



### AT YOUR PARISH

#### St. Agnes

Avon — St. Agnes Elementary School still has openings for pupils in kindergarten through eighth grade. The school, serving northern Livingston County for more than 100 years, offers students a quality Catholic education. Further information is obtained by calling the school principal, Mrs. Peggy Nailos, 226-8500; or by writing St. Agnes Elementary School, 60 Park, Avon, N.Y. 14414.

#### St. Thomas the Apostle

A double reception to honor Father Lawrence A. Gross and to welcome Father William G. Endres, has been slated by parishioners at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 7 p.m., Thursday, June 23, in the parish hall. Reservations are requested and are made

by calling Mrs. Parnell (544-1608), Mrs. Kelly (342-8411, days) and Mrs. Glazier (544-0890, evenings). Father Gross has been named pastor of Holy Apostles Church. Father Endres has recently been transferred from St. Jerome.

#### Holy Cross

Children at Holy Cross School celebrated their annual field day June 20. The pupils participated in games for 16 teams, had a sing-a-long, and received awards and refreshments provided by the Home School Association.

#### Festival Advisory

Parish festival chairmen are advised that the *Courier-Journal* is legally restricted from publishing notices of prizes, games of chance, raffles, drawings and the like.

#### St. Margaret Mary

Apalachin — A farewell picnic for Father Elmer Schmidt has been slated 3-7 p.m., Sunday, June 26 on the parish grounds of St. Margaret Mary Church.

Father Schmidt has been in the community since 1974. During his time, a parish hall was built and a parish tithing program, a student grant program and a parish renewal were introduced. Father Schmidt will move to Hornell June 28.

A chicken dinner will be served at 5 p.m. and reservations are required by calling Mr. and Mrs. Bob Desorcic, 625-3559.

#### St. Anne

Palmyra — The parish council of St. Anne's Church recently elected Ann Rider, chairperson; Claudine Schreiner, vice chairperson; Rita Goebert, secretary.

#### Father Reddington Honored

Father John A. Reddington, pastor of St. Louis Parish, Pittsford for the past 30 years, was feted at a dinner in honor of his retirement this year on Friday, June 10 at the Burgundy Basin Inn. Above, Father Reddington is greeted by Mrs. Mary Noeth, widow of the late Carl Noeth, in whose name the portrait of Father Reddington (background) by John Menihan was donated by their son Jerry. Left, Father Reddington beams as he sits in the new Chevrolet Caprice given to him by the people of the parish.



Father Bruce Ritter



## PROGNOSIS: POOR

People see quickly the great promise in this kid. Mike is a tough one: a long history of casual, vicious, amoral violence. In his last placement, Mike crept into a kid's room late at night

and smashed him with a baseball bat while he was asleep. According to Mike, who explained it to me with an air of wounded innocence, the kid provoked it. He was just getting even. That is very important to Mike, getting even—and getting over. That's even more important.

With an I.Q. of 130, he's one of the brightest kids in Covenant House. Handsome, muscular, sharp, skilled, manipulative, as rigid as a bar of steel, Mike has almost no self understanding and even less insight into human relationships. Words like trust, faith, caring, just make his eyes glaze. A dozen psychiatrists have had a go at him—their evaluations mixed but uniformly bad. The written reports always end with the chilling comment, prognosis: poor. Translations: Mike's not going to make it. The human reality is that Mike will probably spend most of his life in jail after he is caught for killing somebody.

He's been "placed" in ten different institutions before he came to Covenant House—and rejected by a dozen others as "inappropriate." Nobody knows what to do about or for a very bright strong hurting dangerous youngster who, as a child, was terribly abused by a sick mother.

We told Mike he could stay on certain conditions: to begin with, that he keep the rules. He had to. It was either that or a jail cell. We were pretty hard-nosed about it. You have the power, man, was all he said. His daily counseling sessions didn't go well at all. They almost invariably ended with Mike becoming enraged and stomping out of the office. He always said goodbye.

Mike's favorite books are *The Godfather* and *The Exorcist*. He believes in and fears the devil; he denies and

Father Bruce Ritter, OFM Conv., is the founder and President of Covenant House/UNDER 21, which operates crisis centers for homeless and runaway youth.

couldn't care less about God. His hero is an uncle who furnished his entire house with stolen property. When I expressed sympathy for his shamed teenage cousins who had to know their father was a thief, Mike was totally and genuinely surprised. Whatya mean? He got over! If he's smart enough, more power to him! Everybody does it. Everybody's like that.

*"Mike is desperate. He sees the handwriting on the wall...he has seen it before!"*

What about telling the truth, Mike, and keeping your word, not stealing, and ripping off, and what about honor, and courage, and integrity...I don't want to talk about stuff like that. I want to change the subject. You're trying to get inside my head. I'm only a 14-year-old boy. I don't want to talk about any heavy ideas. I can't understand that...Mike stormed out again, screaming a furious goodbye back at us.

Mike has totally concrete ideas about what "being good" is. Keeping the rules when you have to and not getting caught when you don't pretty well sums up his code. Mike is very bright and he knows exactly what we want to hear. He wanted to prove to us that he could be good, not just because we'd throw him out of Covenant House, but to be good...He trailed off...I think for a moment he wasn't sure if he wanted to mean it or just get over on us.

*"One of our staff members found a knife under his mattress."*

One of our staff found a knife under his mattress. Mike wasn't going to use it, he said. He just liked to have it around "for protection." Violence, barely controlled, simmers behind his eyes and pours out of his mouth. He's been making a lot of bad friends in the past month, antagonizing the staff and intimidating the other kids. He can no longer control his anxiety about possibly being discharged from Covenant House and is making open threats: If they throw me out I'm going to kill somebody.

#### "HARVEST A HUNDREDFOLD"

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#### Dr. Rita Retires

Dr. Edw known deni retirement June 12, a family and cl 85 and has 1 61 years.

For the la been a pa Thomas Mo was a me Heart Cath is now r Heritage Avenue.

Let's keep the UNDER 21 Centers open so that kids like Mike have that one last chance to make it. Here's my gift of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ please print: NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ AP (KKE) Please send this coupon with your donation to: COVENANT HOUSE Father Bruce Ritter P.O. Box 2121 Times Square Station New York, NY 10108 Because the street is NO PLACE FOR A CHILD

