



Bishop Matthew H. Clark, left, speaks to the Young Adult Ministry task force during a meeting at the Pastoral Center. Group chairman Karen Materna, background, listens. Members of the task force, from



left, David Predmore, Michael Lynch, Jim Rinefield and Marianne Antczak, also attend to the bishop's words.

### Young Adult Ministry Moving Ahead

At a meeting last month, the Young Adult Ministry task force reported to Bishop Matthew H. Clark that it was carrying on as scheduled in its two-year program to identify the needs of young adults.

Twenty-five members of the group, led by Karen Materna, presented the bishop with a formal paper last June requesting to form this ministry to those between the ages of 18 and 35.

According to Ms. Materna, the group's aim is to form ways of meeting the needs of young adults and to challenge them to serve the Church.

"Right now we need time to

discover the skills among our group," Ms. Materna said. "Once we do that, we will plan the directions to take from there."

Ms. Materna claimed the biggest obstacle was to increase representation on the task force, including some voices from the Southern Tier.

Fr. John Reedy



Looking for the Lord

### A Gentle Jeremiah's Warning

Monsignor John Tracy Ellis serves American Catholics the way grandparents should serve a family.

Because of his lifetime of scholarship as a Church historian, because of the experience accumulated at his age (76) and because of his reflective faith and wisdom, he serves us as a keeper of the tradition, as a guide who puts the anxieties of the moment into the perspective of human experience, of faith experience.

We need wise, elderly men and women who have seen much of life — who have taken the time to reflect on it and interpret it — to serve as guides to our efforts to live our lives well.

There's all the difference in the world between this kind of wisdom and the

technical knowledge offered by experts who know much about one slice of science or culture.

The Harmonizer (Fort Wayne-South Bend diocesan paper) interviewed Msgr. Ellis in a recent issue. It asked him to identify, from his perspective, the most formidable problem facing the Church in the United States today. His answer was one which should be taken seriously.

He said, "We are in an era of extreme individualism, where people are doing what they please regardless of what their church or state says... Catholics are accepting the lack of morals of our time."

His attitude is far from despair, but he added, "It will take a universal calamity to force people to their knees, as it has before, to beg for God's mercy... the way the Depression brought us out of the giddy '20s. It will be done through suffering; there is no escaping this national hedonism and purge us from the permissiveness of our society."

As I thought about this judgment, which arises from faith and the perspective of history, I recognized the reality Msgr. Ellis was talking about.

It's not that our generation is malicious or evil; most of us, at least in a vague way, want to live our lives well. We want to be good people... and to be regarded as good people.

But Msgr. Ellis is right: There is a widespread rejection of any authority which would exercise a genuine moral constraint on our lives.

Certainly, we would acknowledge the authority of God, but God doesn't ordinarily specify his requirements through

immediate communications. And somehow our generation has become very casual about all the structures which were formerly seen as mediating God's call to us.

There's a difference between recognizing a moral call on our lives and refusing to obey, and an indifference toward the call itself. In the past, many Catholics perceived God's will in the accepted teachings of the Church — even when they chose not to obey.

Today, many Catholics either refuse to recognize that God's call is mediated through the Church, or they rationalize these teachings into anything they want them to mean.

A lot of explanations can be offered for this change: an exaggerated authoritarianism in the past, confusion which arose from a viewing of disagreements between Church leaders, the blurring of thought as the general membership becomes superficially aware of revised theological thought.

Whatever the reasons, the reality remains. For those of us who profess to believe, this shared belief of the Christian people makes demands on our lives. It tells us that the God of revelation calls us to actions and decisions which we would like to escape. It tells us that the moral demands on our lives are far more specific than: "At least, I didn't mean to hurt anyone."

Msgr. Ellis' judgment comes through as that of gentle Jeremiah: "It will take a universal calamity to force people to their knees." But it comes with a special force from a man who has spent a lifetime studying the history of the tradition which we share.

### Communion Breakfast

The Rosary Society of St. Andrew's Church has slated its annual Communion breakfast following the 9 a.m. Mass, April 25. Tickets at \$2.50 are only obtained by reserving them through Betty Pudetti, 342-8355; Ginny Janas 266-2628.

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### Nurses Program

St. Mary's Hospital Nurses Alumnae Association will sponsor an in-service program, "The Neurological Patient," 12:30-4 p.m., Thursday, April 22. Alumnae, hospital personnel and friends are invited. A small charge will be levied for refreshments. Reservations are made by April 15 by calling Jean Welchan Ring, 663-0321.

### Fashion Show

The Rosary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle will stage a fashion show, 11:30 a.m., April 21, at Arena's. Fashions from Projansky's and hair styles by Charise of the Main Entrance will be shown. Tickets at \$7.50 are reserved by calling Norma Johnston, 544-1721; Maggie Smith, 338-7065; Barb Tarzia 544-8309.