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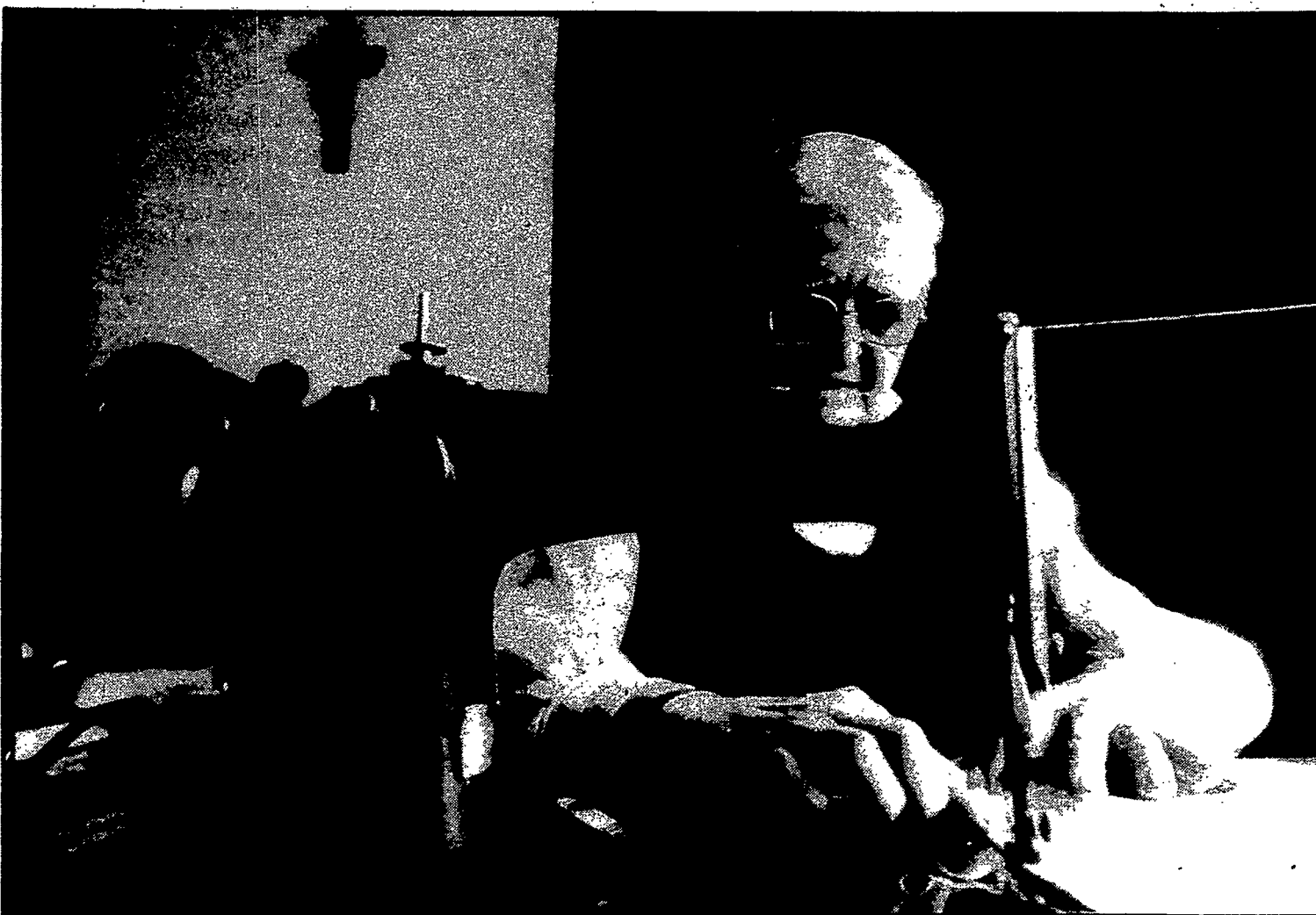
Michael Fleckenstein

Editorial Policy

The *Catholic Courier* wishes to provide space for readers throughout the diocese to express opinions on all sides of the issues. We welcome all signed, original letters about current issues affecting church life.

