

National Seminar Here: What Is Lay Ministry?

Someone recently called the Parentship Resource Center

and expressed interest in the National Lay Ministry

Seminar July 11-15 at Notre Dame in Canandaigua. But he also asked a very good question, "What is lay ministry, anyway?" The National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the 80s Decade of the Family took the occasion to encourage ministry by lay persons within the Church, as well as outside it. And ministry here is used in the sense of "helping to fill the needs of others."

vision to lay people who are thinking about how they can supplement the pastoral care presently offered by the parish staff. For example, it helps to know some hints when counseling others so that the lay minister can be more effective as a listener, or can avoid feeling used, or can know when to make referrals to professionals.

National Lay Ministry Seminar is designed to help lay people and parish staffs to do just that.

who complete all sessions of the seminar are entitled to receive a Certificate in Pastoral Lay Ministry.



Student Speakers

Julie Lenhard, left, and Melanie Gallagher were valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, for the 51st annual commencement exercises of Our Lady of Mercy High School. Miss Lenhard, a member of St. Joseph's Parish in Penfield, will attend Dartmouth College in the Fall. Miss Gallagher, a member of St. Thomas the Apostle, will go to SUNY Geneseo. Sister Mary Bonaventure Hall, RSM, principal, gave diplomas to 175 students.

In the early Church, deacons were chosen to wait on tables of families who lived in common, to be sure that everyone had enough and that the widows and needy were taken care of. Today, the bishops are inviting laity to minister to others in a similar manner. The bishops see the value of lay persons helping one another out of their own life's experiences, struggles, brokenness and pain. And these experiences are sometimes better "teachers" to the persons involved than studying about life in a university. So we see more and more lay persons reaching out to help others with their struggles, not just in sharing their pain, but in many practical ways. It could be the parents who struggled with the problems of raising teenagers talking about their experiences to other parents whose children are just starting into the teen years... saying, this is what I tried and worked, or I did this and it didn't work.

Although the thrust by the bishops to get lay people involved in ministry was well under way in 1978, it is still quite new in some parishes. Sometimes the parish staff isn't quite sure how to go about involving laity, other than in the sacramental areas such as ushers, servers, lectors, or Eucharistic Ministers, or in the teaching areas, such as religious education instructors. Other times, the parishioners are not ready to use the services of qualified laity, preferring to go to the clergy or professionals instead. This seems to reflect the trend in America to rely on professionals, sometimes even outside their areas of expertise.

David Thomas, writing in "Family Life and the Church," says that family life is not limited to mother, father and children. It includes singles, elderly, divorced, young adults, children and those who are hurting. He says, "Family ministry will not occur by sitting back and waiting for professionals to minister. It will happen by the community assessing its own talents and needs, and reaching out to each other accordingly." The

Maryknoll Guild to Meet

The Maryknoll Catholic Mission Guild will meet at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, July 21, at the home of Anni Scieski, 56 Colony Lane. A Mass by Father Elmer Heindl, chaplain, will open the meeting. Afterward, a picnic dinner will be served. Reservations made through Betty Ernst, 458-9331, or Madalen Carpenter, secretary, 467-1470.

Sarah Child



All in the Family

A Good Idea Gone Awry

"Why don't you ever bring any of your friends home?" we asked the oldest, a month or so ago. Two days later, some 35 members of her track team showed up at 6:30 a.m. bearing eight gallons of orange juice and assorted pastry which they stowed away with five dozen eggs, seven pounds of sausage and a few home fries.

An orderly group, they were on their way to a sectional track meet before 8 a.m., leaving in their wake an occasional crumpled napkin. A half hour after they left it was difficult to tell anyone had been in the house.

of the opposite sex into the poison ivy on the ridge.

By dusk they had settled into a huge circle, the noise now only, somewhat deafening.

"What are they doing now?" I asked the oldest, who was monitoring.

"They're playing spin the bottle."

"But they don't have a bottle." She gave me a look. "They don't need one. Actually the game is Duck, Duck, Goose. And when it's one of the girls' turn to chase a boy, she tries to catch him and kiss him before he gets back to his place."

Well, that's pretty sophisticated, I guess.

Before the last high jumper had departed, however, the youngest, who had watched the proceedings carefully, presented me with a proposal for an end-of-year party. "It's only fair," she blackmailed. This past week the affair took place with some 30 "close friends" in attendance. (At least three had soccer games and couldn't come. Thank God!) It was the first boys and girls party we'd thrown since kindergarten days, an eyeopener in many ways.

I know sociologists claim that today's 12-year-olds are more sophisticated than those of my day. I don't know what kids they've been observing.

For the first two hours, this group fought as to what games they would play. Refusing any food that bore the slightest chance of being nutritious, they galloped around the back yard, sometimes on each other's backs, kicking the soccer ball and gulping corn chips and root beer.

Alternative entertainment consisted of falling out of the trees, turning the hose on each other and pushing members

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