

Eucharistic Ministry Furthered at MCCH

By John Dash

Laymen serving as Eucharistic ministers are hardly novel in parishes throughout the diocese; but for one "parish" the development marks a milestone in the path of renewal.

The parish is Monroe County Community Hospital, soon to be served by Eucharistic ministers drawn from among the hospital's long-term patients.

A training program, adapted from that used elsewhere by the diocesan Liturgy Office, has been in session at the hospital since January, and is being presented by Sister Mary Gratia L'Esperance, RSM.

According to Sister Gratia, patients chosen for the ministry are qualified by



Kathryn Curley presents an unconsecrated host to Charles DiFrancesco during a rehearsal at one training session.

their mental and physical health.

Their mobility is seen as a logistical problem and not as

a deterrent to their service. Of the seven patients slated to be commissioned at rites 3 p.m., Sunday, April 10, six are in wheelchairs, and the seventh only somewhat ambulatory.

Those to be commissioned are Gertrude Webb, Agnes Ferguson, Kathryn Curley, Dorothy Cunningham, Mary McTammany, Margaret Read and Charles DiFrancesco.

Also taking the training, though not a resident at MCCH, is Edward Gartland. Gartland was cited recently by Father Bruce

Ammering, chaplain, as providing valuable service to the patients through his regular volunteer visits to the hospital.

Gertrude Webb, president of the hospital's parish council and secretary to Father Ammering, said that she wanted to become a minister "to help Father. We talked it over. Our chapel is a parish church. This is our home."

Gartland said his reason was that "I love my brother and sister and I want to help them live a good religious life."

Both Kathryn Curley and Margaret Read agreed that they wanted to become Eucharistic ministers because they saw the ministry providing a useful service to both the chaplain and their fellow patients.

Agnes Ferguson "saw it as something wonderful — As soon as I saw the opportunity, I grabbed it," she said. And Mary McTammany "just thought I'd like to become one."

For DiFrancesco the opportunity to become a Eucharistic minister is "drawing me closer to Christ. I wish I could explain that, but I can't."

household the resurrection of Jesus in the light of the Scriptures — "to him all the prophets testify." It is the fulfillment of Scripture in Christ that constitutes the essential object of faith. That is why the Scripture arguments assumed such importance in the missionary discourses of the apostles (R1). That is why we say in the Creed: "On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures."

And both these steps to faith are productive because of God's grace operating throughout. In the last analysis, faith is the gift of God. Paul wrote, "You have been raised up in company with Christ" — he uses the passive voice. Divine life is God's doing, not man's. If Christian life had its source from here below, religion would automatically be burdened with backbreaking do's don't's as happened with Phariseism, the religion of the Scribes and the Pharisees. But coming from above, as it does, there is no need to use human techniques for salvation and its maintenance. All that is required is that there be no compromise, that there be a complete break with a world that is always concerned to be its own source of life by use of fallible and sinful means.

The road to faith, therefore, begins when one undergoes the trial of the empty tomb, experiences the emptiness of the world, "the tomb of God." But such a feeling could easily lead to despair or cynicism were not one exposed to the word of God — "faith comes from hearing, from hearing the word of God." And both these experiences are the grace of God calling one to faith. Since faith is ours — and since it has been freely given us through no merit of our own — we cry out each Easter, "Alleluia" — "praise the Lord!"

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Journeying The Road To Faith

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 20:1-9. (R1) Acts 10:34, 37-43. (R2) Col. 3:1-4.

The Easter gospel is the story of the pilgrimage of the apostles toward faith in the resurrection. This faith evolved from twin facts: the empty tomb and the prophecies in Scripture.

When Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb, the stone had been moved away. She concluded someone had removed the corpse. She hurried to the apostles, hoping they would recover it. Because it was only a question of disappearance, the apostles believed her and went themselves to verify the matter. The tomb was empty, but the ceremonies shrouding the body of Jesus were on the ground. This precluded the hypothesis of removal. So the apostles "began to believe" (a reading preferable to "he believed"). The body of Jesus had obviously not been transported elsewhere. Could Jesus be arisen?

The answer was to be found in the Scripture (Hos. 6:2; Ps. 17:10). But at this moment the apostles did not have the key. "As yet they did not understand the Scripture." Faith has to be built not just on the empty tomb, but also on the Scripture.

The first step to faith is to experience emptiness. The world is the "tomb of God." Only when its emptiness is discovered can the first step to faith be taken. It was an experience of this kind that turned Cornelius to Peter.

The second step to faith comes from hearing the word of God. Thus faith was born when Peter explained to Cornelius and his



Sister Gratia L'Esperance, RSM, program coordinator, receives an unconsecrated host from Mary McTammany.

Birthright Sponsors Drive

Birthright, an emergency service offering free pregnancy testing, is sponsoring a clothing drive. Items such as baby clothes, maternity clothes, car seats, play pens, highchairs and cribs are needed and can be dropped off at the following locations: Holy Cross Church (rectory back entrance), 4492 Lake Ave.; Holy Name Church at St. Martin's Way, Our Lady of Lourdes rectory at 150 Varina St., Our Lady of Perpetual Help rectory at 1069 Joseph Ave., Sacred Heart Cathedral rectory at 296 Flower City Park, St. John the Evangelist church

basement at 549 Humboldt St., St. Rita's Church at 1008 Maple Drive and St. Pius Tenth at 3032 Chili Ave.

All contributions are tax deductible. For further information call 865-9872.

Deadline

Items intended for publication must be typed and in the Courier-Journal offices by noon Thursday before the Wednesday publication. The Courier-Journal is located at 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

DEATHS

Sister Mary Helen Rauber, OSF

Williamsville — Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated March 14 for Sister Mary Helen Rauber of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Third Order Regular, who died March 12, 1982.

Her nephew, Rochester diocesan priest Father William Endres, presided at the rites at the congregational motherhouse, St. Mary of the Angels, Convent of Perpetual Adoration here.

Sister Mary Helen was born July 24, 1892, the daughter of Frank and Mary (Johantzen) Rauber. She entered the convent May 3, 1916.

All of the parishes in which she served are in the Diocese of Buffalo, among them St. Gerard, St. Mary of Sorrows, and St. Bartholomew in Buffalo; St. Aloysius, Springville; Sacred Heart, Bowmansville; and Our Lady of Pompeii and St. Mary, Lancaster.

Sister Mary Helen is survived by her sisters, Mrs. Loretta Boff, Mrs. Clara Busch, and Mrs. George Endres; and a brother, Herbert Rauber, all of Rochester.

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Editorial

Good and Bad

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