

Fr. John Reedy



Looking for the Lord

## Women And the Liturgy

The July 17 issue of the National Catholic Reporter snapped me out of the mid-summer doldrums. It carried almost six full pages built around the theme of Catholic women celebrating the Eucharist.

There are variations, some of which I had heard about.

There have been ceremonies aimed at sharpening sensitivity, expressing a sense of injustice at the exclusion of women from priestly ordination. A woman has presided at a ceremony which goes through the Liturgy of the Word and ends abruptly when the Eucharistic prayer (which we used to refer to as the canon) would ordinarily begin.

I'm sure this sense of incompleteness powerfully dramatizes the point which is being protested.

There are other ceremonies in which some of the readings and the prayers of the Eucharist are used devotionally when a priest is not present.

Some of these practices might be questionable, but they clearly did not claim to be the Eucharistic liturgy.

But, according to NCR, there are other celebrations taking place in which Catholic women offer the prayers, break the bread, share the cup in what they see as the true Eucharist.

Part of their thinking seems to be tied to the judgment that the Eucharist is the Lord's gift to all of those who would gather in His name, to do what He did at the Last Supper. Some of these people see the development of an ordained priesthood as an ecclesiastical aberration having no basis in scripture or in the intentions of Jesus.

A few observations — admittedly from one who has a deep sense of involvement in the Catholic priesthood and from one who recognizes that he will never be able to separate himself completely from all

## New Guild Sets First Meeting

The first meeting of the Queen of the Americas Guild, Tepeyac 1, will be held at 7:30 p.m., August 17, at Guardian Angels Church.

The meeting will begin with novena prayers to Our Lady of Guadalupe and benediction followed by an orientation to the guild and a social hour.

Further information is available by calling Harriet Beiter, 334-2912.

the "sexist" influences of the culture which shaped him.

First, I suspect that these "Eucharistic celebrations" are presently very rare. I hope so. My fear is that the NCR coverage might encourage some where they did not previously occur.

Second, I see these celebrations as distinct from the question of whether women can and should be ordained to the priesthood. In spite of the repeated pronouncements of Rome and of the bishops in this country, that question will continue to be studied by theologians; it will continue to be pushed by groups of Catholic women.

My point here is that such ceremonies will do more to close the question than to open it. I might never be able to fully appreciate the experience and the frustration of women, but I think I do have a pretty good understanding of the attitudes of Church officials. If there is anything that is likely to close off any examination of the question of women's ordination it is this kind of ceremony.

Moreover, I suspect that there will be a similar reaction among many lay Catholics. Considering the traditional Catholic reverence for the Eucharist, I would guess that this kind of activity would generate great resentment and hostility.

People who might think that the ordination of women is still a question which needs to be explored can still have a firm judgment, "but you don't fool around with the Mass."

Finally, I have a real problem with the thinking behind this kind of ceremony. The Eucharist is not a private devotion, no matter how much psychological satisfaction might come from the readings, the prayers, the symbols.

The sacramental reality is not limited to those who are participating in this particular celebration.

The Eucharist is Jesus, living and acting through the Church. The members of this particular community hear the words of scripture; they offer the bread and the wine; they eat of the bread and they drink of the cup. But they do so as members of the entire Eucharistic community which is the Church.

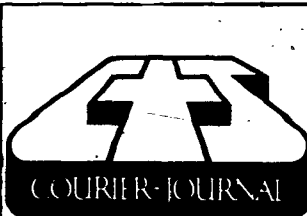
These women might disagree with the present policy of the Church, but I don't see how they can separate themselves from what is so clearly the present judgment of the Church... and still think that they are celebrating the act in which the unity of the Church, in Christ, is offered up to the Father.

I have no reason to doubt the sincerity and the fervor of these women. I just think they are wrong in their judgments and in their actions — seriously wrong.



## Special Celebration

Bishop Joseph Maguire of Springfield and his auxiliary Bishop Leo O'Neill join with more than 150 friars of the St. Anthony of Padua Province in Chicopee, Mass., for a celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the province. The Franciscan Friars serve the Diocese of Rochester at St. Hyacinth in Auburn and St. Teresa in Rochester.



## Southern Tier Auburn-Geneva

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## St. Patrick's Slates Unique Renewal Week

By John Dash

Seneca Falls — More than a year ago the parish council at St. Patrick's Church here set in motion a program that is drawing attention in several corners of the diocese.

The council committed itself to sponsoring a week of intense spiritual renewal for the entire parish this October, and as part of that, to enlist the prayers and sacrifices of diocesans far beyond the limits of parish boundaries.

For the last several weeks, The Patrician, the parish newsletter, has been printing letters from across the diocese — letters of encouragement in the project and letters promising special prayer.

The project is called "Come Grow with Us," and was specially tailored for the parish by a special group of Trinitarian missionaries.

According to Father Michael Bausch, associate at

St. Patrick's who has been working with the parish council on the program for the past year. "It's not a canned program. (The missionaries) come in, listen to your needs and desires and then develop a plan which they present."

During the initial meeting between the missionaries and the council, it was "obvious" the religious "had a feel for the town," Father Bausch said. He related that the team had arrived in Seneca Falls, unannounced, a day before it was expected and had put in several hours getting to know the community.

The team demanded of the council, Father Bausch said, evidence of "a real desire for growth in the spiritual life and a desire to re-involve those who have fallen by the way in the excitement of Christianity."

Father Bausch confided that the head of the missionary team "was extremely impressed with the

commitment of the parish council to the project."

It was the council which a year earlier had "set as a goal the development of a specific plan to motivate people toward growth in their own prayer life and in evangelization." Father Bausch said.

"Come Grow with Us" is slated for Oct. 18-24, and will be part of the celebrations of the parish's 150th birthday.

## Auburn Slates Irish Festival

Auburn — Father Ralph Fraats will solemnly bless the opening of Auburn's Irish Festival at 6 p.m., Friday, August 14, at the main pavilion of Casey Memorial Park. Father Fraats is chaplain to the John F. Kennedy Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. State and local officials will also be present for the ceremonies opening the three-day event.

The weekend will feature Irish bands, Irish dancers, and foods. In addition, handicrafts will be sold.

On Sunday, Father Fraats will celebrate a Mass for Peace in Ireland and recite a rosary for that intention at 11 a.m. in the park's amphitheater. The adult choir of Holy Family Church under the direction of Bob Nolan will sing Irish hymns during the rites.

## Heights Parish Schedules Festival

Elmira Heights — St. Charles Borromeo Parish has scheduled a two-day festival this year for Saturday, Aug. 22 and Sunday, Aug. 23.

A variety of booths and games will be part of the festival, which will get under way at 6 p.m. on Saturday, and at noon on Sunday.

Among the events will be a flea market, a farmer's market, a fish pond for the young children, face painting, and other children's booths.

Co-chairmen for the event are Bob Lintz and Bob Case.

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