



Inspectors liturgical

Nobody likes a nitpicker, so members of a diocesan parish liturgy evaluation team leaven their observations with affirmation and a touch of humor. See page 6.



Vows matrimonial

Our 1987 Special Wedding Section offers humor, inspiration and practical tips for everyone from the newly engaged to 30-year marriage 'veterans.' See page 1A.

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World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Priest's murder investigated

Mexico City — Police are currently investigating the murder of U.S. Precious Blood Father Frederick J. Falce, whose body was found in a Mexico City hotel room. Police spokeswoman Licenciada Solis said the probe includes reports that, on the night before the body was found, a young man entered the Hotel San Marino carrying a key to an extra room rented by Father LaFalce on the 11th floor. The 53-year-old priest's body was discovered in that room Jan. 17. He had been stabbed several times. "We're considering it a robbery," the police spokeswoman said. The priest had left about \$7,000 and credit cards in a hotel safe deposit box, according to hotel officials.

Pope criticizes mass media

Vatican City — Pope John Paul II has asked French bishops to protect young people from elements of the mass media that "flaunt vices." "They carry microbes of death causing youths to become anemic, indifferent and discouraged," the pope said Feb. 13 to a group of French bishops. The pope criticized "certain comic strips, films and broadcasts which flaunt vices, promote violence, revolt and despair, and which do not hesitate to ridicule moral values and sacred signs."

Nation

Reagan proposal denounced

Washington — Officials of three national Catholic organizations have denounced the Reagan administration's proposal to cap federal Medicaid spending for health care services to the poor. "In a society in which 36 million people have no guaranteed access to adequate health care services, cutting federal support for Medicaid represents an unacceptable threat not only to the quality of life of many poor Americans, but to life itself," the officials said. They made the statement in a letter to members of the House and Senate budget committees, the Senate Finance Committee, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Released Feb. 13, the letter was signed by Monsignor Daniel F. Hoye, general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference; Father Thomas J. Harvey, executive director of Catholic Charities USA; and John E. Curley Jr., president of the Catholic Health Association.

Pro-life leaders addressed

New York — Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York told leaders of a new pro-life coalition that their struggle must be waged with "gentleness" and "understanding." Allegations have been made, he noted, that people in the pro-life movement encourage the bombing of abortion clinics. "I personally resent that allegation," he said. He said such actions would be "stupid from a pragmatic standpoint" because they damage the whole movement. "It will ultimately be your goodness that will save human lives."



STORY OF A SOUL — Sister Lucie (Hélène Alexandridis) sneaks a peek at the diary kept by Sister Therese, later named Saint Therese of Lisieux. The scene is from the Alain Cavalier film, *Therese*, now playing at the Little Theatre in Rochester. For our review, turn to page 5.

Parishes briefly test new pastoral options

By Teresa A. Parsons

Some Catholics regard the shortage of priests as an opportunity. Others view it as a crisis.

For Mercy sisters Julia Norton and Rita Heberle, the priest shortage has simply meant the opportunity to manage a crisis or two.

It wasn't as if they had to face anything beyond the ordinary, day-to-day decisions that confront any pastor — what to do about flooding in a church building or what to say to a family that has lost a loved one.

But as one parishioner succinctly noted: "We've never had a lady in charge before."

From August 1 till mid-December, 1986, Sister Rita served as temporary administrator at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Painted Post while the pastor, Father Walter Wainwright, was on sabbatical.

Sister Julia has been administering Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church since November 17, when Father Jim Hewes left for sabbatical.

These are not, in fact, the first occasions when a woman or a non-ordained man has administered a parish in the Diocese of Rochester. In Sister Julia's case, it's not even the first time she has administered a parish here.

She and Sister Rita are, however, the first women whom Bishop Matthew H. Clark has formally appointed as temporary administrators.

Canon law provides that when a bishop is confronted with "a dearth of priests," he may entrust the pastoral care of a parish "to a deacon or to some other person who is not a priest or to a community of persons," as long as he appoints a priest "endowed with the powers and faculties of a pastor" to supervise the individual or team.

So far, Bishop Clark has only taken that step on a temporary basis. But as every indication points to a continuing decline in the number of active priests, members of a diocesan Personnel Commission subcommittee are preparing guidelines and criteria for the position of lay (or religious) parish administrator.

Meanwhile, arrangements such as those at Mount Carmel and Immaculate Heart offer the assurance that parish life will go on, even if some day the pastor is, of necessity, no longer a priest.

"I think that this will serve as credible

evidence for places considering (doing) that in the future, whether on a temporary or even on a permanent basis," Father Wainwright said. "It was very positively accepted by people in the parish."

In both cases, Bishop Clark appointed the sisters as temporary administrators, based on the recommendations of the diocesan personnel division. Personnel division staff members, in turn, consulted with members of the parish staffs.

"There are no criteria that would automatically lead to someone other than a priest administering a parish," said Father Robert Schrader, director of the Division of Personnel, Staffing and Development. "The normal policy is that a priest would fill in. But in certain cases, exceptions can be made."

Appointing a temporary administrator who is already familiar with a parish has some obvious advantages. After more than three years as pastoral assistant at Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sister Rita had gained a certain level of trust and confidence among parishioners.

"It seemed like a very logical arrangement that would certainly help to maintain continuity," she said.

Other advantages are peculiar to particular parishes. "In the case of Mount Carmel, it was felt that someone who knows the parish from being there could better administer it than someone coming in from the outside for a short while," Father Schrader said.

Language was one factor at Mount Carmel, where parishioners are predominantly Hispanic. Sister Julia speaks fluent Spanish, thanks to years of experience in urban ministry and several summers spent working in Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Finances were another consideration, ac-

Continued on Page 12



Sister Julia Norton, RSM