

# Local Catholics Among 'Families of the Year'

In conjunction with National Family Week, Nov. 18-24, Monroe County Executive Lucien Morin and Rochester Mayor Thomas Ryan announced that three Monroe County families are being honored as "1984 Families of the Year."

The honorees are Ronald and Michaelle LaMagna of Rochester, Milton and Ethel Banks of Wheatland, and Edwin and Bobbie Przybylowicz of Webster.

Families nominated for the award were considered by a panel of judges on how they met certain criteria: whether the nominee "possesses a family unit and solidarity," "has strong, positive self-image as a family unit," and "has reached out to others outside the home; to neighbors, to the wider community, or in other ways sought to serve and better the human condition."

The Bankses celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary this year with their four children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Banks, an active conservationist, has served as a trustee of his church, the Second Baptist Church of Mumford. His wife has also taken a leading role in church and community affairs, being cited with numerous awards for her efforts on behalf of

youth, parents, and the elderly.

The LaMagnas have nine children yet both still find the time to volunteer their services to their parish, St. Anne's on Mt. Hope Avenue. LaMagna is chairman of the parish finance committee while his wife is the vice president of the St. Anne's School Board, a member of the Rosary Society, and a teacher of the Liturgy of the Word program.

Both have served as presidents of the St. Anne's Home-School Association, and have also volunteered their time at Monroe Community Hospital and the Jewish Community Center.

Przybylowicz and his wife have 11 children, ages 12 to 29. He has served as a member and past president of the Webster School Board, and currently serves on the parish board at St. Paul's Church.

Mrs. Przybylowicz is active in the PTA and volunteers time at the Rochester Museum and Science Center. The family has, in the past, sponsored a Swedish exchange student and worked with others in the community to help relocate a Vietnamese family.

The three families were

honored at a recognition luncheon on Thursday, Nov. 15 at the Strathallan.

The Families of the Year program was initiated in 1981 when Morin and Ryan appointed a citizens' committee to recognize exemplary families in the county. The committee includes representatives from civic, business, religious and service organizations.

## Ithaca CDA Keeps Busy

Ithaca -- Court Santa Maria 240, Catholic Daughters of the Americas, has been busy with a wide range of activities.

The court, which received eight new members recently, cooperated with Area Congregations Together, to entertain more than 150 persons at the Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service in the First Baptist Church.

Then to help Immaculate Conception School celebrate its 100th anniversary, court members decided not to exchange Christmas gifts at their upcoming Dec. 5 party but to donate the money instead to the school's Tuition Fund, as part of the anniversary celebration but also to help defray expenses for needy children.

and we are mindful of patient waiting. In the sharing of our bread we share life. Remember, Bethlehem means "house of bread."

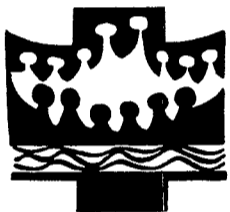
A tree symbolizing the tree-of-life of Genesis has been used for making this a central symbol of the season. Allow the decorating of it to be a family ritual, rather than a hurried chore. The decorations can remind us of life and of the passage through salvation history -- birds and other animals, fruits, stars and snowflakes, angels, and certainly a dove for peace. Perhaps we add a special star for the feast of Epiphany. The decorating can be a reflective experience as we yearly review our history as Christians and our personal faith story as we add to the decorations those which depict special moments in family life.

The setting up of the crib can be spread over the season to emphasize patient anticipation. Start with the empty stable and scattered straw and add the figures one at a time throughout the season. Save the placing of the infant until Christmas Eve and the Magi until Epiphany.

Light and darkness are themes which permeate the season in the liturgy and in nature. The use of candles and simmered lighting at dinner can heighten awareness of waiting for the light of the world. Spend a few moments gazing in wonder at the sky on a star-filled night.

Our season is replete with opportunities for reaching the hearts of children in prayerful embrace. Taking patient time, only a few moments at once, can excite in them a magic which transcends the technological, commercial approach to Christmas. An added benefit may also be to relieve us of hectic feelings so we can then celebrate with our bodies and spirits in harmony and peace.

## Insights In Liturgy



By Sister Ann Habershaw SSSD

## Advent: Time for The Children

No doubt about it! The next four weeks, for most of us, will be the busiest of the year. We will rush, hurry, plan, make contacts with others, and try to stave off feelings of frustration and exhaustion until we can breathe a sigh of relief that once again we have survived the celebration.

To care for the prayer life of ourselves and our children then becomes a challenge, one which the Church urges us to assume as we prepare for the religious celebration of Christmas-Epiphany. We can do this in prayer which is both reflective (a looking inward), and active (a reaching out to others in our midst). We can ritualize the preparations for the feast creating memories for children which will be carried into adulthood and be passed to future generations.

The Sunday readings of the Advent season direct us to patient anticipation of the Kingdom, a watchfulness in hope. To be with us on our journey we have the personages of Isaiah, offering messages of comfort and challenge to reach out to the needy; John the Baptist, urging all to take stock of their lives; and Mary, willingly trusting the Word of God. In the busyness of this season, we can find benefit in taking time to reflect on these readings. Reserve a place in the dining room or family room or classroom as a

prayer spot. Cover a table with royal blue or purple and place on it a candle and an open Bible. Set aside some family or class time to share these readings. Reflect upon watchfulness, encouraging one another to make the watchfulness other, rather than self, centered. Can we take a message of comfort and hope to someone we know -- a child in the hospital, an elderly neighbor, a family which has just suffered a loss, someone with whom there has been an argument? Children have a great capacity for compassion, but they must be guided to recognize situations in which they can reach out.

Daily news stories present us with many situations of hopelessness in the world. This season is appropriate for increasing the awareness of our global society and praying for the kingdom to be manifest in situations of violence and poverty. Although we and the children may experience a sense of powerlessness in the face of world problems, we can be peacemakers within the small part of the world we occupy. We keep before us the ancient Christian prayer, "Maranatha," "Come, Lord Jesus," and act to allow him to enter our midst.

Ritualizing the various preparations can bring to all a sense of calmness and can teach children the wonder-filled symbols which enrich this season. Include children in the baking extravaganza -- at least in the cut-out cookie phase. Symbols of stars, trees, doves speak of God's message. The preparation and the baking take time



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