

# The Right to Know Their Religion

By Joan M. Smith

The International Year of the Disabled Person (IYDP) has brought to the public's attention the health, educational and recreational needs of the physically and mentally handicapped. But what about their religious needs? Do they, especially the children, have opportunities to learn about and practice their religion?

They do through the St. Charles Borromeo special religious education program. At St. Charles, Mrs. Dorothy Mallory and her volunteer crew teach basic religion and sacramental preparation to mentally retarded and developmentally handicapped children, seven to 16 years old.

St. Charles is a special regional religious education



center serving youngsters from Sacred Heart, Holy Rosary, Holy Cross, and St. John's parishes. Its program began 13 years ago and the yearly enrollment fluctuates between 16 participants and four. When there is a large class preparing for the sacraments the ceremonies are held at St. Charles. "We can make such a beautiful ceremony," said Mrs. Mallory. In cases where there is one child receiving a particular sacrament, he will receive at the home parish.

But no matter where the event is held, the primary concern is that it is held where the child is most comfortable. And that's the program's byword — consideration for the pupil. Children learn in a non-disruptive atmosphere and are given individual attention according to their particular needs.

Besides the basic religion and sacramental format, the teachers work to enhance the



The special religious education classes started at St. Charles Borromeo, Saturday, Oct. 3. Attending, in front row from left, are Jan Bansbach, Lisa Lidestri, Scott Leiston, and Brett Rogers. Teachers welcoming them are Mrs. Dorothy Mallory (on left), Mrs. Patricia Scarlata, and Mrs. Hildegard Mitchell.

pupils' awareness of specific occasions. For instance, the children's celebration of Halloween the last few years has differed from the traditional celebration. Instead of dressing in Superman, ghost, or Spiderman costumes, the pupils dress as saints and participate in presentations about them.

In Mrs. Mallory's opinion,

programs such as the one at St. Charles are needed. The ideal situation, she explained, would be to have such a program in home parishes.

Devoting her time to the program has given Mrs. Mallory much personal satisfaction. "One always gains more than gives," she said. "It's so rewarding and the children are so ap-

preciative for what is done for them." And adding to her sense of fulfillment are the "beautiful people who have worked with me."

Helping her with the delicate learning needs of the special children this year are Mrs. Patricia Amafo, Mrs. Hildegard Mitchell, Mrs. Patricia Scarlata, and Mrs. Marilyn LeChase.



It does not take the class long to become involved in its lessons.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

## Newman Is Not Neumann

Recently a nice voice from an unknown, presumably nice young man, aged 21, phoned from Becket Hall, our present seminary. This was the dialogue in substance.

**Young Voice:** Father, I am calling to invite you to celebrate the Liturgy at Becket on a Monday at your convenience. We invite different priests and if they can stay, to have dinner with us. Liturgy is at 4:45 p.m. and dinner is at six. The guest priest gives a homily which helps us to broaden our understanding of the Church. More openness.

**Fr. C:** Thank you, I always stay for dinner. Are you familiar with G.K. Chesterton?

**YV:** Who? G.K. who?

**Fr. C:** G.K. Chesterton. He was an English author and lecturer, a glorious convert, big as a house in body, and big as Thomas Aquinas in mind. He probably was the greatest convert to the Church in the 20th century. His books, *Orthodoxy* and *Heretics*, both written before he became a Catholic, are classics. However, more people know of him because of his detective stories: the Father Brown detective series. Rochester has a Chesterton Society which is fostered by an ardent Chesterton buff, Robert Knille. Some Basilians are also involved, and a couple of Sisters of St. Joseph. Anyway, Chesterton said, "The purpose of the open mind is to close it on something solid." Do you

know much about Cardinal John Henry Newman?

**YV:** Isn't he the American bishop who was canonized a few years ago?

**Fr. C:** No. That was a tiny man who came from Bohemia to the states, became a Redemptorist missionary, worked also in Rochester and Buffalo, and to his dismay was ordered to become the bishop of Philadelphia. His name is

NEUMANN, and should be pronounced as the Germans do: "Noy-Mahn." But most Americans pronounce it as Newman. The problem becomes that people think we're talking about Bishop John Neumann, the Bohemian, when we really mean Cardinal John Henry Newman, the Englishman.

**YV:** I'm afraid I lost you there.

**Fr. C:** Let me give you a sketch. Cardinal Newman was an Englishman, born in 1801. He was a Calvinist in his youth. He became an Anglican at Oxford University where he was a professor, a distinguished historian, an Anglican priest, a writer, a leader of the Oxford Movement, and the finest preacher in

England. He shook all England by becoming a Catholic in 1845. When he became a Catholic, the Catholics were as delighted as we would be if Billy Graham or Norman Vincent Peale should join up. But poor Newman, once in, was treated shabbily by the English and Irish bishops, by the Old Catholics (there were only 6,000 of them who retained the Faith from the time of the English Protestant Reformation), and by fellow Anglican converts. Even Rome held him under a cloud, thanks to a gossipy busy-body, Msgr. Talbot, in Rome. However, Pope Leo XIII made him a cardinal at the age of 79, and with a sigh of relief, he said, "Now the cloud is lifted."

His last 10 years were peaceful. Newman is relevant today for many reasons. 1) He was wonderfully holy, and his cause is up for canonization. 2) He was wonderfully scholarly. Father Bernard Basset thinks he was the most intelligent man since Christ. 3) There is a parallel between his times and our own. Liberalism was rife in the Church of England, which we would call Modernism today. And that was filtered into some sections of the Catholic Church today. I read recently that the Holy See is sending investigators to our American seminaries, which is bringing shrieks of anger from some theologians and rectors, and a sigh of relief from others, and the


concerned laity. Though shamefully treated within the Church, Newman never once wavered in his fidelity to the Pope and the Holy See, and to Catholic doctrine.

Will you tell Father Panepinto and Father Collins that I am saddened that their young men do not know either Chesterton or John Henry Newman. Maybe when I come in November we can discuss this in the homily, or at the dinner table. May you have God's grace to love and serve His Church with the zestful cheerfulness of Chesterton and the tender fidelity of Newman. My greetings to your fellow laborers at Becket Hall.

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