

1984



the genesis of 13 years of conducting groups to many countries. One of the freest Autures has been the many friendships which have been formed.

The May 19-June 2 tour turned our to be escorting the group by plane from Rachester to Kennedy Airport, getting harpage, loaded and the group through passport controls, getting the boarding tickets; meeting the tour guide with coach at brase Airport. The guide took this year was my 14th to ireland: We were 16 — Mary Labino Garvin of St. John's Greece, is thost

the prize. It was her 17th trip to Ireland; Bill McPailden of Corpus Christi, Rochester, and his singer Beth Kilkeuny of over for the program: hotels, meals, Mass arrangements at shrines. I was to be available for predictables and un-St. Barbara's, Bronx, cousing of the late Magra. Steve and William McPadden of Geneva, with firm roots in Canandaigua where Beth laught in St. Mary's School Famett Heaness. The tour went well. We were 47 pilgrims. Fathers Lane and Sturmer, and Brother Sebastian of Mi-Saviour, Elmira, were among them. The group School; Emmett Hennessy of Mother of Sorrows, his was edifying as we visited by blical spots in

knowkageable and gets

Ballyshannon included her sister and use to the 500-bed General Hospital in Sligo. Mrs. Denton stayed on in Sligo with her. The busband has flown to Ireland and at this reading our Hornell Mrs. Denton has joined a similar tour to complete the trip. Fortunately, both Mrs. Carlin, and Mrs. Miller had taken out accident insurance.

Marjorie Kinsella of St. Boniface beamed all through the trip until the end, when she got a mean cold Bill and Elleen Toutant of Lourdes, Louisville, absorbed about everything, Bill is a graduate of Apprendic graduate of Annapolis; Eileen is my niece, daughter of the late Frank and

Of Bernsdette Fisher oly Chast, Rochester, I we no line excepting that He took enough girls' addresses to fill a ledger. At Basilian Father Trovato's request, we had a graduation Mass, and awards for him in Limer-

Ropresenting ecumenism was Dorthy Lattle, who is a deacon of the Batavia Presbyterian Church and a past matron of Eastern Star, who at-tended Mass each day with devotion. And final-ly, Mary Houck of Honeoye, who introduced the Honeoye Tango at an evening of entertainment at Kyeler Castle, once the dwelling place of a famour witch. The M.C. was a kind of stand was a kind of staid Lawrence Welk. He in-vited anyone to dance. Mary took the invitation and twisted and tangoed the M.C. so that I am sure he went home to his wife, saying: "Those American women have enough energy to electrify Tipperary, Cork and Donegal."

## **Mercy Graduation Scheduled June 20**

Our Lady of Mercy High School's 53rd annual graduation exercises will take place at 8 p.m., Wednesday, June 20, at the Eastman Theatre with Bishop Matthew H. Clark delivering the commencement address.

The bishop also will celebrate the graduates' Rose Mass Wednesday, June 19, in the Mercy Motherhouse, according to Sister Judith Heberle, principal.

Seniors Maria Gerace and Karen Paradies are valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively. Gerace of Penfield is in the honors program and plans to study liberal arts at the University of Notre Dame. She has been an editor of Mercedes, the school's literary magazine, and a reporter for the school newspaper, Quill. She also is a member of the National Honor Society and co-captain of the varsity track and field team.

Paradies of Pittsford plans to major in English and communications at LeMoyne College. She also is on the Mercedes staff amd was news editor of Quill. She was a member of this year's basketball team that captured the Class AA Section 5 tournament championship.

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# Father Bruce Ritter

predicatables.

In the jargon of the street he's known as rough trade and he plies his wares, himself, up and down the Minnesota Strip. He is fifteen and looks eighteen and ne's seen the elephant, he's seen it all.

We faced each other across my desk casually, relaxedly while I carefully arranged my face and my eyes and my mind, so that nothing I said or did or thought or felt for the next hour was spontaneous or unconsidered. He offhandedly, with the practical skill that needed no explanation, probed for my weaknesses, inspecting my jugular with the guileless eye of the corrupted young. Slow waves of depravity and innocence washed in shadows of darkness and light across his face.

He used the shreds of his innocence with a kind of detached hapless malevolence to evoke my sympathies. By turns he was cynical and calloused, winsome and desperate—and for knowing moments at a time, even vulnerable. He drifted in and out of reach, in and out of touch, constantly probing, watching for the moment of ad-

The Minnesota Strip is the slimy underbelly of Manhattan, a 15-block stretch of Eighth Avenue porno parlors, strip joints, cheap bars, fleabag hotels—home for thousands of drifters, hookers, and pimps. It parallels Times Square and intersects that block on 42nd Street where a couple dozen third-rate movie houses crowd together in grimy brilliance. At night, the crowds of

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.

**CORRUPTED YOUTH** 

boy across my desk. "He plies his wares, himself, up and down the

Minnesota Strip.

castoffs and nomads and derelicts mingle with the crowds

of affluent theater-goers from the high rent districts and suburbs. A lot of kids go there to make their living. Like the

You don't say very much to kids like that. It's always much more a thing of vibes and perceptions and boundaries. The trick is to offer what he needs at that moment and that's rarely a lot of God talk. It's enough if he knows why you do it. This kid's needs were simple enough: a place to live, some safety, some food. What complicated the essentially simple immediacy of it all was our "no strings" love. He wanted to pay for it. That's what he always had to do. That's how the game is played.

"Maybe that child, who was never a child, will become a child. Maybe.'

We play the same game with God all the time. We don't like His "no strings" love for us either, particularly if the "us" includes a depraved innocent, a vomit-splattered derelict or a pimp with a stable of children whom he rents by the hour. We try desperately to climb up out of the "us" by being good, by being better, by deserving more. We demand that God love us because we are good; and we are good to make God love us. We have to pay for it. That's the way we've always played the game. And to know that God loves us not because we are good, but to make us so, is sometimes unbearable. Because as He loves us. so we have to love "us," all of us.

And so I try to love the kid across my desk in a way he really can't understand. But grace does, and God working in a deprayed and empty and terrified heart does and maybe, just maybe, the innocence will return to that face and he will take his eyes off my jugular and stop pushing his toe into my foot under the desk. Maybe that child, who was never a child, will become a child. Maybe.

He is yours and mine. Like it or not, he is part of us. Thanks for your own "no strings" love—your help.

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The street is NO PLACE FOR A CHILD