

Southern Tier taps into evangelizing effort

Evangelization isn't only for the unchurched or inactive Catholic, but for those who are active as well.

That was the message broadcast to an estimated 35,000 Catholics across the country on Pentecost Sunday, June 6, during what organizers called a historic moment in evangelization.

Pentecost '87 was actually a seven-hour national teleconference. Sponsored by the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association, it was broadcast from Washington, D.C., to more than 200 locations throughout the United States via satellite by the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America.

More than 150 people from Rochester and such Southern Tier communities as Ithaca, Cohocton, Waverly and Corning gathered at Notre Dame High School in Elmira to take part in the event.

"Its purpose was to train lay people in how to evangelize not only the unchurched, but also the alienated and inactive Catholic as well as the active Catholic," explained Sister Mary Jean Smith, social ministry coordinator at St. Patrick's Parish in Elmira and one of the event's local organizers.

"We need to look at what bold, creative steps we as a Catholic community can take to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ," she explained. "Lots of times we're so dull. The gospel is never dull."

Pentecost '87 was the first of 10 annual

conferences that the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America hopes to broadcast each Pentecost Sunday until the year 2000, according to Paulist Father Alvin A. Illig, director of the National Catholic Evangelization Association.

The teleconference format included three major presentations by Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin, pollster George Gallup Jr. and three members of a parish evangelization team from Minneapolis. After each major presentation, a 10-minute period was allotted for panelists to question the speakers. Participants at some sites were able to phone in and speak directly with the panelists and speakers. At other sites, including the one in Elmira, participants engaged in local discussions.

"One of the major things people said was that you could evangelize by being a good, solid Catholic Christian yourself, by living the radical gospel message more," Sister Smith said. "Evangelization happens not so much in programs, but between people."

When it comes to evangelization, Cardinal Bernardin told viewers that too many Catholics "are doing maintenance work. Not enough are doing mission work."

All Catholics "must be made aware that they are called to be active participants, not mere observers, in the church's mission," he said.

Complaining that "too many Christians are lukewarm," allowing "the toxic vision"

of consumerism to shape them, their children and their world, the cardinal said that "we are called, instead, to a holiness that is countercultural. The world cannot afford to have the body of Christ be in collusion with the idolatry, agnosticism and atheism of the consumer vision."

Cardinal Bernardin called on Catholics to be "fishers" who invite others into the church. He suggested reviving the ministry of "the fisher" that was part of the original Confraternity of Christian Doctrine developed by St. Charles Borromeo.

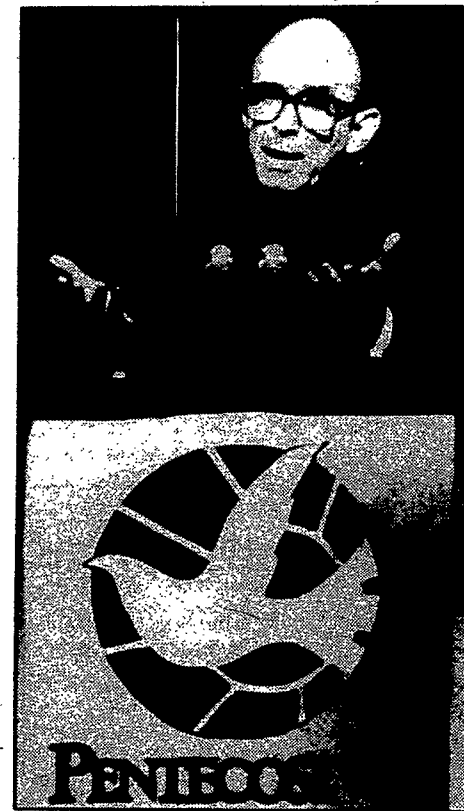
"The 'fisher' visited Catholics at home, inviting some, reconciling with others. This or a similar ministry would offer a remedy for those who feel that we neglect or abandon them," he said.

George Gallup, president of the Gallup Poll, focused on the 90 million people in the United States considered "unchurched," people who have attended church less than two times in the past year.

According to a 1985 survey, 24 percent of U.S. Catholics — about 16.5 million people — were unchurched.

Gallup called for evangelization tailored to Catholics. "The best form of evangelization for Catholics is simply an invitation to join a warm, loving parish community. Family members and peers — young people evangelizing young people and so on — are probably the most effective evangelizers."

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Ron Thomas/NC News
Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago, speaking at Pentecost '87, a national satellite celebration of Catholic evangelization in Washington, said young people today are losing the marker and sign posts that would help them along the journey of life.

McQuaid among 271 schools honored by U.S. Department of Education

For the second time in three years, a diocesan high school has earned the United States Department of Education Exemplary School Award.

McQuaid Jesuit High School on South Clinton Avenue in Rochester was among 271 secondary schools recently rated outstanding by the nation's Department of Education.

Nazareth Academy received the same honor for being an exemplary school back in 1984.

McQuaid was the only secondary school west of Albany to receive the award, and one of a mere 19 high schools to be honored statewide. Thirty schools in all were selected in New York state.

Father Paul Nochelski, SJ, the school's first alumnus-principal in its 33-year existence, cited McQuaid's "newness and flexibility" as two of the reasons for the honor.

"We have had a healthy view of

experimentation here ... something you're able to have when you're younger than other schools," said Father Nochelski, who added that McQuaid is the latest school to be founded in this region by the New York Province of the Society of Jesus. "There's more freedom here."

The McQuaid principal said that the whole school could take pride in the award, which encompasses much more than just academics.

"(The award) shows a real dedication

among the faculty, as well as the parental and student involvement here," Father Nochelski said. "It takes a team effort."

He added that the private school "has always had good interplay" between the school community and the local community, a trait brought on by the necessity of changing with the times.

"This school was founded at the tail end of the very rigid Jesuit curriculum. It has always followed the concept that not everything is etched in stone," Father Nochelski said.

He added that change at McQuaid over the years has been "a fluid process," and that the secondary school has "molded to the needs of the students."

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