

AT YOUR PARISH

Blessed Sacrament

Deacon Joseph Holleran will launch a series of lectures and discussions on "Prayer and Our Spiritual Life, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 28 in Room 11 of Blessed Sacrament School, the series, which focuses on the works of Father Thomas Green, Father Henri Nouwen, Father Thomas Merton and Mother Teresa, is sponsored by the church adult education committee. Other dates in the series are March 7, 14 and 21.

St. Helen

The Altar Rosary Society of St. Helen's Church will hold a card party, 7:30 p.m.,

Wednesday, Feb. 27. Men and women are invited to attend. Reservations are obtained by calling 352-9660, or 247-2952. Tickets are \$2.50.

St. James

The Rosary Society of St. James Church will stage a fashion show featuring "A Touch of Spring," 8 p.m., March 4. Fashions shown will be from Frances Dress and -Bridal Shop. A \$1.25 donation will be asked.

St. Mary's, Canandaigua

Canandaigua -- Parishioners have been invited to a Renewal and Reconciliation Retreat Friday evening and

Saturday, March 8-9, in the school.

Scheduled are talks by priests, nuns and laity, group discussions and liturgies with the theme "The Spirit Is Alive in '85 -- An Opportunity for Spiritual Nourishment and Growth."

Retreatants will meet at 6:30 p.m., Friday -- the evening to conclude with a 10 p.m. liturgy. Saturday's schedule will run from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The retreat is open to all at no charge with food and materials provided by the committee but reservations are necessary and may be made with Paul or Sylvia Nichols, 394-5685, or with Sister Marie Alderman, 394-2325.

Holy Cross

Holy Cross School has scheduled registration for the 1985-86 school year for new pupils (including pre-school) from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Monday, March 11, in the school cafeteria.

Further information may be obtained from Holy Cross School, 663-6533.

St. Nicholas

A special lentil dinner and card party will begin 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23 for St. Nicholas Melkite Rite Church. Featured at the dinner will be M'Jadra, the Arabic confection of lentils, rice and onions, described as a very nutritious and tasty basic Arabic meal. George Abou Harb is chairman of the event who will also entertain. Tickets are \$5 per person and are available from Harb, 342-8064; or Fa-

Sponsors Needed

Sponsors, both individuals and organizations, are needed to help refugees from Southeast Asia start new lives in the United States. Diocesan wishing to assist in the effort are asked to contact the United States Catholic Conference's local refugee officer, James Delaney, (716) 546-7220.

ther Salem Faddoul, 467-8925.

Lady of Lourdes

Elmira -- The religious education committee of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is sponsoring a Lenten Series on Prayer, to begin 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 21 in the Church. Father John Mergenhahn from Stella Niagara Retreat House at Niagara Falls will present the first program. The evening of prayer will introduce people to new forms in prayer including the breathing prayer, and prayer of the imagination.

St. Cecilia

The Solo Club will sponsor a dance for singles 30 and older, 9 p.m., Feb. 23 at St. Cecilia's Church. Ticket price is \$3.

St. Thomas

Focus on the Eucharist is scheduled Feb. 28 at St. Thomas the Apostle Rectory Chapel, 4530 St. Paul Blvd.

Evening prayer and rosary at 7:30 p.m. will precede the Mass celebrated by parish priests. A short meditation will follow and the evening will close with benediction. Everyone is welcome.

St. Patrick

Seneca Falls -- The fifth and sixth grade basketball team of St. Patrick's School will participate in the Angelo Capaldi Tournament Feb. 23 and 24 at St. Patrick's. The public is invited to attend. Last weekend, the girls' basketball team participated in the "Girls Diocesan Tournament," also at St. Patrick's

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

Reflections On Elmira

Didn't you conduct a novena in Elmira recently?

Yes. At Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Feb. 3-11, at the invitation of my townsman, Father Paul McCabe. It was the annual novena in honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. The parish has had the devotion every week on Mondays at 7:30 for many years, and an annual nine consecutive days in February, ending with the patronal feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. When the invitation came, I pondered: "The people who will come to the novena will be largely older people who still cherish old devotions." I was surprised and pleased that there were many younger people, including youths. Historian James Hithcock, in his perceptive "Decline and Fall of Radical Catholicism," has a whole chapter on "folk religion" which is not a snide against popular devotions, but an understanding.

One of the paraliturgies which has almost disappeared is Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, loved by Cardinal Newman and the Oxford converts, and by most Catholics everywhere. Last year I conducted a Benediction service and was greeting the congregation afterward. A matron in her early 40s rushed to me and exclaimed: "Oh, Father, I am so glad I came. My son, who is 21 years old, is home from college, and he came with me last night. Afterward he said, 'That's the first time I have ever seen Benediction. Why, it's beautiful.'" It dismays me that so many things connected with devotion of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament have been dissipated. I suppose the firm devotion of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her Sisters to the Blessed Sacrament has kept the spiritual life of these missionaries especially strong.

Well, what did your ponderings conclude?

The novena services were scheduled for twice a day: at 11 a.m. Mass, novena prayers and instruction; 7:30 p.m., novena prayers, instruction, Holy Communion and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. I am obsessed by the conviction that our people do not

know or appreciate the basic truths of our religion, so I decided to give a series on the basics, relating them to Our Blessed Mother. Something happened to confirm my decision.

What was that?

I like and admire teenagers. They are of the age of uncertainty and contrariness; egotism and generosity, with great spiritual potential. And I like to pose questions to them to stimulate their curiosity and intelligence. Before Saturday night Mass I buttonholed six boys separately and asked each: "If someone should ask you, 'Why are you a Catholic?', what would you say?" The boys were 15, 16, 19, and three were 17. One said: "Because I believe in God." "But Muslims and Jews believe in God; and non-Catholic Christians." Another: "I was born into a Catholic family." "Yes, but you could quit. Some do. And others become Catholics." Two very sharp youths, with Elmira conservatism, said: "I'd have to think about that." Another replied: "Because Jesus Christ established the Catholic Church."

What were your basic instructions?

The opening was at Sunday Mass: 1. Religion and Intellectual Clarity, using as an example the life of Madame Rose Loomis, who founded the Church at Sodus Point after the Civil War. She became a Catholic through the study of the catechism, and was the instrument of bringing her pastor, Rev. William Salt, at the village of Sodus, into the Church. He became a priest. He established Seton Hall College, and he became Vicar General of the Diocese of Newark. Following the series came: 2. The Church; 3. The Bible; 4. Development of Christian Doctrine, from Newman's masterpiece. Then, 5. Purgatory, about which our pulpits and catechetics have been so uncharitably silent. Then, 6. The Blessed Sacrament; and after that, 7. Original Sin and the Seven Capital Sins, using the text from "O Salutaris" -- namely, "Bella Praemunt hostilia." On the eighth day, Sunday, 8. The Mass; and the final day, 9. Mary, the Mother of God and Our Mother.

More on this Elmira apostolate next week.

Visit St. Jude Shrine in Baltimore during Lent.

Thousands visit this Shrine during Lent to seek St. Jude's powerful intercession. They trust that St. Jude will help them overcome their various problems. Take your problems to St. Jude, the patron saint for hopeless causes--attend Solemn Novena Services in his honor starting on Ash Wednesday, February 20 (7:45 a.m., 12 Noon, 5:45 p.m., 7:45 p.m.) and on Sunday, February 24 (7:45 a.m., 9:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.). Visit the Shrine by yourself or with others as a group. Group bus trips are welcome. Write or call for your free St. Jude Novena Prayer Booklet.



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