

AT YOUR PARISH

St. Augustine

A fundraiser for St. Augustine's School will be held from 6 p.m. to midnight, Friday, Feb. 24 in the school hall, 420 Chili Ave. Admittance is limited to those 19 years and older.

Christ the King

The Red Cross will conduct a blood drive 2 p.m.-7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 15 at Christ the King Church Hall, 445 Kings Highway. In general, blood donors must be in good health, between 17 and 67 and weigh at least 110 pounds.

Holy Trinity

Webster — The religious education department and the Reality and Discovery groups of Holy Trinity Parish will hold a "Youth Day", 9:30 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 18 in the school hall. Among the day's activities are games, small group discussion, spaghetti dinner, scripture service, talent and gong show, movies and a performance by the Rochester Awareness Theater. Admission is \$4. Advance registration is made by calling 524-8946; 422-7102; or 265-1616. Participants are asked to bring a brown bag lunch.

Mother of Sorrows

Scouts from the Junior Girl Scout Troup 485 who recently were awarded the "I Live My Faith" medal are Michele Cordaro, Genevieve Effinger, Michelle Hunt and Kathryn Walker. The girls all attend Mother of Sorrows Church and school.

Special Advisory

The Courier-Journal is legally restrained from publishing notices of games of chance and prizes won on such occasions.

Annunciation

Annunciation School will register new students 9 a.m.-5 p.m. March 5 in the school, 1787 Norton St. Registrants are required to bring birth certificates, baptismal certificates and immunization records. Further information is available by calling the school, 342-8390.

St. Philip Neri

A homemade pork and sauerkraut dinner will be served 1-2:30 p.m. and 3-4:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 26 in St. Philip Neri Church's school hall. The menu includes a relish tray, pork and sauerkraut, potatoes and gravy, applesauce, rolls and butter, beverage and dessert. Proceeds will be used to help defray school expenses. Tickets at \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children under 12 are reserved before Feb. 19 by calling the rectory, 482-2400. Take out service will also be available.

Mother of Sorrows

Father Sebastian Falcone, president and dean of St. Bernard's Institute, will speak on the Eucharist in the Gospel of John, 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 26 in the Our Mother of Sorrows Church hall, 5000 Mt. Read Blvd. The event is open to the public.

St. Bridget

A Black Heritage Celebration featuring speakers Father Robert Werth and Minister Lawrence Lee Evans, and gospel singing by Bright Clouds Gospel Group, Serenity, and St. Bridget's Choir, will be held 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 18 at St. Bridget's Church, 175 St. Bridget's Drive.

St. Charles Borromeo

A candy sale is being conducted by St. Charles Borromeo School through March 9. The 15th annual such event, the sale helps the school. Delivery dates are April 14 and 15, at which time the candy is paid for. Persons wishing to make a purchase are asked to call 865-5095 or 663-1220.

St. Francis Xavier

The annual spaghetti dinner of St. Francis Xavier Church will be served 1-5 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 19 in the school hall. Tickets for adults are \$3.75; for children under 12, \$1.50. Take out dinners also will be available. According to Eleanor Ricketts, the event is one of the parish's largest fundraisers.

Old St. Mary

An "I Love St. Mary's Party," featuring square dancing called by Mr. and Mrs. Myron Huss, will be held 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 18 in the downstairs church hall of Old St. Mary's Church. The event is one in a series celebrating the 150th anniversary of the parish.

Southern Tier Catholics Blast 'State of Union'

Elmira — "President Reagan's 'State of the Union' address was filled with political rhetoric, patriotic fervor and emotional appeal... It was also filled with gross exaggerations, substantive omissions, glossing of real problems, contrived anecdotes and outright untruths," Sister Mary Jean Smith, SSJ said here recently.

Sister Mary Jean, former president of the Diocesan Sisters Council, now coordinator for social ministry at St. Patrick's Parish, was one of a number of Catholic speakers participating in a press conference called by the Chemung County Coalition for Equity in the Federal Budget a few days after the president's State of the Union address.

The conference was held at the offices of the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry which also serves as the coalition's address.

"Hunger, unemployment and all the evils attendant upon poverty are a significant part of the real state of our union in 1984. Budget cuts in human services and enormous escalations in military spending are robbing human beings of basic rights and needs," said Sister Mary Jean.

Joining her at the conference were Father Michael Bausch, executive director of the Southern Tier office; and Kathy Dubel of the diocesan

Department of Justice and Peace.

In a statement prepared for the press conference, Ms. Dubel stated:

"We demand that Ronald Reagan wake up — that he feel the real world as we feel it: impoverished from the weight of death-machine spending and terrorized by the threat of superpower bullying and nuclear sabre-rattling.

"We demand that he become sensitized to the cost of a nuclear submarine that equals the annual education budget of 23 developing countries with 160 million children.

"We speak the real story, Ronald Reagan. Every minute 30 children die for want of food and vaccine, and every minute the military budget absorbs \$1.3 million of the public treasure.

"But the safety, health and well-being of Americans and the world is not to be found on Mr. Reagan's agenda.

