

CCGEB Approves Pool Agreement

Elmira — The Chemung County General Education Board agreed to a contract with the Elmira City School District for use of the district's pool facilities, Martin Tracy, board president, reported.

The contract provides for free use of the pool at Elmira Free Academy, with the Catholic school system providing its own instructor and lifeguard. At its November meeting, the CCGEB had rejected a proposal which would have required payment to the school district of what it considered to be its costs in providing the instruction with its own personnel.

The contract provisions are for the current school year, and affect only St. Mary's and St. Casimir's schools. Our Lady of Lourdes students were already provided for under another agreement.

The contract garnered unanimous support from the CCGEB members present, Tracy said.

In other action, Tracy reported, the board rejected a suggestion that the number of kindergarten classes at St. Mary's School be reduced from three to two, after hearing from Sister Marilyn Reeves, school principal, and several parents.



Youth Mass

Father David Mura, diocesan director of Teen Seminar, and Father Philip Billotte of St. Patrick's, Corning, were the celebrants at a city-wide youth Mass at St. Mary's, Corning, Sunday, Dec. 14. Approximately 200 junior and high school students attended the Mass, which was the first event prepared by a group representing the three Corning parishes which is working to establish youth programs. A pizza party followed the Mass.

Rabbi Urges Donations for Quake Victims

Providence, R.I. (RNS) — The dean of the Providence Hebrew Day School told parents of Jewish children they should reduce the number of Hannukah gifts they planned to give and consider making contributions to relief programs for Italian earthquake victims.

Rabbi Shalom Strajcher also suggested that parents and children consider contributing additional funds to other charities and to the State of Israel through the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

Centering on Service



Office of Liturgy

"Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations weaken and destroy faith."

We at the Liturgy Office want to make these words of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy a reality in each of our parishes: to help develop good celebrations that nourish the faith of the people who participate in them. This is a big order, of course, but we don't do it alone; most of our parishes have many people who take seriously their work of developing their faith and community through good celebrations. It is the task of the Liturgy Office to facilitate this local effort.

We do this primarily by the support and formation we offer those who are directly responsible for providing good liturgical celebrations: parish liturgy committees and the various liturgical ministers. It is not only important that the rituals are done correctly; it is also crucial that they are done in such a way that they allow people to express and deepen their faith in the God who also loves them. And so, formation programs help develop the ministry of lecturers, eucharistic ministers, ushers, musicians of all sorts and presiders. Workshops on the meaning of the liturgical seasons, planning children's and family liturgies, and the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours have been or will be additional ways in which parish committees can enhance their understanding of their task of liturgical planning. Also parish liturgy committee formation is always available to help new or rejuvenated committees sort through their responsibilities and priorities.

The Liturgy Office has always tried to provide services at a variety of levels: diocesan-wide, like the annual Liturgy Institute, or regionally or parish-cluster, like Focus on Parish Worship (1976) and Lector Formation (1978). But most particularly we work with individual parishes, assisting them in their particular areas of need. This help has been provided in workshop sessions on topics ranging from Christian Initiation or

Penance to hymnal development or a "laboratory" for reading skills for lecturers. Parish staffs or committees or individual parishioners contact the office by mail, telephone or in person, for advice and consultation about celebrating Evening Prayer, the baptism of a child, copyright permissions, renovating a church, the conditions for general absolution, planning a communal anointing of the sick, determining if there is any longer a distinction between High and Low Mass (there isn't), and many other issues and concerns.

The publications of the Liturgy Office are another way of aiding this understanding. The weekly column "Insights in Liturgy" appears elsewhere in this paper. We also make available a reflective bulletin on liturgical topics called "Liturgy Resources Newsletter" (\$3 per year). Three resource booklets have also been prepared in the past 18 months: planning the Easter Vigil, celebrating children's and family liturgies, and parish celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours.

There are three full-time staff persons who carry the bulk of the work of the office: Father Robert Kennedy, director; Sister Nancy Burkin, SSI, associate director for parish worship; and Mrs. Pamela Schaeffer, resource assistant. The office is helped by the advice and talents of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission and its committees on music, environment and art, and liturgical theology.

Overall, our work is directed to the call of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: "Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy; the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian Spirit." (#14).

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