

COURIER-JOURNAL

SOUTHERN TIER-AUBURN GENEVA

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Vocations Exist, But Must Be Fostered

By Martin Toombs
Southern Tier Editor

Bath — A plea for Catholics to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life was followed by workshops which told some of the problems of accepting that call at the Steuben Region Assembly on vocations at St. Mary's, Bath, May 17.

Families and friends should be willing to ask someone if they have investigated the possibility that they have a vocation, the same way they do with marriage. Father Eugene Sweeney said in his keynote address.

And in the workshops that followed, a mother of a Sister of St. Joseph told of her mixed feelings about her daughter's vocation, and a permanent deacon candidate related his children's fears about his new role.

Father Sweeney, pastor of St. Pius V, Cohocton, and Sacred Heart, Perkinsville, opened the program, and told those attending that "you and I" have to do the job of fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

There is no shortage of calls, he said; God is giving vocations, but "men and women are not responding." That could be because "we are not doing enough" to foster vocations, he said, giving family members, priests and religious and friends that responsibility.

Some say they don't want to force someone into a religious vocation, but he said that talking about the religious life isn't coercion. He pointed out that people are not reluctant to encourage marriage.

Vocations don't come from revelations; he noted that "it happens through people," in his case, "a seminarian and a priest in his parish when he grew up. He added that the same questions from a lay person can have even more influence.

People shouldn't pray for vocations, he said, but rather that those who have vocations will "say yes to that call."

Three workshops followed. In one, Joanne and George Martinec, St. Patrick's, Corning, parishioners, discussed how

parents can help their children select their vocation, be it the religious life or other patterns of adult living.

Another featured Kay Mitchell of St. Patrick's, Corning, and her daughter, Sister of St. Joseph Mary Lou Mitchell, who lives at St. Mary's, Elmira, and teaches at the St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing.

Mrs. Mitchell related that she didn't immediately accept her daughter's decision to enter the sisterhood. Despite fond memories of an aunt who was a religious, and of her heavy involvement with her faith, she had trouble accepting her daughter's choice, and felt guilty that she felt that way.

The emotions she felt at the time came back in the retelling, and Mrs. Mitchell said that while "it was hard" at the time, she has found that she hasn't lost a daughter, but gained other religious women as friends.

Sister Mary Lou, after listening to her mother and supporting her while she spoke, stated that she sees her vocation as a gift. While



A Sister of St. Joseph and her mother met with some of those attending the Steuben Assembly at St. Mary's, Bath, May 17. Father Francis Davis, St. Patrick's, Corning, pastor, is at the end of the table; on his right is Kay Mitchell, and to her right is her daughter, Sister Mary Lou Mitchell.

in college, she fought the feeling that she was called to the religious life, she said, something which her twin sister pointed out to her.

At first she was reluctant to join what she feared was a dying lifestyle, but she found that it is "still very much alive and well." Being a religious sister is a "very human way of life," she said; it is an "ongoing process," and perfection is not an entry requirement.

She made her first vows last year; she said that she expects to make her final profession when the time comes.

The third workshop was

given by Ray Defendorf, a permanent deacon candidate, his wife Patricia, and their children.

Part of the discussion involved the impact of Defendorf's ordination on his family. He noted that while serving the Church as a deacon, his first priority will be to his family, and to his job which supports them. That means that most deacons will have about 10 hours a week for their Church work, and will usually be assigned to work near their homes.

While the workshop participants were supportive of the new role the deacons will be filling, the Defen-

dorfs noted that their children have some reservations. Afraid about what their friends will think, a son doesn't like the idea of his father being ordained, and a daughter has threatened to attend another church if her father is giving the homily.

The approximately 40 assembly participants then heard presentations on two parish evangelization projects which grew following the region's evangelization program with Father Alvin Illig, head of the national evangelization effort, last December. Reporting were St. Mary's, Bath, and St. Patrick's, Corning.

St. James Honors Volunteers

Hornell — Volunteers who gave more than 50 hours of service to St. James Mercy Hospital and members of the RSVP Cluster Group were honored at a recognition dinner May 13 in the hospital cafeteria.

The honorees consisted of 49 volunteers with more than 50 hours of service, and 12 RSVP participants who gave uncounted hours compiling newsletters and brochures for the hospital.

Paul Shepherd, associate administrator, welcomed the group and thanked them on behalf of the administration, board of directors, and employees. Edith McGuckin, public-relations director, gave the invocation.

Carl Robertson, volunteer director, noted that during the year, 103 volunteers provided 11,427 hours of service in the gift shop, delivering Meals on Wheels, staffing blood pressure clinics and assisting in the hospital's various departments. He also noted the thousands more hours given by those who worked on fund raising projects.

Robertson, assisted by volunteers Julia Koski and William Huber, presented certificates to those present.



May Day

Students step back after placing a crown on the statue of the Blessed Virgin during May Day ceremonies at St. Casimir's Church, Friday, May 15. The ceremonies, performed by St. Casimir's School students, included benediction.

Atlanta Benefit Scheduled

Elmira — The "Carr-Hill" choir of New York City, under the direction of Carroll Buchanan, will present a concert at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, June 6, at the Park Congregational Church. The concert, a memorial to the Atlanta tragedy, is being sponsored by the Chemung County Probation Officers Association, community organizations and Elmira residents.

A local choir under the direction of Dr. Joseph Cook, Elmira College professor of

music and choir director, will also perform.

The community is invited; donations are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students. Tickets will be available at the door. Direct contributions to the fund can be made by sending checks made payable to the "Atlanta Police Bureau of Investigative Funds," and sending them to the Chemung County Probation Officers Association, PO Box 382, Elmira, N.Y. 14902.

At the end of the fund drive

CCGEB Schedules Registration Day

Elmira — The Chemung County General Education Board (CCGEB) got an update on its festival planned for June 20, 21, and heard about a supplemental registration day at its meeting May 14 at St. Casimir's.

The supplemental registration will be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday, June 1, in all four schools. The registration has been set in the hope that those now in the system but not registered for next year will do so, and to give new students another opportunity to register as well.

The festival work is proceeding well. Thomas Klotz reported, noting that he is recruiting additional volunteers through the schools.

ANOINTING MASS

Seneca Falls — The sacrament for the Anointing of the Sick and Infirm will take place at St. Patrick's Church during the noon Mass on Sunday, June 14. The ceremony is open to all who wish to receive the sacrament. For further information those interested may call the rectory, 568-5203.

Charismatic Leader Named

Mt. Morris — Charles Garagozzo, a parishioner of St. Patrick's parish here, was named coordinator of all Charismatic Groups in the Central West Region of the diocese recently. There are 75 Charismatic Prayer Groups in the diocese presently that meet on a regular basis.

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Concert Announced

Binghamton — A concert featuring three solo artists and a group from Canada which will benefit the Spiritual Center in Windsor will be at 7:30 p.m., Friday, June 5, in the Forum Performing Arts Theater, on Washington Street in Binghamton.

The performers are artists with K'R Music, which is based in Trumansburg. Performing will be Ray Repp, a founder of K'R, and the composer of many songs used in liturgy; Mary Lu Walker, the singer-songwriter from Corning; Bea Verdi, an accomplished composer of popular songs who has devoted her efforts recently to liturgical music; and Antioch, a group of seven men from Montreal, Canada, two of them priests.

Tickets, at \$5 each, are available from the Religious Education Office in Binghamton, 798-0612, or from K'R Music, Trumansburg, 387-5325.

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