

## Converts

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testants to convert," he said. "The church became easier for Protestants who weren't used to so many rules ..."

Vining's story is echoed in the words of Richard John Neuhaus, a nationally known theologian who until recently was a member of the Lutheran Church. Like Vining, Neuhaus credited the reforms of Vatican II with inspiring him to join the Catholic Church earlier this year.

One could almost predict Neuhaus' conversion after he wrote *The Catholic Moment* in the mid-1980s. Published in 1987, the book was a sympathetic treatment of the post-Vatican II Catholic Church, which Neuhaus called "the most diverse of churches (with its discrete orders of ministry, its monastic communities, its myriad works of mercy ...) Such 'unity in diversity' is what 'other churches should

emulate," he wrote.

Neuhaus left the Lutheran Church because he felt that much of what its founder had criticized in the Roman church had been corrected, especially since Vatican II. Since the council, Neuhaus has worked to reconcile the two churches, but he concluded that his desire to unite the two denominations was a position "very much marginalized in the Lutheran church."

"(The Lutheran church's) separation has been not only institutionalized, but ossified as well," Neuhaus told the *Catholic Courier* in a phone interview from his New York City office.

A fellow Lutheran shared Neuhaus' conversion to the Catholic church, but his story is less that of intellectual assent to church authority, than of a passionate longing for a spiritual home.

Ask Johan Engstrom, a native of Stockholm, Sweden, what led him to join

the Roman Catholic Church, and he might reply: "Women and gambling."

Not that Engstrom can be found vying for the affections of female bingo workers, but the 28-year-old youth ministry coordinator of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Brighton did acknowledge that a woman's charms led him to explore the Catholic faith.

Ten years ago, Engstrom was an exchange student in the senior class at Penn Yan Academy in Yates County. He had been raised in a country that was officially a Lutheran society, but, as he recalled, was unofficially indifferent to Christianity. Engstrom said he had always had a slight interest in Christianity as a youth, but he had not pursued it beyond occasional speculation.

Catholicism didn't interest the young Swede, "until I met this gorgeous (American) girl, and I found out she was Catholic, and then I thought if found out

more about Catholicism maybe I'll have something to talk to her about."

Engstrom wound up attending a diocesan retreat for teenagers, and returned to Sweden with a keen interest in both Catholicism and Lutheranism. It was a Lutheran minister's sermon on the state lottery that convinced Engstrom to gamble on the Catholic Church.

The pastor likened failing to act on one's faith to refusing to buy a lottery ticket even though one had a desire to win. Engstrom concluded he wanted to "win" heaven, and so he converted to Catholicism because it seemed to offer him the best chance at that eternal prize.

In particular, Engstrom credited his attraction to the church to such outward signs as the papacy and liturgical rituals, because these signs give Catholicism a cultural identity Swedish Lutheranism lacks. He credited the Catholic Church's emphasis on the sacraments for swaying him to join, and said he especially gravitated toward the church's teaching that the sacraments are a visible sign of God's invisible love.

"The sacraments were God's way of hugging us, of touching us," he said. "Sacraments and sacramentality became a part of me because I'm a concrete person."

These stories of conversion illustrate that each convert is drawn to Catholicism because some aspect of the church — its sacramentality, its people, its teachings — resonated in the convert's soul.

Chris Coniglio, a religious-education administrator at St. Agnes in Avon and a recent convert, recalled that the spiritual struggles of her own life — which began in great family poverty — were something of a "war" between herself and a God she saw as unjust. The Catholic Church's struggles in recent years mirrored those inner struggles of her life, she noted.

While many people lament conflicts in the church over such issues as women's ordination, abortion, the role of the laity, and other concerns, Coniglio welcomes them as a sign that the church is healthy.

"I found in a lot of churches people don't really believe ... they don't struggle enough," she said of her explorations of other denominations.

"(The Catholic church) wasn't a perfect church; it isn't and it never will be," she explained. "But I fit in there."

## Joseph P. King at 80, promoter of area schools

Joseph P. King, former administrator of the Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority and a financial consultant to the Diocese of Rochester, died on Monday, Oct. 29, 1990, at his home in Pittsford. He was 80 years old.

Mr. King was known for his dedication to family, education and business. After 21 years of service, he retired as administrator of the market in 1979. Mr. King stayed on as a market consultant until 1982.

William J. Mulligan Sr., who succeeded Mr. King as market administrator in 1979, said he had a gift for interacting with people.

"When we had problems with finances in the early days, Joe was able to get through to the right people," Mulligan said.

William Mulligan Jr., who succeeded his father as administrator in 1987, said Mr. King was largely responsible for making

the market authority the success that it is today.

"Joe had his priorities straight — family, church, business," William Mulligan Jr. said.

