



Chalice Presentation

At its annual Lincoln Day Dinner, the Bishop James E. Kearney Assembly 4th Degree Knights of Columbus presented the 1981 Memorial Chalice to Rev. Mr. George Heyman, deacon at St. Ambrose in Irondequoit. Above, Father John Gagnier, faithful friar; James McCormick, faithful navigator; Deacon Heyman and his parents, Mary Ellen and George Heyman, and their daughter Patricia. Rev. Mr. Heyman will be ordained to the priesthood on April 24 in St. Ambrose Church.

Insights In Liturgy



Reflections Of Ministers Of Hospitality

By Paul Oliver

We have had ministers of hospitality for over a year now in our parish, and it has been a very enjoyable experience for the total community. The ministry itself, while the title is new, combines both the old ministry of usher and the new ministry of greeter.

We began this ministry in its renewed form about a year ago during a Ministry Day planned for our liturgical ministers. At this Ministry Day, men and women who expressed an interest in learning more about parish hospitality were helped to approach ushering in a warm, friendly manner. They learned that this was a very old ministry, going back to the early church, and that it was being brought back to the fullness that it once enjoyed.

After serving in their chosen ministry as Ministers of Hospitality for over a year, I thought it would be interesting to talk to some of these individuals, and to ask them to share their insights with the readers of this column. The following is a result of my conversations.

One couple responded, "One of the first things that struck us as we entered this ministry was that we could experience it as a couple. Before Vatican II and the liturgical renewal, this ministry was reserved for the men of our parish, and now for the first time at our parish women had been chosen along with men!"

One of our men reflected, "One of the most fulfilling parts of the ministry to me has been that of greeting the people before Mass, and saying goodbye at the end of the celebration. Welcoming people, especially those who are new to our community, and helping acquaint them with other members of the parish has led me to a deeper appreciation of the communal nature of the liturgy, and helps reveal to me, personally, what a true

Christian community can be."

Along the same line of thought, another person said, "I never realized that by the way we welcome people we can influence the mood that is set at the liturgy, actually making it one of celebration. I find myself hoping that the people I greet will be able to better enter more fully into the celebration."

A woman responded, "One aspect of the ministry, and one that we (she shares her ministry with her husband) entered into with some trepidation, was that of taking up the collection. We were not completely comfortable with the idea of collecting money. As a woman, I was a little fearful of treading on that last bastion of the male usher. A woman taking up the collection! But, after discussing it, we realized that this is the way that most of the members of the community shared in the mission of the Church, and that these contributions should not be hidden. Rightfully, the people's monetary contributions should be presented with the other gifts of bread and wine as the offering of the community. I was also very pleased with the way in which our community immediately accepted women in all of the various functions of this ministry, including taking up the collection!"

One couple summed up the reactions of their fellow ministers when they said, "We have felt very fulfilled as we have shared our ministry over the past year, and this feeling that we get as we welcome our brothers and sisters to our Eucharistic celebration has helped us to grow in our faith and love of Jesus Christ."

For myself, and for the entire community, I wish to commend our Ministers of Hospitality, and relay to them our heartfelt gratitude for helping our community grow in our faith and love of Jesus Christ.

(Paul Oliver is the chairperson of the Liturgy Committee at St. Monica's Parish and a member of the Diocesan Liturgy Commission.)

Public Assistance Subject of Meeting

By Michael Groden

Area residents filled the St. Michael's Auditorium last week to hear testimony on why New York State public assistance should be raised from its current level.

An eight-member ecumenical panel heard testimony from several individual welfare recipients and 12 representatives of social agencies that deal with public assistance.

The welfare hearings came as a result of Gov. Hugh Carey's recent statement on public assistance, saying that the rate of payment should increase. Welfare rates have remained the same since 1974 despite of the inflationary spiral the economy has suffered the past years.

Critics of the Carey increase say that the proposed amounts are not in keeping with the current inflation rates and want the state to allocate more.

The panel gathered to hear testimony on the public assistance situation to prepare for an Albany meeting with area legislators, to present what they had learned.

Panel members are Bishop Matthew H. Clark; Bishop Robert Spears, Episcopal Diocese of Rochester; Rev. Carroll Turner, Monroe Baptist Association; Rabbi William Blank, Temple Emanu-El; Rose Tantalio, president of Charles Settlement House; Ivette Salgado, Action for a Better Community; Ann Nelson, president of Church Women United; and Mari Greisberger, president of Genesee Settlement House.

Those who testified described living conditions for welfare recipients. Marg Schmale, from the Monroe Welfare Justice Coalition dealt with the "myths that exist" about those of assistance. One myth, Schmale said, was that recipients are simply lazy individuals who do not want to work. She said that "a few hours of research in the library" would show that the number of welfare clients are directly proportionate with the employment statistics

the county. When unemployment figures rise, so do welfare applications. When unemployment goes down, so do welfare applications, proving welfare recipients will work when work is available, she said.

Another myth is that the majority of welfare applications come from women and that once they are on the welfare roles they stay on them forever, Schmale said. Again citing statistics, she said that when women have an opportunity to work, they work.

A woman receiving public assistance described her life to the panel as "like being made to feel like a beggar."

She said that she had never been on welfare before and that it took a great deal of thought to make her decision. "It came to the point that I had to decide between keeping my pride, or letting my children suffer," she said.

After the formal hearings panel members voiced their reactions to the problems that they had just heard. Bishop Clark said that he felt "challenged" by what was said at the hearing and that he was committed to bringing their message to public attention, both in the Catholic community and to our area representatives in Albany.

Bishop Spears said his reaction to the testimony was one of "anger." He said that many of the country's priorities are done in a way that "boxes out the poor." He felt that tax cuts and other cutbacks in government spending should not include those programs that benefit the poor.

Rabbi Blank said, "my eyes have been opened" in regard to public assistance, and that he was angered by what he heard and would work to remedy the situation.

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Parish Offers Lenten Series

A Lenten series of "minicourses" is planned at Holy Spirit Parish, Penfield. The series will begin at 7:45 p.m. on consecutive Sunday starting on March 8 at Holy Spirit, 1355 Hatch Rd.

Course offerings are The Bible: What it Tells Us, led by Father Frederick Bush, pastor; Portraits of Jesus Through the Gospels, by Father George Heyman, deacon intern at St. Ambrose; Fulfilling the Promise: A History of the Church, by Father James Wolfe, associate pastor at Holy Spirit; and Types of Prayer: Centering Jesus, Scripture, Healing, with Brother Ronald Howe, CFC, from Bishop Kearney High School.

Registrations are required by March 2 and they may be obtained by calling the Religious Education Office, 671-5680. All those interested in the courses are invited by the Christian Education Committee.