



Teresa A. Parsons/Courier-Journal  
Kathy Francis (right) and Marcia Miller spot an old friend who's also returning to teach in a diocesan school. Francis is beginning full-time teaching at St. Thomas More School after working part-time for nine years. Miller taught eight years ago at St. John the Evangelist on Humboldt Street.

## Diocese welcomes new teachers with school orientation workshops

By Teresa A. Parsons

Some sobering responsibilities, a lot of practical advice and contagious enthusiasm marked the first day of school for teachers new to diocesan Catholic schools earlier this month.

Two orientation workshops were held by diocesan education officials on Tuesday and Wednesday, August 28 and 29. The earlier, held at St. Mary Our Mother in Horseheads, drew about 22 participants. Nearly 100 attended the morning-long session at Holy Rosary School on Lexington Avenue.

"The day gives them an idea of how they fit into the 12-county, 75-school system at the diocesan level by introducing them to diocesan staff and giving them an overview of the system," said Sister Virginia Steinwachs, S.S.J., assistant superintendent for Urban Education/Public Relations. Placement of new teachers is up slightly this year according to Sister Edwardine Weaver, superintendent of schools.

Participants ranged from brand-new teachers to those with experience who are new to the system or who are returning after time away from the job.

Eileen Jackson, a recent graduate of LeMoyn College, began her first teaching job at St. Helen's School this year. Marcia Miller is returning as a junior high religion teacher after eight years. Anne Allen has moved from a school in the Archdiocese of Washington to teaching seventh grade at Nazareth Hall. All were excited, but felt first-of-the-year jitters. "It's nice to come together and feel you're not alone," one teacher remarked.

A series of mini-sessions gave the teachers, grouped by grade level, an opportunity to get some practical advice from several long-time teachers in the system and from diocesan officials.

After 22 years at St. Lawrence School, Eloise Martin hasn't forgotten that starting out or starting over is intimidating. She urged her listeners to ask questions and to be firm, fair, consistent and well-prepared.

"You're new and everyone knows it," she said. "No question is stupid. You're stupid if you don't ask."

"Tell yourself you are an asset with your youth and your freshness of approach," she

advised. "If you are excited about what you are doing, if you are happy, the kids will share your attitude."

Also on a practical note, James McAuliffe, assistant superintendent for public affairs, outlined the teachers' legal responsibilities. In particular, he noted their obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Aside from injuries that don't appear accidental — like cigarette burns — he advised his listeners to watch for children who never have lunch or don't have necessary or appropriate clothing.

"It is your responsibility to address a situation where physical abuse or neglect seems to be happening ... If you recognize it, you are liable under law to report it," he said.

In a number of presentations, teachers were urged to think about why they chose Catholic as opposed to public schools — "besides the fact that there are no openings in public schools," joked Robert Gefell, the assistant superintendent for personnel. "Each school is a separate little faith community, and each of us is expected to bring and share our own gifts," Gefell said.

In turn, presenters noted that Catholic schools have something special to offer both students and teachers.

"Our schools are different because we have a faith-centered, value-centered education. We have the great hope and promise of the Lord to offer," said Sister Joseph Gilmory Russell, S.S.J., principal at St. Jerome's in East Rochester and assistant superintendent for elementary and administration/religious instruction. "You who instruct others to justice will be like shining stars for all eternity," she added.

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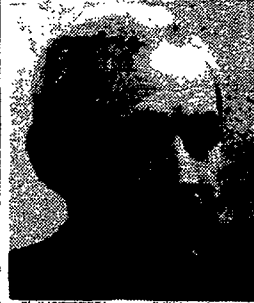
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## Along the Way

with Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Sunday.

This evening at beautiful St. Stephen's in Geneva, we held the first of three reflection sessions on the concerns of women in the Church and society.

These gatherings are in response to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops effort to develop a pastoral letter on this theme. We hope that our local efforts will contribute to the NCCB's research and that they will at the same time deepen in our own diocese our appreciation for the dignity and gifts of every member of our faith community.

The hearing today engaged me deeply as such experiences always do. I think I can honestly say that I heard no topics discussed which I have not heard in some way before. But that is in no way to suggest that the hours will be ill-spent.

On the contrary they were very much worthwhile for the commitment, the insight, the passion and the deep spirit of faith manifested by those who so generously participated in the program.

There was pain expressed today — very real pain — by persons whose faith and generous service is very well known to me and no doubt many of you.

I am deeply touched and moved by that, not only because I don't like to see anyone suffer unnecessarily, but also because most of those who shared their experience would probably have kept it all to themselves had they not been invited to speak.

If there was a strong mention of suffering, there was also a strengthening and invigorating sharing of hope, achievement, perseverance, and perhaps above all, love for the faith.

As a male participant in the pro-

ceeding, I was asked to jot some notes about this question: As you reflect on your experiences of Roman Catholic women, what stands out for you?

My notes:

Gratitude — for my mother who gave me life and has nourished me with food and prayer and friendship ... for my sister's love and the friendship and promise of her beautiful daughters ... for so many women who have taught me in the classroom and outside ... for the inspiration, example, prayer, encouragement and challenge of women friends in our history, in my life, past and present.

Admiration — for the achievement women have realized in the face of opposition, misunderstanding ... for their patience, so often lovingly offered, to those (to us!) who have offended or hurt them ... for the contribution women I know make every day to the well-being of others.

Sorrow — for the pain and suffering so many women experience today ... especially that so many women have judged it right for them to leave behind active participation in our community of faith.

Hope — in God's love and in the good things to which that love has given birth in the contemporary Church.

There is no doubt a long road ahead of us and it may be difficult at times, but my prayer and hope is that God's love will bring us to new life through what we experience together.

We have two more reflection sessions scheduled — at Holy Cross, Rochester, on Sunday, Sept. 15, and at St. Mary's, Dansville, Sunday, Sept. 22. Please come if you wish.

Peace to all.

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