

'Faith Journey' at Immaculate Gets Wide Response

Parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester embarked on a unique "faith journey" for the Lent-Easter-Pentecost season, and the results, so far, were described last week

as "enthusiastic and persevering."

According to Gaynelle Wethers, youth ministry director at the parish, the Lenten phase of the program involved, among other

things, group discussion on parish goals, and the relevance of those goals to parish identity.

Under the title of "The Difficulties of the Faith Journey at Immaculate," the program drew parishioners after Mass on each of the Sundays of Lent to consider such parish goals as:

- To foster spiritual growth, vital liturgies, and religious education opportunities;

- To recognize and utilize the many diversities present in our community;

- To develop a sense of Christian witness that pervades our daily lives;

- To support understanding and communication among ourselves as parish and ourselves as neighborhood;

- To incorporate and give priority to black Christian experience in our community life and worship;

- And to help this community continue to grow in shared ministry.

Ms. Wethers said the homily each week centered on a



Adult leader Isabelle Walters, upper right, has her charges participate in a cultural awareness workshop.



Donna Mitchell, Immaculate Conception Church's music minister, teaches pre-schoolers a chant for this year's Easter celebration.

Sarah Child



All in the Family

Education The Answer

When the chairman and chief executive officer of the New York Times came to town last week to receive an RIT award and dedicate a printed word museum his paper had donated, he said the public confidence in the media had sunk to an all-time low and the press must begin steps to reverse the trend.

"The public has become disillusioned, not only with the press but with government, politicians, doctors," said Arthur Ochs Sulzberger.

In citing these particular groups, the chairman left out some other institutions which are in as least as much trouble with the public.

A complete listing might include teachers, clergymen, police and all other authority figures who once enjoyed unquestioned obedience, allegiance and/or esteem. Such fixtures of our society have undergone a drastic change in the public's perception in the past 25 or so years.

Some experts tell us that certain individuals within an establishment have ruined the image for all. For example, they will cite the "spiritual leaders" who have brainwashed people in the name of God in order to amass money and power for personal use, and mention others who have flaunted immoral lives even as they chastized the rest of us for our sins.

The experts were wrong. Those are not the reasons for our disillusionment.

The same experts will say that teachers are no longer dedicated and are poorly educated. No more true than it ever was. We have always had great teachers, poor teachers and those in between.

Then they will mention the excesses of the press. The truth is that that medium is more self-critical and self-regulatory than it has ever been, in

spite of some notable lapses. The same for government.

Then there are experts on the other side of the fence. They charge that it is not the authorities who are at fault, but society.

We are not the same kind of people our parents and grandparents were, they say. And, they're right, thank God! But not in decrease of moral fiber as they'd like to have us think.

The difference between us and our parents and their parents is that we are better educated today, ironically, thanks to the very institutions and media we criticize. We are more sophisticated, better able to distinguish between what is genuine and what is contrived; what is good for us, what is harmful, what is right, what is not.

There was a time, not too long ago, when the village priest, the general practitioner and the schoolmaster or marm were the only people in town who went beyond high school. And when one of them spoke, it took great self-confidence to question what were sometimes arrogant, petty and even false dictums.

Education is a marvelous equalizer. Besides knowledge, it gives us courage and the boldness to question authority and even the words with which to do it — a powerful combination of weapons. (It was a revelation when as a teen I discovered I could puncture pompous assertion with a couple of correctly used 50-cent words. Later when my self-assurance matched my fervor, I found that even two-for-a-nickel words could do the job.)

So, Mr. Sulzberger to the contrary, it is quite possible that both our public institutions and the society they serve have never been in better shape. Awe and blind subservience have gone out the door. The sacred cows are hamburger. Now when respect is given it is because respect has been earned.

July Opens Mercy Camp

Camp Silver Birch, the summer day camp staffed by the Sisters of Mercy for boys and girls 5-10 years old, is accepting registrations through June 22.

The camp will operate from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, July 2 to Aug. 3 at Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Road. According to Sister Sheila Stevenson, camp director, campers may enroll for a maximum of two weeks.

The camp offers the American Red Cross Swimming Program, sports and games, arts, crafts, movies, picnics, music, and "love", said Sister Sheila.

The fee is \$45 a week for one child with adjustable fees for families with more than one camper. Registrations can be made by contacting Sr. Sheila, 605 Edgewood Avenue, Rochester, N. Y., 14618 (716-244-2175).

Editor Now Archbishop

Philadelphia (NC) -- Archbishop John P. Foley, the priest-journalist named last month to head Vatican communications, received his episcopal ordination May 8 from Cardinal John Krol.

More than 2,000 people packed the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul for the ordination, where 22 years ago Cardinal Krol had ordained the new archbishop a priest.

Archbishop Foley has been editor of the Philadelphia archdiocesan newspaper, The Catholic Standard and Times, for the past 14 years. He was named an archbishop and president of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications by Pope John Paul II on April 9. He is to move to Rome to take up his Vatican post in early June.

Parish Deadline

Parish correspondents are advised that the deadline for submissions to At Your Parish is noon on Thursday, preceding Wednesday publication. The Courier-Journal address is 114 S. Union St., Rochester, N.Y. 14607.

goal and the readings were also illustrative of the goal.

She said, "parishioners were encouraged to articulate positive and negative feelings about current parish liturgies and other parish activities. No immediate solutions were sought. Responses were collected and classified at the end of each session. The participation was enthusiastic and persevering."

She also noted that a special committee has been appointed to consider the suggestions made with the parish staff and parish council. Steps for implementing the suggestions will be planned and presented to the parish-at-large.

A second aspect of the

program involved parish children and youths. Children, from two to seven attended a Bible Story-telling hour while the adults were at their own tasks. The stories were told by Lucy Brady.

Youths, nine years and older attended sessions "based on the Family Cluster concept," Ms. Wethers said.

The goal of those sessions was "Celebration of Differences," she noted.

The youths had specific objectives to resolve on each of the six Sundays.

One such objective was to "Identify what there is about you and other people that makes it difficult for you to accept differences in them," Ms. Wethers said.

The final session was reserved for making changes. The youths were asked, "List three observable, public things you are willing to do to help celebrate differences at Immaculate. List ways in which we are alike at Immaculate. Sign personal, private contract for change."

She noted that adults facilitated the sessions and the youths were assisted by professional counselors and a psychologist.

"A high interest level was maintained throughout the six-week sessions. The response of the youths was gratifying in its sensitivity and understanding of human problems," Ms. Wethers said.

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