"He plays with words as if the ideas behind them meant nothing. But peace means something and it has nothing to do with a five-year war-fighting plan. Peace means something and it has nothing to do with space-based weapons. Peace means something and it has nothing to do with sacrificing the globe in nuclear fire for the sake of security.

"Peace must include the

immediate cessation of the arms race and eventual abolition of nuclear weapons. If Ronald Reagan has not room for these goals on his agenda, then our agenda has no room for Ronald Reagan."

Pilgrimage Presentation Available

Mrs. Anne M. Scheuerman, local promoter of the cause of Kateri Tekakwitha, last week offered diocesan groups a special presentation of some 20 religious shrines of Spain, France and Portugal.

The 70-minute presentation includes slides and professionally recorded narration on such sites as Montserrat, Santiago de Compostella, Guadaloupe, Avila, Paray-le-Monial, Vezelay, Nevers, Lourdes and Fatima.

The photographs were taken by Mrs. Scheuerman last summer during an extraordinary pilgrimage to the 20 shrines. Music which accompanies the narration was principally recorded in Europe.

Groups interested in booking "Pilgrimage to Europe" are asked to call Mrs. Scheuerman, (716) 381-5998. There is no charge for the showing.



Father Bruce Ritter

GOD'S PRODIGAL SONS AND YOUNG MAGDALENES

The boy looked me right in the eye. He spoke quietly and courteously: "I'm too busy to listen to you right now, Bruce. No offense, okay, but I've got to make a few bucks. Your god is okay I guess, but he's sure not part of anything I've been into. I sure hope he can't see what I'm going to have to do tonight. I do have to, Bruce. I don't like it very much, but I'm really afraid to hate it.

"Hey, thanks anyway for running Covenant House, Bruce, but I can't stay. I guess I don't like the street very much, but it's where I live. You've got some rules here, and I can't take the curfew. Tell you what, Bruce, I'll just go out for a little while. It's only 2:00 AM; I'll just walk around the block a couple of times. See you later."

The kid paused a moment, his hand on the door knob, the door pushed open a few inches to let in the street noise. Outside a fire truck from the 38th Street Firehouse hurtled by. Its deep bellowing klaxon drowned out his words but I could still see his lips moving. He waited until the truck had passed... "Your god has too many rules Bruce," he said, "and I'd rather have you for my Father."

I will never forget the expression on his face when he said, "Bruce, can you give me one good reason why I shouldn't jump off the Brooklyn Bridge" and I couldn't. I didn't have a reason. I couldn't say to this kid: look, don't do it because God loves you. He wouldn't believe me and you've got to give a kid a reason he can believe. And so, I made one up.

You see, he's 17 years old. He can't read or write. He has no job skills. He's a hustler, a male prostitute. Ever since he's been 13 years old, this kid has been selling himself up and down Eighth Avenue, on 42nd Street, on East 53rd Street, working the streets and bars of Greenwich Village. Father Bruce Ritter, OFM Conv., is the founder and President of Covenant House, which operates crisis centers for homeless and runaway boys and girls all over the country.

and other countless cities. He's jumped in a thousand cars, slept in a thousand beds. He's an alcoholic. He's really a bright kid. If he were my son or your son, he'd be a doctor, a lawyer, a priest. But he won't be any of these things and he knows it. His major experience in life is to have been an exploited sex object, a bought and sold kid. He doesn't believe God is his Father.

He never came back. I knew he never would.

I keep wondering and thinking that maybe if I were better or smarter or holier, or worked harder, or prayed more, I wouldn't lose so many of these kids. Look, I know the Scriptures as well as the next person. I've squeezed a lot of comfort out of God's word, especially that statement by Christ about choosing the weak and inadequate of this world to do His will.

"Bruce, can you give me one good reason why I should not jump off the Brooklyn Bridge."

What I'm trying to say, I guess, is that I mourn for this kid. Three months on the street is a very long time. Six months is forever. A year? By then they're breathing in and out but inside they're dead. The poison works quickly. The girls' faces show it first. The boys can hide a little longer. I have to take what little comfort I can from the fact that God loves these kids infinitely more than we do. I don't understand it very well, but I believe it.

Making these kids believe it is what preaching the gospel is all about. I've met thousands of girls and boys from all over the country who needed to know God and didn't; who needed to trust God and couldn't; who needed to believe God loved them and wouldn't.

You wonder about God's plan for these kids: His prodigal sons not yet returned to their Father. His young magdalenes not yet aware of their need for forgiveness... Many never do return; many never do become aware. And I mourn them.

Please help me make God's love real to these kids. Look, these kids are good kids. They're not good the way your kids are good, and they're not nice the way your kids are nice—but what happens to them should not happen. Most of them have never had the chance to be like your kids.

I'm convinced that it is only when we—all of us—become incarnations of God's love, that our kids will truly know Him, know His compassion and His mercy. It is only through your generosity that we can run our crisis centers.

So, I'm begging you to care about my kids. Without your spiritual and financial support, we could never survive.

I care about the homeless and runaway boys and girls and want them to know the power of God's love. Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____

Please print: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

ZIP: _____ AP (UCI)

Please send this coupon with your donation to:

COVENANT HOUSE
Father Bruce Ritter
P.O. Box 2121
Times Square Station
New York, NY 10108

The street is NO PLACE FOR A CHILD