

Kathy Kircher's Bittersweet Day Comes on Friday

By John Dash

Friday marks a bittersweet beginning for Kathy Kircher. On that day she officially will relinquish the directorate of the diocesan Ministry to the Divorced and Separated and take up new duties at Rochester General Hospital.

She describes herself as "joyfully anticipating what is a new experience in this stage of my life," but only after a "long and painful decision."

She now knows "pre-separation pain," she said in an interview last week — the same sort of pain that she has helped others deal with in the past five years of the ministry. Kathy Kircher's papers for release from her religious community are now in Rome.

And yet, on the whole, she feels her counselling work has "been critically enriched by my own experience."

Her experience of late has been to personally know "feelings of grieving over an ending."

The ministry which she helped shape is now five years old. It began with two groups, one at St. Charles Borromeo and the other at St. John the Evangelist on Humboldt Street.

With the encouragement

FELLOWSHIP DAY

Church Women United's annual May Fellowship Day will feature a talk by Dr. Mary Hodgson of the Boike Marriage and Family Service, and a workshop on family communications headed by Karen Brammer, associate director of Alcohol Youth Education, starting at 9:30 a.m. Friday, May 1, at Webster United Methodist Church, 169 E. Main St., Webster.

of Father James Young, national chaplain to the ministry; Father James Lawlor, now co-pastor of Old St. Mary's; and Pat Norton of St. John's Parish, she wrote a proposal for establishing a diocesan office in the winter of 1976.

"Bishop Hogan was committed to it right from the beginning," she recalled. He accepted the proposal, naming her to be the director of the office, after a summer's study, in September of that year.

At that time, she said, there were only four such offices in the country, and the Diocese of Rochester had a unique model. Elsewhere, she said, clergy and religious constituted the steering committee for such offices. Here the divorced and the separated "made their own way, devising programs, and working the budget. Priests and Sisters would act as chaplains."

She said Father Young, at that time, informed her that the diocese was alone in its model for the ministry. The lay group over the years has come to act as a clearing house for new programs, she said.

Almost at once, divorced and separated people began to establish groups, first in Elmira, then Corning and Ithaca, all in the winter of 1977.

The advisory group grew so rapidly, she said, that it has now split into two groups, north and south.

"My idea was to establish the ministry in such a way that in five or six years it would be in the hands of the layman."

As now it is. Also on Friday, Angela Gallo will become the first diocesan director of the ministry to have gone through the



MS. KIRCHER

experience of divorce. "I feel others will follow suit," Ms. Kircher said.

The ministry now has 12 regional groups in the diocese. Between 3,800 and 4,500 persons a year are assisted.

In addition, Ms. Kircher said, there is some reorganization under way and programs are being devised for persons with special needs. To wit: special programs for the newly divorced and separated; special programs for those who have been divorced for three or four years; and a program for men only.

"These are all seen as additional ways for the ministry to work," Ms. Kircher said. The regional group, however, remains the standard point of entry into the ministry.

Ms. Kircher will not entirely abandon her work with the ministry on Friday, however. She now considers herself affiliated "not by professional interest, but now by experience. The programs will now assist me in my transition."

FOCUS ON EUCHARIST

This month's Focus on Eucharist will begin with evening prayer and Rosary at 7:20 p.m., Thursday, April 30 at Queen of Peace Church, 601 Edgewood Dr. Father Robert Klem, CSB, will celebrate Mass at 8 p.m. and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will follow. All are welcome.



Hard Work

The panel of judges for the Courier-Journal Mother of the Year Contest studiously examine the hundreds of entries submitted from all corners of the diocese. The judges, who completed their work last week, are, from the left, Ms. Gail Smithers, promotion manager of Long Ridge Mall; David Nolan, news director of Channel 10/WHEC-TV; Frank Sibillo, vice president for personnel and community relations, Sibley's; and the Honorable Michael Telesca of the Surrogate Court. The judges' decisions will be revealed in the May 6 edition of the Courier-Journal.

Sign up Early for June Conference

The fourth annual New York State Conference for Separated and Divorced Catholics will be held Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 12-14 at Marymount College, Tarrytown, N.Y.

Guest speakers will include Father James Young, CSP, national chaplain for the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics; Wesley Moore, founder of Capital District Chapter of Equal Rights for Fathers of New York State; and Virginia Clemente, marriage and family therapist from Dallas, Texas.

Fees for the weekend range from \$65 to \$105. The registration fee of \$65 includes admission to the general sessions, two workshops, two breakfasts, Saturday lunch and dinner and the entertainment.

At a recent gathering at the Marymount facilities,

Carmela Corbo, conference registration chairperson, emphasized early registration for the event because only 460 rooms on campus were available. The rooms will be

filled on a first come, first served basis. For further information contact Carmela Corbo at (914) 762-4766, or Gene Sheridan at (914) 762-3241.

Special Camping Offered

The Rotary Sunshine Camp, sponsored by the American Diabetes Association and the Rochester Rotary Service Foundation, is offering a 10-day camping session for diabetic youngsters and their non-diabetic brothers and sisters. Children aged 8 through 15 will be accepted.

The camp session will run July 20-29. Activities will include swimming, hiking, athletic games, creative arts, campfires, and diabetic teaching.

The camp fee is \$150. The American Diabetes Association, Rochester Regional Affiliate, will

provide several full and partial campships for those in need.

For information and applications call 271-1260.

FIRST FRIDAY

Msgr. Charles V. Boyle, pastor of St. Anne's Church, will celebrate Mass and speak at the following luncheon of the First Friday Club, 11:45 a.m., Friday, May 1. The club is at the Knights of Columbus chambers, 670 Thurston Road. The event, open to the public, is sponsored by the Daily Mass League and the Knights of Columbus to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

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