

Forums on Women

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 Thornbush") are being taken very seriously by the Diocesan Office of Liturgy."
 As for the direction the proposed 1988

national pastoral will take, Dr. Sullivan cites four points of view currently held by different factions. "There are those who feel that the U.S. bishops won't really be able to

say by 1988 anything more significant than they have already said. Given the present climate of the Roman Catholic Church," she posits, "even if they wanted to be more forward-thinking, would they be able to be so without bringing unnecessary risk to their own authority, vis-a-vis the larger Church?"

A second group holds that whatever the American bishops are able to say collectively will be welcome and will advance the dialogue in positive directions, says Dr. Sullivan. "A third point of view suggests that the U.S. bishops shouldn't say anything about women, because they aren't women," she adds. "I feel that's a kind of illogical position — but that, given that the official conscience of the Church has for so long been guided by the male experience of the Church, it will be extremely important for the U.S. bishops to be in full consultation with women as they attempt to say something real and worthwhile about women in the Church and society."

As to a fourth opinion that the bishops

should be addressing their pastoral instead to the issues of sexism and patriarchy, Dr. Sullivan concludes, "I think that there is every reason to believe that the majority of the U.S. bishops genuinely desire to heal whatever injures the relationship of the Church with women — and while we should try to be honest with them, we should not nitpick every effort they're making in this direction, because they are as disadvantaged as women are in this matter by the history of the Church."

The dialogue, in any event, has been joined, and the chorus of voices Judith O'Brien hopes for is likely to create lasting echoes in the ears of American bishops for some time to come.

On the local level, the words of one anonymous respondent, quoted in the final report of the task force on Bishop Clark's Commission on Women in the Church, ring out with almost palpable reverberation.

"Women," she affirmed, "are being heard in the diocese of Rochester."

Thanks Giving Appeal

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 believed best able to assist the diocese financially, he added.

"We are just very hopeful that this approach will relieve some of the burden on the people who simply cannot afford to give an average \$41," Father Moynihan said. The money raised at the receptions will be credited toward that to be raised by the donors' parishes.

Pastors in all parishes will deliver homilies on the Thanks Giving Appeal Sunday, Oct. 13. Phase II, in-home visitation of the 15 percent of potential donors who will be asked to give \$100 or more, will occur the week of October 21. The remaining 80 percent of potential donors will be solicited by mail starting October 14. All Catholic individuals and families will receive a brochure explaining the appeal and the programs it benefits.

Father Moynihan noted that through the Pastoral Center, the diocese provides a number of services individual parishes could not afford. "We have to bring more and more attention to that," he said. "We really depend on the free-will offerings of the people in the diocese."

Adult education

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 the Sacred Heart last spring, a new program was designed with seven different areas under the supervision of four full-time staff members.

Sister Janice Morgan, formerly assistant superintendent for curriculum for the diocesan Department of Education, is now director of religious education at the parish. She will administer the overall program, which serves 1,100 children, kindergarten through high school. A parent-run preschool and kindergarten program is the only Sunday morning class — the rest are held during the week, both afternoons and evenings, with the cooperation of the public school system.

A series of elective courses will be offered to junior and senior high students by Deacon Steve Carroll, coordinator of youth ministry. His wife Barbara, coordinator of Christian initiation, will take on the RCIA and sacramental programs. An adult program called "covenanting," designed for both catechists and other adults, will also be offered by Stephanie Batterman, adult education coordinator.

If for no other reason, budgets dictate that Assumption's program is not realistic for all parishes. But parent involvement in some form is not only possible, it's required. Diocesan guidelines for sacramental instruction stipulate that it be both family- and parish-centered.

With a strong tradition of parent involvement already in place, sacramental programs have been effective at St. Mary's in Auburn according to Gary LaLonde, D.R.E. Parents and children come to classes and meet both together and separately. In Confirmation preparation, candidates meet in small groups with a catechist, while parents meet in a large group for an hour. Afterward candidates spend a half hour alone with their sponsors. He has seen a reawakening of faith in families, especially through First Eucharist and Penance programs. "Families begin to plug into the Church again," he observed.

Anna Black, religious education coordinator at St. Patrick's in Corning, has also seen sacramental programs bring people back to the Church, some of whom end up as catechumens in RCIA.

"We have had an awful lot of people willing to work in the program and a very enthusiastic response," Black said. "I truly believe the catechumenate is guided by the Holy Spirit. When people share their stories, it's a true cocoon-to-butterfly experience."

Last year while grieving over her brother-in-law's death, Black recalled preparing for an RCIA gathering with misgivings. "I was afraid I'd be a real downer," she said. "I think it was the best thing that ever happened to me. Timid, shy people who never said a word were talking, saying how wonderful they felt. It was contagious."

