

Diocesan Religious Welcome Vatican Commission's Study

By John Dash

Diocesan major superiors of women religious are looking forward to a dialogue with the Vatican commission on religious life in the United States.

At the same time they are rejecting the idea that the commission's work can properly be labeled a "probe" or an "investigation."

Interviewed last week Sister Muriel Curran, SSND, diocesan vicar for religious; Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley, SSJ, major superior of the diocesan Sisters of St. Joseph; and Sister Janet Korn, RSM, speaking for Sister Jean Marie Kearse, major superior of the diocesan Sisters of Mercy, all

Religious Life

expressed their intention to pursue dialogue with the commission.

The three Sisters had attended the recent meeting of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in Baltimore.

At that meeting a good deal of discussion centered on the Vatican commission, and reservations about the commission's work were aired in several quarters.

However, Sister Muriel said, "the continued (media)

use of 'probe' and 'investigation' is unwarranted, she said. "That is not my perception of the letter from the pope to the bishops of the United States," establishing the commission.

Be that as it may, Archbishop John Quinn, head of the commission, and Sister Helen Flaherty, outgoing president of the LCWR, found it necessary to hold a press conference detailing the commission's work. At that conference Archbishop Quinn said, "What the Holy See is asking for is an extension of dialogue," between men and women religious and the bishops and the Church as a whole.

Sister Muriel cited the archbishop's description of the commission's work as "to foster pastoral service" to religious.

"I admit," she said, "some religious are using words like 'probe,' but I don't know what's going to be accomplished if we approach it like that."

Sister Janet suggested that "perhaps 'study' is a better word."

She also seized on the description of the commission's work as initiating dialogue. "Dialogue is necessary," she said. "But in dialogue — both sides have to be open to dialogue. If there is not that openness, there isn't dialogue."

Sister Elizabeth Anne sees the commission's work as a furthering of the extraordinary period of internal renewal experienced over the past 20 years by communities of men and women religious.

She said that Vatican Council II had issued the "mandate to renew. We are mandated to renew... And our renewal has been a broader thing than can be expressed in the constitutions." It is that which needs to be aired with the bishops, she said.

"We welcome the challenge," she said, citing "the fine mutuality and collaboration we have with Bishop (Matthew H.) Clark. Our experience here has been very positive."

Sister Janet said the commission's point is "to make us continue to renew, and to deepen the aspects that need renewing in our lives. When we are questioned, we have to question ourselves."

Dance Winners

Teresa and Marie Mayfield, members of Holy Name Parish recently took high honors in two dance competitions. Teresa placed first and Marie first runner-up in the Summer Dance Festival in Irondequoit. That competition qualified them for the National Championships in Pittsburgh, which they both attended. They are both students at the Marilyn Schneider School of Dance.

Pilgrimage

Persons interested in taking part in an October pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, under the leadership of Anthony Guida, are asked to contact Mrs. Mary Kelly, 586-1664.



Fr. Albert Shamon

Word for Sunday

Ignorance A Real Enemy

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 15/1-32. (R1) Ex. 32/7-11, 13-14. (R2) 1 Tim. 1/12-17.

A maid was called to account by her employer for her slovenly work. Pointing to a dust-covered table, the lady said, "I can write my name in the dust here." "Isn't that wonderful?" said the maid. "That's more than I can do. It just goes to show you what an education can do for you." Now that's double ignorance, not knowing how to write, and not grasping the meaning of the lady's remark.

Ignorance is bliss, they say. But is it? Speaking of his persecution of the Church, Paul wrote, "I did not know what I was doing in my unbelief. Paul wasn't looking for an excuse for his action, but for an explanation."

John Dewey ranked ignorance among the four common enemies of humanity. The other three he named: Poverty, Disease, and Injustice.

Be that as it may, ignorance can be a real enemy.

In July of 1876 the naked body of General George Armstrong Custer was found reclining against the carcass of a horse near a relatively unknown stream called the Little Bighorn in Montana.

Custer came to that spot one afternoon as a result of ignorance. Custer's small band found the largest assembly of Indians that had ever come together on the Plains. Like the man in last Sunday's gospel (Lk. 14/31-33), had Custer known what he was up against, he never would have led his troops into a trap. Custer's real enemy was not the Indians, it was ignorance. Had he known, he would have survived.

Ignorance is the college freshman who said in English class he had never read "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" because he did not follow football.

Education is meant to dispel ignorance. Christian Education is meant to dispel ignorance about Christ.

Wherever the Church has gone, there also has gone the school. Bishop Bernard McQuaid, the first Bishop of

Rochester, used to say, "The schoolhouse before the church building. To build the church and not the schoolhouse is to build a monument to our folly for in the generation, the church will be empty."

Ignorance is not truly defeated until the spiritual dimension is added. What good is it to know how the heavens go and not how to go to heaven? What good is it to know how to make a living, and not how to live? What good are all the PhDs after one's name, if there is not a St. before it?

Paul was an educated man, but he was, early in life, ignorant of the grace of God and the "knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." Once he found Christ, he considered everything else dung.

Dorothy Thompson, who waged a one-woman's war against Hitler, wrote an essay titled "The Lesson of Dachau." Thompson wrote, "Nothing to me was so shameful as the sight of the homes of the SS administrators. Their homes were civilized. You and I would have enjoyed living in them. Their libraries had the lyric poems of Goethe. On the piano of one of them I found the lovely 'Lieder of Schubert.' Then she drew this lesson: "When the soul goes, man goes."

What Miss Thompson was saying in effect was that technological and scientific knowledge alone will never save man from becoming an animal. The gas chambers of Germany were built by learned engineers; children were poisoned by educated physicians, infants were exterminated by trained nurses.

C.S. Lewis, in his devastating diatribe against secular education, stated that education without God produced only "trousered apes." When we put God out of education, we rip out the humanity in man. As Archbishop Fulton Sheen used to say, "Leaving God out of education is not like leaving raisins out of a cake, but like leaving eyes out of the body."

The greatest ignorance, and the ignorance most harmful to man, is ignorance of God. Who does not know God is truly ignorant!

Volunteers to Learn Braille

Persons interested in learning transcribing Braille have been offered a series of classes from this month through April.

Braille is the language of raised dots used by the blind to read. Volunteers transcribe the printed word into Braille.

Classes are held in the day time, once a week, at four locations in the area. Following is the schedule of opening classes:

Wednesday, Sept. 21, 10 a.m., Temple B'rith Kodesh, 2131 Elmwood Ave.

Wednesday, Sept. 21, 9:30 a.m., First Presbyterian Church, East Avenue, East Rochester.

Tuesday, Sept. 20, 9:30 a.m., First Baptist Church, 175 Allens Creek Road.

Thursday, Sept. 22, 9:30 a.m., White Church, 55 Church St., Spencerport.

Further information on the

program is available by calling Ms. Thelma Casey, 377-1075; or Ms. Mildred Hill, 586-0228.

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Parishes and through will observe Sunday this on which community one of its functions, catechesis, Binsack of partment of tion sai "Catecheti ates a new of rede catecheti sharing the with and b old." She said year is "C terprising S from the re and cente person an catechist, and volunt in a speci baptism a parish co well those skills, -kno

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