

## Corpus

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ly while one of the sisters recovered from surgery. The sister eventually died, and Unger was asked to stay permanently.

"My years there were among the most enjoyable in my life," Unger says. "I taught whole families. It made you feel close to them."

During the parish's June centennial liturgy, a former student gave Unger a note thanking her for her influence in his life and recalling the onetime student's memories of Corpus Christi. "I think of ... being an altar boy, Beadie the sacristan, Fred the janitor, Monsignor Maney, the many priests, and its new life since Father Callan has arrived," the note read.

The school and the overall renovation and improvement of the parish buildings was a prime concern of Monsignor John E. Maney, who was appointed administrator when Monsignor Hart became confined by illness in 1956. Monsignor Maney conducted extensive fund drives to improve the church's interior and the rectory.

Father Lawrence Ward, pastoral assistant from 1951-1957, describes the Corpus Christi of his time as a "busy parish," whose members came from within its boundaries, unlike today's parish, which draws people from all over the city and outlying areas.

During the 1960s and '70s, however, Corpus Christi experienced a decline in attendance. More and more residents of the Main Street area were moving to the suburbs in that period, while many of those who stayed in the neighborhood had a weak connection with the parish. By the early '70s, it seemed Corpus Christi would have to merge with another parish or close forever.

The first victim of this decline was the school. Sunday night bingo was established in 1971 to help defray the costs, but by 1977, the school had become too costly to maintain.

Yet, just as the parish decided to close the school in spring of 1977, the school parents came to a decision of their own. With a \$30,000 subsidy from the diocese, the parents began to run the school on an independent financial basis. Annual tuition from parents and various fundraisers enabled the school to continue operations, reopening that fall as the only parent-run Catholic school in the diocese.

Father Joseph W. Dailey ran the parish from 1976-1977, cutting the budget and revitalizing the parish through warm sermons and hu-

morous bulletins. His work paved the way for the parish's current administrator, Father James B. Callan.

Along with Sister Marjory Henninger, Father Callan established a parish outreach center on Webster Avenue, bringing the parish to the people, many of whom were isolated from its location.

Sister Rosalia Nunez began working with Puerto Rican parishioners in 1975, beginning the parish's efforts to reach the Spanish-speakers in the area, an effort that has resulted in a Saturday-evening Spanish Mass and an Hispanic ministry. Sisters Nunez and Henninger also broke ground in becoming the first women to be named pastoral assistants.

The parish also established such programs as Dimitri House, a Union Street shelter for the homeless; a child-care center on Prince Street; Rogers House and Restaurant to help ex-prisoners re-entering the community; Isaiah House, a hospice for the dying; and numerous ministries and groups involved in everything from protesting nuclear weapons to helping refugees from Southeast Asia and Latin America. The parish even helps support a health clinic in Haiti.

The spiritual societies have given way to a bible study group and a branch of Pax Christi, a peace and justice group. At Corpus Christi School, students from non-white minorities — who are more likely to be Baptist, Pentecostal, and even non-Christian — now sit in the same classrooms once filled with Irish, German, and Italian Catholics. Today's students are still instructed in Catholicism, though the emphasis now is on getting the children to understand the material, not on making converts.

The school is still saddled with financial problems and continues to rely on bingo for a large part of its income. Father Callan's outspoken effort to eliminate the game as a means of school funding this year resulted in a parish campaign to replace the bingo receipts with \$100,000 in voluntary donations. So far the drive has failed to reach the goal, and although Father Callan considers the gambling of bingo to be scandalous to the Church as a whole, not all his parishioners agree.

"I think it's regrettable they're trying to get rid of it," Unger remarks, noting the school's need. "I think of it as entertainment."

And so the debate continues, one of the many indicators that Corpus Christi is always attempting to adapt to the demands placed upon it. If the past is any indicator of the future, Corpus Christi will find a solution to this problem as it has so many times before in its own combination of faith and finance.

son or two," Father Callan said.

Father Callan asserted that the Church in "the United States has been remiss in following the directions of the Holy Father." General absolution can be offered when the need unexpectedly arises, he said, but all too often parishes create the circumstances.

"According to the rules, you can not call a group together with the intention of having a service," Father Callan noted. "This rule is regularly abused."

The Irondequoit pastor also noted that the practice of having general absolution ceremonies causes confusion among the laity because the rules governing the rite are not adequately explained or understood.

"I have people coming to me in confession and say, 'My last confession was a general absolution,'" Father Callan said. "When I question them, they tell me the last few times they went to confession were at general absolution services. I tell them they have to go to individual confession in between general services. They say they've heard something about that, but didn't understand what it meant."

In addition, Father Callan said he objects to general absolution services because they do not provide the individual counseling that people need. "The concept of judgment that the priest can offer is gone," he noted.

He applauds the new criterion, however, because "the clarification of the time element has been helpful at least in terms of giving pastors a clearer guideline. With the designation of 30 days, you don't have to panic. There's time to offer individual confession."

