



Youth Seminar Attracts 150

Father Bruce Ritter, founder and president of Covenant House, and actress Liv Ullmann discuss her keynote speech delivered at "Shelter the Children '83: An International Symposium on Street Youth," Dec. 5-7 in New York. The symposium was attended by over 150 professionals representing 27 countries, and provided a forum for sharing experiences and information on the challenge of caring for street youth. Frank Petrus, executive director of Rochester's Center for Youth Services, represented the upstate area.

ROS 'Messiah'

The Rochester Oratorio Society will perform its traditional pre-holiday concert of Handel's "Messiah," 8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 18 at the Eastman Theatre. Theodore Hollenbach, founder and musical director of ROS for 39 years will

conduct the chorus, members of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and guest artists, Deborah Carbaugh, soprano; Marion Pratinicki, contralto; Gene Tucker, tenor; and Jan Opalach, bass.

Program Scheduled On Liturgy

A program for educational formation will begin Jan. 11 at St. Boniface parish.

With the parish liturgy committee playing host, the 10 two-hour sessions will deal with such topics as the liturgical year, environment and art, eucharistic theology, music at liturgy, the Liturgy of the Hours, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The sessions will run until April 4 under the supervision of Sister Nancy Burkin, SSSJ, of the diocesan Office of Liturgy, and will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the St. Boniface school.

Any interested parish liturgy team members, parishioners and teachers of religion who wish to attend any or all of the session should call the Liturgy Office (716)328-3210 for a complete schedule of dates and topics.

Registration will take place at the door and will be \$5 per person (for all 10 sessions) or \$1 for each individual session. The text, "The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource," will be available at each session or from the liturgy office.

Anyone wishing further details should contact the diocesan Liturgy Office.

Deadline

Deadline for news in the Courier-Journal is noon on Thursday, preceding Wednesday publication. The Courier-Journal address is 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Continued Emphasis On Nuclear Issue Urged by DPC

Geneva — Further study and action on issues affecting world peace and the nuclear arms race should continue in the diocese, the Diocesan Pastoral Council said Saturday.

Meeting in St. Francis de Sales Parish, the council approved a motion calling on Catholics in the diocese to become more informed about the issues, such as those raised by the anti-nuclear protests, Oct. 22-24 near the Seneca Army Depot in Romulus.

The resolution also suggested that Bishop Matthew H. Clark schedule a diocesan peace march.

The approval, in an 18-14 vote, with two abstentions, completed the discussion begun at the council's September meeting, during which it wrestled with and defeated a motion supporting the Oct. 22 demonstration.

The council then was told Bishop Clark would be a featured speaker at the event.

The recommendations approved Saturday were culled from group projects done at the September meeting and compiled by Gaynelle Wethers of Rochester.

Saturday's discussion centered on one of the seven recommendations in the report, that church people be prepared to support finan-

cially and otherwise those who may quit nuclear-related jobs out of conscience.

Robert O'Gara of Owego argued the statement constituted an encouragement to people to quit their jobs and to military personnel to desert.

O'Gara said the motion also supported the view that peace could only be achieved through unilateral disarmament. He said that view is not consistent with the pastoral by the nation's bishops which called for bilateral disarmament.

An amendment restricting the language to support for those quitting civilian jobs was defeated.

The resolution also calls for the distribution of a list of suggested actions related to peace and nuclear arms which was presented to the DPC in September by Jim Lund of the diocesan Pastoral Office.

Some members objected to sending out the list without discussing each of the points in it.

Others said it was only a list of suggestions and did not recommend any of them.

Other recommendations called for parish discussion of the issues, thoughtful sponsorship by the diocese of programs and continuing publication of information

about programs devoted to peace.

Later in the meeting, Bishop Clark commented on his participation in the anti-nuclear rally and his appearance the same day at the state Right to Life convention in Rochester.

He said participation in the rally allowed him to inform those present and those reading press coverage of the event about the religious perspective on nuclear arms.

"I could say what I said 50 times at Sacred Heart (Cathedral) and not touch a tenth of the people," he said.

He said the more than 200 letters he received ran about four to one in favor of his participation.

The DPC also heard reports on a survey of its members regarding evangelization. And Father Peter Bayer, director of the diocesan Department of Finance, gave a presentation on statistics about the diocese and its people.

Deadline

Items intended for publication in At Your Parish must be written and at the Courier-Journal offices, 114 South Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607, before noon of Thursday preceding Wednesday publication.

