

Cenacle Slates Winter Events

The Cenacle Renewal Center has published a list of a number of events taking place next month.

Father David Mura will lead a Year End Renewal program, Dec. 31-Jan. 1 at the renewal center, 693 East Ave. The evening will include a conference, quiet time for prayer, fellowship and liturgy. Guests have the option of staying overnight or leaving after welcoming the new year. The event is open to all. Further information or reservations are obtained by contacting the Cenacle Ministry Office, (716) 271-8755.

other parishes are welcome to join the group from St. Rita's as space allows. Further information is available at the Cenacle Ministry Office.

A dual parish retreat for the women of St. Lawrence and Assumption in Fairport has been slated Jan. 21-23. Father Robert Collins, rector of Beckett Hall, will lead the program which will feature presentations, time for quiet meditation, private consultation with Father Collins or a Religious of the Cenacle, and Mass. Women from other parishes are welcome as space allows.

A Communication for Couples weekend has been slated Feb. 4-6. The program, "planned for the enrichment of happy marriages," will be conducted by Joseph and Mary Ellen Fitzgibbons, Sister Margaret Mary Mattie, RSM, and Sister Ellen Frawley, RC.

St. Rita's Parish will lead of the year's slate of parish retreats for women. Father Euclid Marier, director of Family Life and Pre-Cana for the Diocese of Ogdensburg, will lead the 24-hour program, Jan. 14-15. Women from



The Fire in the Thornbush Dialogue

Growing Consciousness of Human Dignity

By Sister M. Gratia L'Esperance, RSM

No. 42: "The dignity and human rights of all men and women are promised in their creation by a universally loving God and in their baptism into the generosity of Christ Jesus."

The bishop's pastoral surveys briefly in Part V the

powerful teaching of our Church tradition on the dignity and rights of the human person. Today we are part of a growing worldwide consciousness of human dignity and human rights. Great idealism has developed in spite of horrendous violations in practice. Official Roman Catholic teaching has contributed significantly to the development of a human rights tradition, especially in the last twenty years.

Many other factors have contributed to this growing awareness. In the United

States, the educational revolution in this century is a major cause. For example, my grandmother, born 100 years ago, could reasonably hope to finish grammar school (she did). My mother, born in 1904, could expect to attend high school. She went on to college, in spite of relatives' comments that it would be wasted on a girl. When I arrived in 1932, it was taken for granted that I would go to college, and indeed my congregation sent me on for graduate degrees. Education raises expectations as well as skill levels. For our Church community, the reality of an educated laity is a historic shift from that of a generally illiterate "simple faithful."

Our own official Catholic teaching challenges us that human dignity is the source of all moral principles. What lessens that dignity and

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restricts human rights is morally wrong. Human dignity is the standard for judging institutions, whether social, political, economic, or even religious, in keeping with the principle "the Sabbath was made for the human person, not the person for the Sabbath."

We should therefore not be surprised that Catholic women are inspired by this teaching, become more aware of their potential, and challenge both society and Church about current practices affecting their participation.

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THANKS TO St. Jude, Virgin Mary, and Jesus for favors received. H.E.

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Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Home Is Where The Lord Is

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 2/41-52. (R1) Sir. 3/2-6, 12-14. (R2) Col. 3/12-21.

A family was being evicted from their house. They were loading all their possessions onto a handcart so that they could move it to some temporary accommodation. A neighbor across the street was watching the whole operation. The family did not seem to be overly concerned about the difficulties they had to face in being homeless or the problems that must certainly be awaiting them. At last, the neighbor spoke to one of the children, almost without realizing that he was thinking out loud, "You poor child! It must be terribly hard for you to be without a home!"

The neighbor never forgot the tears in the child's eyes, as she said, "Oh, but we do have a home! We do! It's just that we have nowhere to put it."

In the Christmas Mass a short while ago, we read that Jesus was "laid in a manger because there was no room at the inn." Then to escape the tyranny of Herod, Jesus, Mary and Joseph suffered all the privations of displaced persons. Later on, Jesus could point out that "the foxes have holes and birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head." And yet the Feast of the Holy Family clearly reminds us that Jesus did have a home. It was just that for much of the time He had nowhere to put it.

A home is not bricks and mortar, nor luxury carpets and kitchen gadgets, nor things and comforts. And it takes more than a heap of livin' to make a house a home. Actually Sunday's feast reminds us that it takes Christ Himself. For a family is more than blood

relationship; Dostoevsky portrayed that magnificently in his outstanding psychological novel, The Brothers Karamazov. It takes love to make a family. Love is the bond of unity. And love comes from Christ.

The Holy Family is set before us as the model family. Of course, it was not a typical family: Mary was virgin, Jesus was God, and Joseph, just the greatest man who ever lived, next to Jesus. Still, the family was much like other families: it had its ups and downs — Jesus' loss in the temple was just one of them; they attended the synagogue services just like everybody else in Nazareth and went up to the Temple once a year for the feast of the Passover. However, Jesus and Mary were the center, and that made the family holy and happy! In proportion, as Jesus and Mary become the center of families, so shall they also become happy families. It is not enough that the members of families pray for one another. They must pray with one another. "The family that prays together stays together."

Difficulties and misunderstandings, as in Sunday's gospel, are an integral part of all family life. The fusion of personalities, the relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters will inevitably generate friction. But these are only the signs of growth.

Families today face problems like those of the Holy Family. They should be open to the same solutions. Parents, like Mary and Joseph, should lead the search for Jesus in prayer, and accept the fact that they will not always be able to understand the words and actions of their children. And children should learn to live under the authority of their parents. In this way, the family can progress "steadily in wisdom and age and grace before God and men."

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