

Holy Year 1983-84

A Progress Report

By Father Robert F. McNamara

On March 25, 1983, the feast of the Annunciation (which commemorates the conception of our Redeemer in the womb of Mary), Pope John Paul II launched the "Holy Year of Redemption," slated to run to Easter Sunday 1984.

Popes declare regular "holy years" every 25 years, but they also now and again proclaim special holy years. The "Holy Year of Redemption 1983-84" is one of these special holy years. It honors the 1550th anniversary of the saving Death of Christ. (As the pope later pointed out, this year also marks, more or less, the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Mary, the chief human agent of our Redemption.)

Usually, holy years (also called papal jubilees) invite the faithful to journey to Rome as pilgrims. Of course, they are invited to do so this year as well. However, the Holy Father's main purpose in 1983-84 is to have the jubilee celebrated in the individual dioceses.

In the diocese of Rochester, therefore, as in all other Catholic dioceses, we are invited particularly to make a pilgrimage (or many pilgrimages, if we choose) to the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart or to another church or chapel officially designated as a pilgrimage center. There, we pilgrims will offer special prayers for the jubilee intentions of the pope. We will also make a sincere private confession of our sins to a priest at a convenient time, and receive a special "Jubilee Holy Communion." The pope likewise asks us to perform some "act of mercy" -- an easy enough task in our days when so many people are in need. To those who perform these devotions and tasks, the Holy Father gives a plenary jubilee indulgence. This indulgence cancels all the temporal penalties we owe to God on earth or in purgatory for the sins we have committed, even though the sins have been forgiven.

Now, all that I have just written is well understood by those who have kept up with the Holy Year news published in the Courier-Journal. I restate it for the benefit of those who for some reason are not aware that the pope has called us in 1983-84 to "live an ordinary year in an extraordinary way."

What have we done thus far in the diocese of Rochester to make the jubilee a year of grace?

Well, in the first place, there have been two jubilee celebrations which count as pilgrimages. Bishop Matthew H. Clark opened the Holy Year at the first one, on June 22, 1983, the feast of St. John Fisher, patron of this diocese. A second celebration, presided over by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan at St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua on Oct. 7, did honor to Mary. As these words are being written, a third such celebration is being readied for Jan. 25. This will be an ecumenical service at St. Charles Borromeo Church, Elmira Heights, led by Bishop Dennis W. Hickey.

There have been a number of pilgrimages to the Cathedral and other pilgrimage churches. On Oct. 16, the Northeast Region of the diocese had one to the chapel of the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse. On Nov. 27, St. Patrick's Parish, Seneca Falls, made a pilgrimage to St. James the Apostle Church, Trumansburg. On Dec. 11, some 75 people left St. Thomas More Church by bus and car-pool for the pilgrimage chapel of the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, in addition, visiting the pilgrimage church of the Assumption in Fairport. Assumption Church had already presented special jubilee services on Aug. 14-15.

The most outstanding parish-centered event thus far has been the "Week of Peace and Reconciliation" at St. Theodore's pilgrimage church in Gates, preached by Father James Dolan, SJ. At St. James Church, Waverly, "Bishop Clark Day", Nov. 9, was scheduled as a Holy Year event.

Nor has the intellectual aspect of the



Redemption been forgotten. St. Bernard's Institute has scheduled five lectures on the special theme of our diocesan Holy Year: the Beatitudes. Conducted by the Institute's Department of Continuing Education in both Rochester and Elmira, this program has had 40 enrollees. St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Rochester will present a public lecture on Feb. 26 on a Redemption-oriented theme, Holy Scripture. Speaker will be Father William Most of Loras College, Dubuque. Later there will also be a discussion conducted by Father Most for priests.

Roman pilgrimages have not been wanting, either. In September, Msgr. Richard K. Burns, pastor emeritus of St. Thomas the Apostle Church, led a pilgrimage of 42 parishioners to the Eternal City. At about the same time, a diocesan pilgrimage of 77 people, led by Father Louis Vasile, journeyed Rome-ward and prayed for the diocese at each holy site it visited.

Thus far, then, a good many jubilee activities have been undertaken in the diocese. But not enough...not enough!

The celebrations at the Cathedral and at Canandaigua have not had full churches. If some parish groups have made pilgrimages, there have been too few. We have a diocesan population of 350,000. There should be 350,000 pilgrims setting forth; 350,000 jubilee confessions; 350,000 people trying to make this a spiritually extraordinary year.

Lent will soon be here. Let pastors now bring the jubilee into focus, with services or retreats, special devotions, frequent pilgrimages and homilies on the greatness of the sacrament of penance. Let religious orders choose jubilee projects related to the theme of Redemption. Let each of us, young and old, resolve to turn over a new leaf, so that when the church bells ring on Easter Sunday to signal the close of the Jubilee, we can say, "This has been the holiest year in my life!"

That's what the Holy Father wants. That's the sort of year the 1550th anniversary of our Redemption should be!

Jail Ministry Sets Training

Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry, an organization serving pre-trial prisoners in the Monroe County Jail, will hold a training program for prospective volunteers,

7-9:30 p.m., Feb. 6, 8, 13 and 15 at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St.

