

'Caritas Christi' Seeks New Members in Diocese

Caritas Christi, the secular institute for unmarried, widowed or divorced Catholic women, is seeking to expand its membership in the diocese.

According to Father John C. Murray CSB of St. John Fisher College, an agent for the institute, "Any unmarried woman or widow wondering if her lay life is meant as a vocation might consider... Caritas Christi."

He described it as "a way of life for women who wish to formally dedicate their lives to God and to grow in this dedication."

He cited the words of Pope Paul VI's encyclical "Populorum Progressio," which states, "It is the role of the lay person to take an initiative in bringing about

the renewal of the temporal order and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs and laws of the community in which they live."

Father Murray said that in the institute "Members live in their own homes but offer spiritual support to each other... Family relationships, apostolic work and employment remain unchanged. Community is expressed through monthly meetings, days of recollection and retreats, and in daily prayer for the Church."

"The institute offers members formation in a celibate, apostolic, contemplative lay life through the study of Scripture and the doctrines of the Church," Father Murray said.

According to a national brochure, membership "is open to unmarried women, widows and divorcees. All professions and occupations are represented. Ill health is not necessarily an impediment. Members provide for their own material needs and future security. The age limits are 18 and 40, but in certain cases dispensation may be given to women

beyond the age of 40." The qualifications are listed as "Stability, strength of character, emotional maturity, moral and spiritual balance, a sufficient amount of intelligence and training to live a dedicated lay life," the national office said.

The national office outline of the institute's formation program states:

"After the period of Preparation, admission to Caritas Christi takes place and a period of Formation of at least three years begins. At the end of this time the member makes her First Dedication, i.e., a vow of celibacy, and promises to embrace the evangelical counsels according to the constitution of the institute. This pledge to follow the evangelical counsels as they are proposed in the institute

is renewed at least four times, after which Dedication is made for life.

"A member does not leave her ordinary occupation or environment. Family relationships, apostolic work, employment, etc., are not interrupted."

Interested women are asked to contact Father Murray, 3497 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14618; (716) 586-6750.

Jury Convicts Man For Clinic Fires

Seattle (NC) -- Curtis Anton Beseda was convicted on four counts of arson Nov. 9 by a federal jury in Seattle after confessing to setting fire to two abortion clinics.

Beseda, 29, was found guilty in U.S. District Court in connection with three fires at the Feminist Women's Health Center in Everett, Wash., and one fire at the Bellingham Family Practice Center, Bellingham, Wash.

The fires took place between December 1983 and March 1984.

Beseda told the court he didn't want anyone hurt and he made sure no one was in the buildings when he set the fires.

He also testified that he was "solely responsible" for all four fires and he acted "solely to stop the destruction of human life."

The jury deliberated for three hours before returning its verdict.

The jury of eight men and four women asked U.S. District Judge John Couchenour if they were limited to an instruction which said that an act, "even if motivated by moral beliefs or concern," is done maliciously if it is "done on purpose and has as its foreseeable consequence damage to property."

Beseda's attorney, Tom Hillier, reminded the jurors of Beseda's motivation and asked, "Can an act be malicious if it's intended to protect?"

Hillier requested that the instruction be amended to say that an act is malicious when done for a "bad or evil purpose." But the judge told jurors to follow the original instructions.

Religious preference and feelings about abortion became issues in the jury selection process. Most of the potential jurors who said they were Catholic and attended church regularly were excused from duty as well as those who said they had strong opinions on abortion.

Beseda faced a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine for each of the four counts of arson. He remained free on bail until sentencing.

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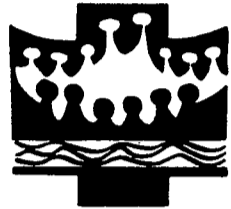
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Insights In Liturgy



By Gretchen Dent

'Time' For Advent

Advent is a complex and confusing time. In the Northeastern United States, the environment around us speaks of darkness and death -- days grow shorter and all of nature is dying. The cold permeates our very lives, and signs of new life are difficult to find. The culture in which we live counters nature's austere overture to winter and seeks all the joy and warmth that can be mustered. We light fires, go to parties, decorate our homes with light and color and rush about in preparation for the Christmas festivities. Despite the hurriedness of the season, a sense of joy pervades.

In the midst of all of this action and counteraction, stands the Christian season of Advent calling us to simplicity and reflectiveness. Advent calls us to slow down, to find hope amidst a world that speaks to us of disaster, to find Christ's presence in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

It is no wonder that we, as Christians, find ourselves pulled in so many directions. Time becomes an ever more precious commodity as Dec. 25 nears. We need "time" to prepare our homes for the festivities of Christmas, "time" to shop for gifts and "time" to attend parties and host them. Those who work in preparing the celebrations of Advent-Christmas-Epiphany in the Church use great amounts of "time" in doing the work that need to be done. All of this is part of the culture in which we live and cannot be ignored, nor does it need to be!

As Christians, however, we need to find "time" to immerse ourselves in the mystery of the Advent season -- to do more than live within our culture. Each of us needs to find ways in which we can accomplish this in a manner that best suits our

need. For some it may be a retreat, for others it may be time set aside for individual prayer or in service to others, and for some perhaps gathering as a community or group to reflect on scripture and/or to pray. One suggestion is for parishes or groups to come together to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

The Liturgy of the Hours speaks to us of time -- of our daily cycles of waking/sleeping, working/resting, living/dying. The principle Hours of Morning and Evening Prayer open each day with praise and bring it to a close in reflection and thanksgiving. Through this prayer we are called to look beyond the daily grind, to the power and love which made and sustains us.

The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours provides an opportunity to spend time as a community of Christians reflecting on the mysteries of Advent and the joy and hope of God's presence among us. It gives an oasis of quiet amidst the chaos of the season, an opportunity to put our "busyness" in perspective and a chance to be renewed and refreshed in preparation for our celebration of Christmas.

Evening Prayer will be celebrated at Sacred Heart Cathedral each Sunday during Advent at 4 p.m., and hopefully in some of the other parishes in the diocese. If joining your brothers and sisters in the celebration of Evening Prayer sounds as if it will help you get in touch with the season, all are invited to join the Cathedral parish; if distance and travel conditions are a factor, I encourage you to contact parishes nearer your home -- possibly even your own parish! Where a need is found -- it will surely be filled! Whether or not we can (or wish to) take advantage of these celebrations, each of us needs to take "time" in the midst of the rush to find the meaning of Advent in our lives, and to allow the presence of Christ to fill us with lasting warmth and light.

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