He also served as a financial consultant to diocesan councils under Bishops Joseph L. Hogan and Matthew H. Clark.

Mr. King received his bachelor's degree in 1936 from Cornell University, where he was a living legend, according to university Chairman of the Board Stephen Weiss.

Known as "Mr. Cornell" to many of his friends, Mr. King was a governor's appointee to the university for two consecutive five-year terms (1970-1980), elected emeritus trustee in 1980, chairman of the committee on state relationships, emeritus member of the alumni affairs and development committee, and a member of the athletic advisory council.

In Rochester, Mr. King was a member of the board of trustees at Aquinas Institute for more than 20 years, according to Aquinas Director of Guidance Father Peter Etlinger.

When the Dewey Avenue high school experienced financial problems, Mr. King was able to raise contributions, Father Et-

linger said. He was also a member of the committee that negotiated the sale of Aquinas Memorial Stadium to the City of Rochester.

Mr. King was actively involved in recruiting Rochester-area high school students for Cornell.

Father Richard Noonan, moderator of alumni at McQuaid Jesuit High School, said Mr. King would frequently stop in at the all-boys' school to express interest in a student-athlete prospect for Cornell.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Mr. King was celebrated on Friday, Nov. 2, at St. Louis Church, Pittsford. Interment was at White Haven Memorial Park.

He is survived by his wife, Ethel MacConnie King; two daughters, Elizabeth King Durand, Rochester; and Mary Ellen Stack, Michigan; three sisters: Ann Connor of Omaha, Neb., Margaret K. Dalton and Veronica Hennessy, both of Perinton; and five grandchildren.

Contributions may be made to the Friends of Joe King Scholarship Fund, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Roberts Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853.

— Barbara Ann Homick



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## Knights

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tabulated by GRC's marketing company and results will not be available until January, 1991.

The format for the Knights' effort called for notices about the EWTN campaign to be placed in parishes' bulletins for two consecutive weeks, then for an announcement from the pulpit to be made on the day the forms were available in the church — preferably in the pews.

Alfano noted that some parishes had deviated from the program the Knights had outlined, resulting in a lower number of signed forms than had been hoped. Still, he said, some parishes — including St.

Charles Borromeo, Mother of Sorrows, Christ the King, St. Rita's and St. Pius X, all in Rochester — turned in large numbers of signed forms.

As a follow-up to the parish campaign, the Knights are currently asking local politicians and civic leaders to write GRC in support of EWTN. Alfano reported that Penfield Town Supervisor Donald Mack, Henrietta Town Supervisor James Breese and State Assemblyman Roger Robach are among those who have already done so.

If the current campaign fails to bring EWTN to GRC, Alfano said the Knights would re-evaluate the effort, and would consider alternatives. Those alternatives

could include a boycott of GRC or picketing.

"I'd like to avoid a confrontation situation, but if it's the only way, we'll do it," Alfano declared.

In addition, Alfano said GRC officials had told him that during the next few years the cable company would be expanding the number of channels it offers, and thus would have room to offer EWTN.

However EWTN comes to GRC, Alfano said that he is determined to see the Catholic network on the cable channels in Rochester.

"If we aren't successful this time," Alfano predicted, "we will continue until we are successful."

## Shelter

Continued from page 3

winter will be the last for parish shelters at St. Bridget's and Blessed Sacrament. Both are scheduled to close next spring.

In addition to the 20 beds at Blessed Sacrament and the 10 beds at St. Bridget's, seven beds for the homeless are currently available at Dimitri House, a shelter operated by Corpus Christi Parish. Blessed Sacrament's shelter can accommodate as many as four women, whereas the other two shelters take men only.

The three parish shelters are scheduled to open Nov. 11, Privett said.

Lillian Piersante, director of Dimitri House, noted that her facility would continue to operate after the Francis Center opens, and that Dimitri House will occasionally take in extra guests who are unable

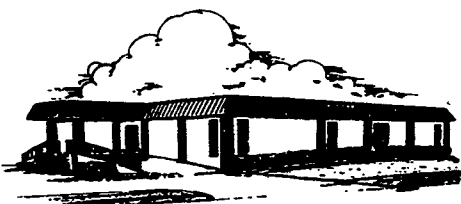
to find space at other shelters around the city.

Bed space is also available at St. Joseph's House, which can take five men; Sojourner House, which can accommodate 14 women and six children; Bethany House, which can accommodate six women and a varying number of children; and Women's Place, which has room for 12 women and five pre-school children.

Privett said it is impossible to obtain an accurate count of homeless people in the city of Rochester. Yet, he cited statistics from the Department of Social Services showing a 25 percent increase in the number of people seeking emergency housing over the last two years as evidence that homelessness may be growing.

Privett also said that the city's emergency-shelter providers have already begun to meet on a regular basis in order to better monitor the number of homeless people.

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