

Readers Installed

Bishop Robert F. Garner, auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Newark, recently installed four Rochester seminarians in the Ministry of Reader. The students at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Mahweh, N.J. are, left to right, Michael McHale, Paul Bonacci, Edward Giannino, and Timothy Brown.

Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

Masturbation Again Topic

Dear Reader

The following is a letter I received from a good friend and perhaps wiser head than I which I need to share with you so that his wish to have the whole picture presented may be verified:

Dear Louis:

Re your CJ column of 3/14/84. Permit me to say that when the correspondent asked about "the seriousness of masturbation," you gave him a stone when he begged for an egg.

It seems to me that in a Catholic question-box, a priest should enunciate, as he should in the pulpit, the basic teachings of the Church on objective morality. You merely quote (and incorrectly) a phrase from some contemporary statement from "Rome", not identifying the document. Then you drift off confusingly into the subjective aspects of the act. The end product is very fuzzy, and the addressee can only have scratched his head with your non-answer. The only readers who could possibly be satisfied with your reply are those who are happy to read what seem to be minimalist ethics.

Probably the best way for me to comment is to say how I would have answered the same question. Indulge me, please, for taking this approach.

First, I would have excerpted relevant phrases from the document, which I would identify: "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics," S.C. for the Doctrine of the Faith, Jan. 22, 1975, #6. This balanced treatment, which cites the main Church documents on which it is founded, says that "the traditional Catholic doctrine is that masturbation constitutes a grave moral disorder...is an intrinsically and seriously disordered act." That, I maintain, is a firm and authentic statement of

Catholic teaching — objective teaching — on the issue. It is not a mere "abstraction" as you call it; nor is it a non-moral action that it deals with. Had you quoted the phrase correctly "a grave moral disorder," you would not have fallen into the trap of labeling it an action that has no moral connotation.

Second, I would have gone on to point out that while this action, like other immoral actions, is objectively sinful, in the case of a particular act by a particular individual its guilt might be lessened or even cancelled out by subjective considerations. But the degree of existential guilt would be a matter to be discussed with one's confessor, or spiritual advisor. What I am saying, I guess, is that you didn't think this one through.

M.C.

Dear M.C.

I realize that I should not have left out the word moral because it was a part of the quotation. The reason I did leave it out was that it is too easy to see masturbation as a sexual aberration without regard for the fact that it is also a psychological disorder, a kind of "adult self-petting" to deal with negative emotions in many instances. To fail to reckon with this aspect of the situation and to present masturbation simply as a serious or mortal sin, would be to deceive and discourage millions of people who are trying to struggle with this whole thing and who need to see the entire picture rather than just the simple sexual content and the consequent moral disorder.

When people write about these things I assume they are not writing from a vacuum or asking abstract moral questions but rather are asking serious personal questions which cannot be answered in a totally simplistic way. I also realize that the better locale for obtaining these answers is through a counselor or confessor or both.

Ministry Topic

Webster — "Ministry" is the topic of a talk by Gerald F. Driscoll of Holy Trinity Church, Rev. Barbara M. Humphrey of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, and Mrs. Marie Richards of the Assembly of God Church, 7 p.m., April 8 at Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, 131 W. Main St. The program is part of the Lenten series sponsored by the Webster Council of Churches.

Family Mass

The Parents Club of Bishop Kearney High School has invited the public to a Family Mass, 10 a.m., Sunday, April 8 in the school cafeteria. Father Charles Manning will be celebrant. Music will be provided by the St. Salome Folk Group. Co-chairpersons for the event are Mr. and Mrs. I. Michael Mangione and Mr. and Mrs. John Kukuvka.

Deadline

Parish correspondents are reminded that items for At Your Parish must be typed and in the Courier-Journal offices before noon on Thursday preceding Wednesday publication. The address is 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

Community Effort Provides Meals

Through a grant administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and The United Way of Greater Rochester, Volunteers of America Men's Shelter located at the corner of Ward Street and Joseph Avenue has resumed its popular "Lunch Bag Program." This program is designed to provide a well balanced meal primarily to the struggling elderly of the struggling Monroe County area. A total grant of \$13,429 was received

by Mrs. Loretta Darling, executive Director, for continuation of this three month program which will serve 9,000 bagged lunches by its completion in May.

As one of the service providers for this program, James F. Hare, administrator, plans, purchases and coordinates the packaging and distribution of these lunches. Volunteers of America residents volunteer their own time to pack the lunches as a service to the

community. These meals consist of: an entree, vegetable, juice, bread or cereal and fruit which are largely non-perishable needing minimal refrigeration. A typical meal for example might include: orange juice, spaghetti, green beans, crackers and apple sauce which costs \$1.31 per individual.

Once packaged, the lunches are distributed through the Regional Council on Aging.

Church Women United Plan Area Tour

Church Women United has scheduled a bus tour of two area churches from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., on Friday, April 6.

The tour is part of the group's goal "to develop a network of church women who are alert to the crisis issues and committed to achieving justice and wholeness in community life."

The group will meet at 9 a.m. at Emmanuel Evangelical Covenant Church, 319 Browncroft Blvd., to board the bus. At 9:30 a.m., the bus will arrive at Corpus Christi Church on East Main Street to hear of the parish's community outreach program.

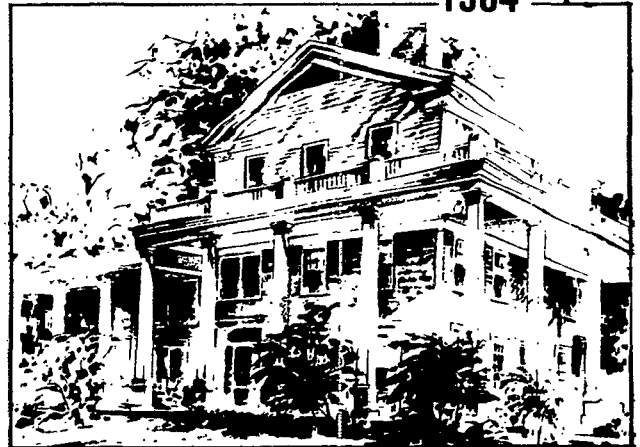
Approximately an hour later, the tour will move on to Westminster Presbyterian Church in the city for a similar presentation. Cephas Attica, a group working with ex-prisoners, will also speak to the women's group.

The group will return at 12:30 p.m. to Emmanuel Evangelical Covenant Church for lunch. Those interested should bring a bag lunch. Beverages and dessert will be provided.

Tickets for the bus tour are \$3 per person and reservations are necessary. For more information, contact the CWU office, 17 S. Fitzhugh St., Rochester, 14614; or call 454-1813.

Official Opening

Circle This Date APRIL 13 1984



Breakfast — 8:00-9:30
Luncheon — 12-2:00
Dinner — 5:30-9

HOURS

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