Father Marvin, on the other hand, is not swayed by the objections to general absolution ceremonies. "It's not cheap grace; they have to pay for it," he noted, adding, "I've seen people crying at the services." The high attendance at St. Ambrose's services indicates that many people have a sense of sin and guilt, and that people have a need to seek God's compassion, he noted. "They just have a new approach to God's mercy," he said. "They're saying, 'I want God's forgiveness, but I want it this way.'"

Yet Father Marvin points to history to counter contentions that general absolution leads



**CHAVEZ ENDS FAST** — Cesar Chavez (left) receives a cross given by the people of El Salvador from Franciscan Brother Ed Dunn. Chavez, leader of the United Farm Workers, ended his water-only fast on its 36th day, during an August 21 Mass attended by priests, rabbis, ministers, politicians, movie celebrities and thousands of farmworkers. During the Mass, the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson vowed to take the first three-day shift in fasting the fast.

Chavez, 61, began fasting July 17 to protest the use of certain pesticides on California grapes. The United Farm Workers' protest of pesticides has included a boycott of California table grapes since 1984. The union said August 15 that Chavez was fasting "to emphasize the dangers posed to farmworkers and consumers alike by the reckless overuse of deadly pesticides."

Representatives of California grape growers called the union's attack "reckless and irresponsible," adding that the chemicals are carefully regulated.

people to stay away from individual confession. "Let's be honest," the pastor said. "Before we had general absolution, people were already staying away from confession. This form of the rite is something that happened long after the

decline began. "(General absolution) is giving them a chance to do something that they might not have done," Father Marvin concluded. "It's helping to draw people back to God's mercy."

## Tanzanian sisters seek 'broader experience' at Nazareth College

Four sisters of Our Lady of Usumbara from the northern part of Tanzania, East Africa, recently arrived in Rochester to begin phase one of a self-sufficiency in education project for Tanzania.

The general public will have an opportunity to meet the Tanzanian sisters at a benefit folkfest scheduled for October 1, at 7 p.m.

Initiated by Father Damian Milliken, OSB, the project's goal is to create quality secondary schools in a country where schools are inadequate in number. The four Tanzanian sisters currently in Rochester will be studying for their bachelor's degree at Nazareth College in order to return to Africa to staff new high schools for girls as teachers and administrators.

The four sisters, Leonia, Alida, Domitila and Silvestra, will take a liberal arts course of study at Nazareth College. According to Sister Silvestra, the sisters came to the United States because they were not allowed to pursue higher education in her country, but also so that they could obtain a "broader experience of the world" to bring home to their students.

The Tanzanian Outreach Project began as an inspiration for Father Milliken, a native of Elmira and a Benedictine missionary in Tanzania. Since his assignment in Africa in 1960, he has undertaken several school building programs and teaching assignments. In Tanzania, Father Milliken is chaplain and building supervisor of the Mazinda Juu Domestic Science School, which is conducted by Our Lady of

Usumbara congregation. The sisters take in African girls on a live-in basis, teaching them such subjects as childcare, hygiene, math, gardening, animal husbandry as well as English and Swahili.

Father Milliken's dream is to upgrade the present two-year domestic science school to the four-year high school level through qualified teachers. Once the four sisters complete their course of study at Nazareth, they will return to teach and administer secondary schools including the upgraded Mazinda Juu School for girls. If all goes planned, the school will be recognized and accredited as a high school by the Tanzanian government by January, 1989.

The problem of education in Tanzania revolves around supply and demand: There are not enough schools to reach all of the needy children in Tanzania. One million children in Tanzania have a grammar school education. Only two percent, however, are able to go on to secondary school, and only one quarter of that small number are girls.

Father Milliken and the Sisters of Usumbara hope to change these unpromising figures with by operating high schools.

Those who would like to join the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St. Joseph, Father Milliken, Rochester parishes and community groups in supporting the Tanzanian Outreach Project, may call Sister Wilson at (716)586-1000 or Sister Milliken at (716)288-7120.

## Absolution

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message once a month," he said. "That's her message"

Another priest who has been to Medjugorje, Father William Trott of St. Augustine's Parish, said that he, too, promotes confession at every possible opportunity. During Lent, he schedules extra confession times, but because of the number of people seeking confession in that season and because he is the only priest in the inner-city parish, he also offers general absolution services. The pastor puts so much energy and time into providing opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation because he believes in the importance of regular confession.

"(Confession) is a way of coming closer to the Lord," Father Trott said. "The more often you come to confession, the more you are able to see some of the things you couldn't see."

In addition to giving people an opportunity to receive the sacrament, general absolution and community penance services fill another need in the community, he said. "It helps you to realize that your sin is not just between you and God — it offends the body of God on earth."

Still another advantage to general absolution services is that they enable people who have been away from the Church for a while to ease their way back in, Father Trott noted. "I think that general absolution sometimes helps people who have been away for a long time to go to private confession," he said.

Father L. James Callan, pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, disagrees with that line of thinking.

"It's baloney," he charged. "You start the process of general absolution, and what do you have today — few people going to (individual) confession. Look at the statistics!"

He noted that general absolution services are not needed, because private confession is available in the diocese. "I'm willing to bet there isn't a church in this diocese where on a Saturday you can't get into confession within a per-