RCIA programs are designed for adults seeking instruction from the Catholic Church. The program is modeled on the way adults were received into the early Church by the whole community. By involving the whole church in witnessing the growth and acceptance of a new member, the process challenges all parishioners to look at their own faith and their need for renewal.

"Some people are beginning to say 'can we do something along the lines of these new Catholics?'" said Patricia Lawlor, consul-

The goal for this campaign is \$3,562,000, although parish quotas only equal \$3,005,000, representing a 5 percent increase over last year's quotas but creating a gap of \$557,000 between quota and goal. Therefore, "it's imperative for every parish to go over goal," Donnelly said. Last year, 135 to 140 parishes exceeded their quotas, with 21 or 22 failing to reach their goals.

"We've done very well in the past in the sense that we've always made our (overall) goal," Father Moynihan said. "On the other hand, you can never allow yourself to become too comfortable. You always need new ideas, new initiatives. You need always to be looking for ways to do things better."

He said he expected the new format to be more convenient to donors, despite a slight loss of personal contact for many. "Hopefully, they (those in the 80-percent category) will respond to the mail appeal as faithfully as they respond to all of the other requests for charitable donations that come across their desks. Hopefully, the bishop's appeal will rank as one of their most important charities and that they will respond as generously as they have in the past."

tant for the Finger Lakes Office of Religious Education. "RCIA is one of the biggest successes in this area. It's blossoming throughout the diocese."

More than 90 parishes now take part in the RCIA program, said Sister Mary Ann of the diocesan office. To promote the image of religious education as a lifelong process, both beginning and enrichment workshops for RCIA are planned.

CERT programs are offered, not only to catechists, but to all adults around the diocese in three levels. The Southern Tier's Stanton noted that new level three adult enrichment courses have been particularly well received in her area.

The diocesan office plans a Catechist Congress November 8 and 9 at Our Lady of Mercy High School in Rochester. With the theme "Humbly Welcome the Word that has taken root in you," an estimated 500-600 people will choose from close to 30 workshops. Speakers include Father John Aurelio, a well-known storyteller and children's writer and chaplain for the West Seneca Developmental Center in Buffalo, and Maureen Gallagher, director of adult and family ministry in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Diocesan religious education staff also plan a series of lunches with pastors to give them information and to gather their views and insights.

The diocesan office and its two regional branches also offer resources from videotapes to parish consultations.

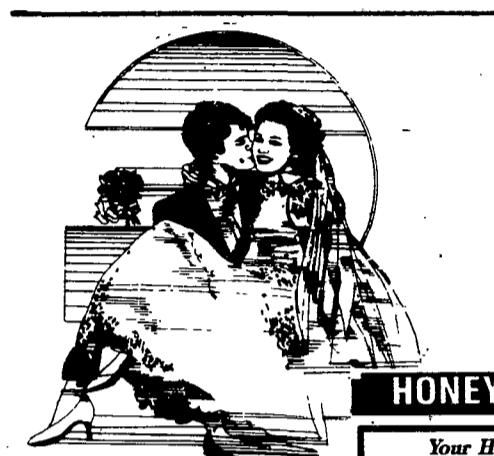
"We are trying to adapt to what they (parish personnel) say their needs are," Sister Mary Ann said, pointing to yearly evaluations as well as evaluations of each program her staff presents.

"Our overall goal is to be visible, to say 'tell us how you want us to serve,'" Sister Mary Ann said.

Diocese-wide, 107 parishes employ 119 paid religious education coordinators and directors and 40 parishes make use of 47 volunteer coordinators. Fifteen parishes list the pastor as administrator for religious education. The number of paid coordinators has increased by 40 since 1981 said Sister Mary Ann. She added that lay people overwhelmingly make up the bulk of religious education personnel.

Religious education personnel are classed at three levels. Directors of religious education hold a master's degree combined with a level of experience that qualifies them to run a parish's program. Coordinators of religious education typically hold a bachelor's degree and will be responsible for most areas of religious education. A religious education administrator has no specific educational background. That job entails organizing the religious education program with someone on staff handling the program's theological content.

At the parish level, Sister Mary Ann estimates that well over 2,000 people volunteer as catechists. That term is replacing teacher, she said, to better express the way religious education draws forth faith from inside. "It is one who echoes the gospel message. It's more than knowledge you're trying to impart," Sister Mary Ann said.



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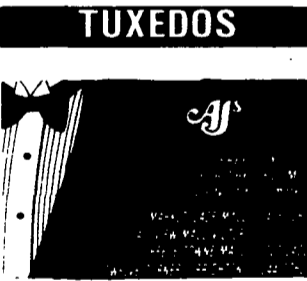
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