

Sisters of St. Joseph Get New Constitution

By Sister Mary Seitzinger

Writing a constitution for a religious community is a difficult task. It requires a great deal of grace and common sense.

More than 500 Sisters of St. Joseph gathered recently to celebrate the completion of 14 years of work, as they personally received their copy of the new constitution from Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley, superior general and Sister Clare Brown, assistant superior general.

The constitution is the basic book outlining and describing the character and identity of a religious community. It says who the members are and what they do. It is a powerful symbol of unity for religious. Good constitutions are a blend of spiritual wisdom and sound practical judgment. Constitutions should incorporate lasting values, so the writers need to look beyond the present to design a document that will uphold the community's spiritual inspiration for years to come.

In keeping with the mandate for renewal from Vatican II, the Sisters of St. Joseph held their Chapter of Renewal the summers of 1969 and 1970. As a result of the prayer and study of the years following the close of the council, the work of various committees, and the Chapter itself, an interim constitution was developed. This book, called "Values in Faith," reflected the principles of adaptation recommended by the Church. Some revisions were made by the Chapter of 1972 and a second edition of "Values in Faith" was presented to the congregation in 1972.

During the decade between 1969 and 1979 experimentation in prayer patterns,

community living and ministry were undertaken. As a result, new understandings of the meaning of the vowed life of a woman religious in the Church were developed. From the lived experience of those ten years, and based on the traditional documents of the congregation, the present Constitution was written.

The Chapter of 1970 decreed that the central administration of the congregation should begin necessary steps toward the re-writing of the constitution with an emphasis on the maximum involvement of the members of the congregation.

As each section was written (and re-written), the Sisters had opportunities to read, reflect on, and discuss the documents with one another, as well as submit their written responses and critiques to the different writing groups.

The writing groups in turn, with the editorial assistance of Sister Margaret Brennan, rewrote the constitution in the light of the responses. Sister Ellen O'Hara, CSJ, a canon lawyer from Boise, Idaho, worked closely with the writing groups at this point, interpreting and explaining points of Church law as they related to the constitution.

In formally promulgating the constitution to the congregation at their special Holy Year Mass, Sister Elizabeth Anne addressed her Sisters: "This year we gather at a rich time in the life of our congregation, a rich time in the life of our Church, and a critical time in the life of our society. Our congregational life is now focused in a way that it has not been since the call to renewal by Vatican II.

"Within the last 70 years, 592 women have stood before

a faith community and publicly professed three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience as Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester according to a constitution.

"Much has changed through these years. Yet there remain 592 women, there is still the faith community and there is the continued fidelity to the vows. Now, for us, there is a new constitution — in continuity with these seven decades and yet in discontinuity because it is such with the Christian life committed to a Gospel that is ever old and ever new.

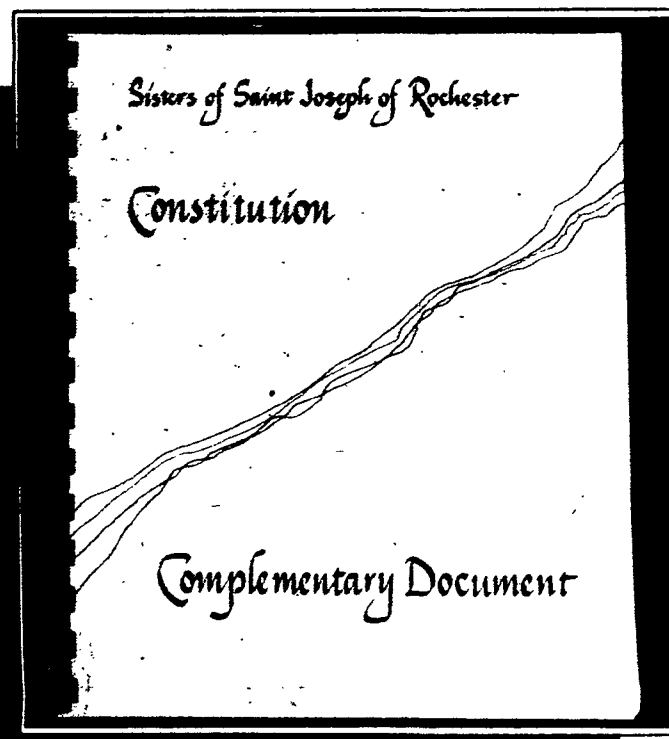
"The realities these documents represent can be wel-



Sister Elizabeth Anne (right) presents a copy of the constitution to Sister Melita Burley, as Sister Agnes Catherine Battersby looks on.



Sister Ellen O'Hara gives a presentation on Canon Law during the Summer session of Chapter.



comed as a needed stabilization and a basis for going ever deeper into our Gospel mission; parts of them will call for a bending of our wills and our hearts; they can be a

call and an inspiration. Our personal prayer and reflection on the words and realities and the meaning will bring us to varied responses — and this is good."

The summer Chapter of 1983 also approved a congregation-wide renewal program centered around the new constitution.

For the Sisters of St.

Joseph it is a time of gratitude, as they now hold a constitution that binds them closer to each other and to the Church.