Father Bruce Ritter



NO ROOM AT THE INN

The Innkeeper said, No. I can't help you, he said. Go away, he said.

It was late at night. The inn was very crowded. The young couple was poor. The husband, frantic with

anxiety, insisted and pleaded and argued desperately. Look, my wife is going to have a baby any minute. Please, you've got to let us in. Clearly, there were no large tips forthcoming to inspire the Innkeeper's compassion and understanding. You can't take responsibility for every pilgrim and traveller and wanderer who knocks on your door, even if the girl is young and tired and about to have a baby!

After he turned them away, I wonder if the Innkeeper ever gave the young mother and her husband a second thought? Listen, I know exactly how that innkeeper felt. Maybe he'd had a bad day. He wasn't such a bad guy. You just can't assume he was an unfeeling heartless wretch and sweep him out of your mind like so much dirt. He must have had his reasons. And besides, it turned out okay. The young couple found a cave on a hillside where some shepherds stabled their animals. The 14-year-old girl had her baby there. It turned out all right.

Two kids knocked on my door one night! It was late and I had had a bad day. I didn't want to wake up. I didn't want to answer the door. I was tired and had gone to bed angry. There were a bunch of kids bedded down on the living room floor and the six bunk beds were filled. I had been mugged earlier that day and one of my kids stole the grocery money—and I didn't like any of my kids very much. They just didn't appreciate me and weren't very grateful... Playing the role of noble martyr to the hilt, I opened the door.

Two kids stood there, uncertainly, obviously reading the look on my face. One of the kids said: Are you Bruce, and I said, Yes. And he said, do you take kids in? And I said, Yes. Can we stay with you? he said. And I said, No, because we have no room. The kid began to cry. Where can I go? What

can I do? he said. And I said, you can go back out into the street, and you can look sad.

The kid stopped crying, and he looked at me. I can do that, he said. So he did, or they did, they both went back out into the street. One boy was 15, the other was 14. I never saw them again.

"Jesus was, like my kids, a wanderer and nomad, with no place to lay His head."

I can still see their faces, just about as clearly today as I could that night so many years ago. I can still see the tears on the boy's face. I can see how the other kid stood, and the way he looked at me.

I wonder if the Innkeeper kept remembering, too.

Jesus has to love my kids, I'm sure of that, in all their pain and sadness—for Jesus was, like them, a wanderer and nomad, with no place to lay His head. Like most of my kids He was born in poverty and welcomed by outcasts. He was no stranger to the hunger and fatigue and misunderstanding and rejection of their lives either. Perhaps more than any one else, they have the right to be called the least of His brethren, and the right too, to His special love and mercy for the wandering lost sheep that He cares about so much.

Look, Christmas is not the time for sad letters about my kids—letters that could perhaps diminish your own happiness. Christmas is a time for joyful thoughts about the Son of God who loved us with such an immeasurable, long-ing love. We celebrate His birth and childhood and innocence with the giving of gifts and speaking of our own love. We try to make our own love visible.

Let our celebration be simple and unsophisticated. He was just a child in a stable. Let our joy be unhurried and unharried. The angel wished us peace and good will. Let us give gifts, also, to Him as the wise men did, and in giving gifts to others let us give in His name and in love, for we are all nomads and pilgrims together.

Thank you for giving that gift of love to my kids. Your kids now. Because of you, thousands of children and young people are helped every day. Because of your love, thousands are saved from lives of degradation and

humiliation. Because you haven't stopped caring and helping, we at Covenant House are able to touch these kids with your hands, to love them with your love, to share the blessings God has given you to share with them.

Maybe my kids won't know that for a while. Maybe only when Jesus draws us all to be with Him and the Father will we all know each other and experience that special shock of recognition that must be one of the great joys of heaven. You're going to meet a lot of beautiful kids who will know your name and know your face and reach out to you with joy. And, I hope, you'll meet a couple of innkeepers, who made a tragic mistake and said No when they should have said Yes.

I wish you all His peace and His joy, and the certain knowledge of His love. Thanks, again, for loving my own homeless nomads who, because of you, do have a place to lay their heads. Always pray for us, please, as we never stop praying for you and thanking God for you.

I want to help make room for a few more homeless kids. Enclosed is my gift of: \$ _____

please print:

NAME: _____


ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

ZIP: _____ AP (SXE)

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

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