The training prepares volunteers for jail visitation, and includes information about the organization's philosophy, goals and activities as well as the jail and the criminal justice system.

The organization is sponsored by local religious communities. Sister Barbara Moore, RSM is executive director.

The training includes role plays on visiting situations, and a module in the developmentally disabled.

Faith Sharing

The Sisters of Mercy have invited women interested in exploring the religious life to share supper and prayer, 5 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 14, at the Andrew Center, 81 Barbary Terr. The evening is part of the congregation's monthly Faith Sharing Program. Persons wishing to attend are asked to contact Sister Sheila Stevenson, (716) 244-2175.

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Colombia Flood Kills Three Nuns, Orphan

By NC News Service

Archbishop Gennaro Prata of Cochabamba, Bolivia, celebrated a Mass before an overflow congregation Jan. 23 for three American women missionaries and an orphan boy who were killed Jan. 21 when their jeep was caught in a flash flood while crossing a river near Cochabamba.

Two other Americans, a priest and a woman Religious, escaped with minor injuries.

Those killed were: Sister Geraldine McGinn, 46, of Bronx, N.Y.; Sister Gilchrist Conway, 41, of Chicago; and Sister Mary Mahoney, 42, of Chicago.

Sister McGinn, a Dominican, and Sister

Conway, a Sister of Providence, were Maryknoll associate missionaries, people who sign temporary contracts to work in Maryknoll projects. Sister Mahoney was assigned to Bolivia by her Dominican motherhouse in Sinsinawa, Wis.

The three nuns were half of a six-person mission team in Charamoco, near Cochabamba, and frequently traveled, by jeep, mule or horseback to their 36 mission stations.

A 15-year-old handicapped boy, adopted by Sister Conway, also died in the accident. Dominican Father Jack Risley of Chicago and Benedictine Sister Mary Funk of Beech Grove, Ind., escaped with minor injuries in the accident.

According to missionaries in Bolivia, the six left Charamoco early Jan. 21 to visit a mission 20 miles away. When crossing a river bed their jeep became stuck in mud.

Father Risley and Sister Funk, a friend of Sister Conway who was visiting the mission, got out to push the vehicle when a sudden rush of water from the mountains swept away the people in the jeep.

Sister McGinn was a school teacher in the United States before entering Maryknoll to work with Quechua-speaking Indian farmers in Bolivia.

Sister Conway, a past president of the National Catholic Education Association Adult Division in

Washington, previously headed the Indianapolis archdiocesan adult education office, where she also taught at Christian Theological Seminary. She also taught at Southeastern University in Oklahoma. She hosted a radio program and pioneered a prison ministry program at McAlester prison in Oklahoma.

Sister Conway had a masters degree in communications and a doctorate in ecclesiology from Christian Theological Seminary and also studied in India.

Sister Mahoney taught art and religion in elementary and high schools in Shorewood, Wis., Chicago, and Cheyenne, Wyo., before going to Bolivia.

Sister Margaret Mary Townsend

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sister Margaret Mary Townsend, SSJ, Jan. 21 in the motherhouse chapel.

Sister Margaret Mary died Jan. 18, 1984 at the age of 87.

A native of Geneva, she moved to Rochester in her early years, graduating from East High School and Rochester General Hospital School of Nursing.

She earned degrees in nursing education from Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis., and Catholic University, Washington, D.C. She also

took her master's degree in the subject from Catholic University and was a member of Pi Gamma Mu.

She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1923 and served as a teacher in the School of Nursing at St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira for 11 years.

In 1940 she was named to the Nazareth College faculty as teacher of nursing and that year became the director of the department which opened then.

She held the position until 1964. She retired two years later, and in 1979 moved to the congregation's infirmary.

One of her graduates recently wrote: "Her honesty, her loyalty to her students, her integrity and her forthrightness were gifts beyond measure. She always exemplified for us the true meaning of compassionate professionalism. Her presence in this life touched, and will continue to touch, many persons in need of the Lord's healing."

Sister Margaret Mary is survived by two sisters, Mrs. John (Grace) Houser of Dunkirk, and Mrs. Walter (Ruth) Robinson of Peabody, Kan.

Sister Quits For Politics

Providence, R.I. (NC) -- Arlene Violet, who ran for political office in 1982 as a Sister of Mercy, said Jan. 19 that she has left her religious community so she may run as a Republican candidate for attorney general of Rhode Island this year.

Ms. Violet announced her intentions at a campaign kickoff in Providence, attended by about 1,000 people. She said she had resigned from the Mercy Sisters with a "clear conscience."

Her losing 1982 bid was also for the attorney general's office.

THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



EDWIN SULEWSKI
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Should I sell my house now that my spouse has died?

Many people complain that living in an empty house with all the reminders of the deceased is painful. Usually at this time we are upset and feel we would like to move away. The time to sell, however, is not the period right after the death of a loved one! Moving away may resolve some immediate pain but it also entails leaving friends, releasing some very important assets, adjusting to an apartment or moving in with others. We recommend waiting a year or more before a decision to sell one's house is made. Then check out a new area, even live in an apartment for some time. Caution is important!

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