Sr. Patricia Beairsto Will Make First Vows

Sister Patricia Beairsto, a member of the theology department at Our Lady of Mercy High School, will make her first profession of vows in the congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 15, in the motherhouse chapel, 1437 Blossom Road.

The profession rite will take place during the celebration of Mass. Father Terence Fleming, chaplain at Brockport College, will preside at the Eucharist.

Sister Patricia's theme will be, "For where your treasure lies, there will your heart be also."

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Beairsto, pa-



SISTER PATRICIA Beairsto is a member of the Congregation of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Brockport.

Canadian Bishops Elect

Ottawa (NC) — Bishop John M. Sherlock of London, Ont., has been elected the new president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Bishop Jean-Guy Hamelin of Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec, has been chosen the vice president of the Canadian hierarchy's national organization.

As president, Bishop Sherlock will be the chief spokesman of the Canadian

bishops and represent them in meetings with the Vatican, other episcopal conferences, the government, other denominations, and various groups.

The office of president of the Canadian bishops alternates between the French- and English-speaking branches of the CCCB. An English-speaking president is assisted by a French-speaking vice president, and vice-versa.



TOUR - Of Rochester's older homes, Saturday, Oct. 15, 19th Ward. \$5 tickets are on sale at Creator's Hands, Wilson Holley Farms, Village Green Bookstore and all locations of Phelps Glass Studio. For information call Barbara Sullivan, 328-6571.

"STARS - For Strong" presents Pearl Bailey, 8 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 18, Eastman Theatre. Tickets are \$10 and available at Eastman Box Office; all McCurdy's stores and through the Friends of Strong Memorial Hospital, 275-5417.

NAZARETH EVENTS - Parents' Weekend - Oktoberfest, Fun Run, sports, dinner dance, Friday, Oct. 14 - Sunday, Oct. 16, forum, Otto A. Shults Community Center: Ring of the Fetuccines, an opera spoof by the Broque Opera Company of New York, 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 15, main auditorium, Nazareth Arts Center. Tickets are \$6 and \$4 for students: Children's The-

ater to present Laura Sims, storyteller, 1 and 3 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 15, main auditorium, Nazareth Arts Center. Tickets \$3: Lecture, Mussolini and the Jews, by Dr. Thomas A. Fabiano, 8 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 20, A-13, Nazareth Arts Center. Open and free to the public.

THE GALLERY - Will present an Eastman School of Music Concert, 3 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 16. Free admission, contact Eastman Concert Office for more information at 275-3037: Oil painting demonstration by painter Ferdinand R. Petrie, sponsored by the Rochester Art Club, 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 18, conference room. Admission is free: Lecture by James Packer, associate professor of classics, Northwestern University, on Trajan's Forum in Rome, the East Colonnade and Hemicycle, sponsored by the Rochester Archaeological Society, 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 18, auditorium. Admission free. All at Memorial Art Gallery.

NFP SESSIONS - Sponsored by Natural Family Planning Education, 7:30-9 p.m., Friday, Oct. 14, main conference

room, Rochester General Hospital.

DRAMA - "The Desperate Hours", 8 p.m., Friday, Oct. 21; 5 and 9 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 22 and 2 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 23, Rochester Community Players. For more information call 473-8130.

DISCOVERY SUNDAYS - Featuring films from Richard E. Leakey's new seven-part series, The Making of Mankind, featuring "In the Beginning" at 1:30 and 3 p.m. followed by a fossil demonstration, Sunday, Oct. 23, Rochester Museum and Science Center. Free with museum admission.

GUIDED - Fall foliage tours at Turning Pt. Park, east end of Boxart St. sponsored by Monroe County, 10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 15. For information call 428-6697.

NATURE WALKS - and seed dispersal 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 16, Visitor Center, Mendon Ponds Park.

BOOKS - Sandwiched-in features "The Youngest Science: Notes of a Medicine Watcher" by Lewis Thomas and reviewed by Louis Lasagna, M.D., 12:12 - 12:52 p.m., 3rd floor, Rundel Library.

MEETING - Office for

Aging Advisory Council, 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 12, Office for Aging, 375 Westfall Road.

EASTMAN - School of Music presents a faculty recital, John Marcellus on trombone, 8 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 13, Kilbourn Hall. Free; Eastman Jazz & New Jazz, 8 p.m., Friday, Oct. 14, Eastman Theatre. Free; Eastman Wind Orchestra, Donald Hunsberger, conductor, 8 p.m., Monday, Oct. 17, Eastman Theatre. Free; Wilson Day Concert, Music of Puccini, Nelson, Benson and Tchaikovsky, 8 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 19, Eastman Theatre. Tickets required.

PROS AND CONS - of the Rochester Metro Police consolidation issue will be discussed at the Rochester Federation of Women's Clubs meeting, 11:30 a.m., Thursday, Oct. 13, at the Cathay Pagoda Restaurant, 488 East Main St. Call 467-6435 for reservations.

CELEBRATION - Columbus Day musical program and film "The Children of Columbus, The Untold Story of Italians of America," followed by reception, 8 p.m., today, Wednesday, Oct. 12, Casa Italiana, Nazareth College. Free.