable pastoral problems which arise in Catholic colleges and universities. Their statement was supportive, sensitive to real problems facing these institutions, reasonably frank in pointing out some of the worries of the Catholic community.

They also exercised restraint in their statement on communism. I doubt that the document is going to have any profound impact on anyone. No one suspects that the American hierarchy is about to endorse communism, but the bishops avoided any tone of witch-hunting or hysteria; they recognized that there are social injustices which are unacceptable to both Christians and communists.

And they avoided suggesting that rejection of communism implies an endorsement of everything opposed by communists — including some aspects of the capitalistic system.

There were a few moving, prophetic voices among the bishops: There was Bishop Tom Gumbleton's passionate plea for recognition of the horrible dangers involved in the increasing possibility of military confrontation and a resort to nuclear arms.

There was the profoundly sincere, almost painful effort of Bishop Frank Stafford to express his discovery of how family life can become a rich environment for growth toward Christ.

Bishop Stafford didn't really succeed in getting across the deep insights he had drawn from those married people he had listened to in his work on the recent synod. But he did suggest to all of us that there is much more that we need to see, to understand, to appreciate.

And his statements made it clear that the synod experience could not be reduced to legalistic

judgments on birth control and remarriage after divorce.

My overall reaction to the stacks of reports and the long discussions:

On the whole, these are good men, cautious, but open to the real concerns and needs of their people. As a group, they are not likely to take any radical stands, but they listen to and are affected by the voices of the people, the voices of prophets.

While they stand by traditional teachings, they are slowly learning to combine this doctrinal fidelity with a pastoral manner which avoids condemnations, which recognizes the real obstacles to a full Christian life, which is willing to accept and encourage people where they are.

As a group, they have a lot of limitations. But I came away from the Washington meeting impressed, more confident that the Lord will be able to make Himself visible even through the organizational bureaucracy of our church.



Mercy Sisters Mary Inez Livingston and Mary Denise O'Brien display some of the wares which will be for sale at the mall.

## Nuns Join Mall Sale

The Senior Sisters and the Infirmary Sisters of both the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Joseph will operate booths at the annual East Rochester Mall Sale, Dec. 4 and 5, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The booths will offer baked

goods and handcrafted articles including Christmas decorations, stuffed animals, dolls, candles, pillows, hooked rugs, scarves and ski hats.

Proceeds will benefit the Sisters of Mercy retreat house at High Acres, Geneva, and the Sisters of St. Joseph Living Needs fund.

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