Although we cannot publish every letter we receive, we seek, insofar as possible, to provide a balanced representation of expressed opinions and a variety of reflections on life in the church. We will choose letters for publication based on likely reader interest, timeliness and a sense of fair play. Our discerning readers may determine whether to agree or disagree with the opinions of the letter writers.

We reserve the right to edit all letters. Mail them to: *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624. Please include your full name as well as telephone number and complete address for verification purposes.



ACTIVE RETIREMENT — Sister Ancilla Dash, SSJ, makes bibs in the sewing room at the St. Joseph's Convent infirmary. Some of the bibs will go to children at the congregation's Daystar facility. Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer

Retirement costs source of worry

To the editors:

The broad and sensitive reporting by Lee Strong and the photography of Babette Augustin (*Catholic Courier*, May 16: "Retirement population challenges church"), has provided members of the Church of Rochester with a clearer understanding of the situation of women religious of this diocese. Talking about themselves and their needs comes very slowly to those who have spent their lives seeking help for others. Your publication has provided a necessary and very welcome explanation.

I want to express my personal gratitude to the *Catholic Courier* for this article. It is

encouraging to find this serious and urgent issue of retirement of women religious and priests meriting front-page coverage.

However, I would like to emphasize that there are some significant differences between the situations of the women religious whose congregations are solely responsible for their own members, and diocesan priests who are independently employed.

While the Diocese of Rochester has needs, the retirement needs of women religious are naturally of significant concern to our membership. The costs incurred by the approximated 280 employed sisters for their own support and that of the 210 sis-

ters over the age of 70 are increasing annually while new members coming to the Congregation are fewer in number. The Sisters of St. Joseph have always responded to the needs of the Church and the needs of their neighbors. This response often takes sisters into ministries where the congregation provides subsidized meals, support, all education and formation needs for our sisters.

We are grateful for this excellent communication of retirement needs of both priests and women religious.

Sister Elizabeth Ann LeValley
Superior General, Sisters of St. Joseph

Abstinence is solution to teen pregnancy

To the editors:

There is widespread concern about the ever increasing incidence of teenage pregnancy and the concomitant results emotionally, financially, and socially and rightly so. Where I part company is with the solutions proposed.

The voices out there are not objecting to their children having illicit sex — they just don't want to deal with pregnancies. So birth control devices are not only condoned by aggressively suggested and avidly promoted. Yet the problem increases.

Sexual education taught indiscriminately in the public schools isn't the answer either. It may even lead to more sexual promiscuity by arousing the curiosity and pursuit of previously latent sensual desires. As a former teacher, I know that parents are the primary educators and that they are much more capable of guiding and instructing their children in this sensitive area based on the child's degree of comprehension and maturation.

Abortion is a heinous act and is certainly not the solution. Besides, it is aimed at the result and not the cause and there is a better solution for the unintended sexual consequence — namely, adoption by one of the millions of childless couples desperately anxious to provide a loving home for the unwanted innocent ones.

I submit that the only certain way to prevent pregnancy is complete abstinence. Our youth must be challenged and motivated by our churches and in our homes to follow the Christian concepts of sexual

morality. And if done properly, our youth will respond because they are naturally altruistic and sincerely want to follow unchanging standards that set high goals. Look at the practically nonexistent teenage pregnancy problem among the Amish, the Fundamentalists, the Mormons, the "old-fashioned" European and Oriental families, etc.

Parents must be ever vigilant and not allow their children to get involved in situations where the temptations may be overwhelming. And in this, the parents must be the judge and the jury.

When I was a teenager, the girls sort of expected you to try "something funny" on a date. But most of the time, the girl had an appropriate and sensible response — my father will kill me; it's wrong; I can't take a chance; George, it's time to go home.

Today, the boys are getting a free ride with no obligations and the girls are being used. The most precious gift that a girl can give to the future father of her children is the unsullied gift of her virginity. It might cost the girl some dates but it may also lead her to her Prince Charming because there are a lot of guys out there looking for the ideal, untarnished gal as the future mother of their children.

In this sexually dominated culture where almost everything is directly or indirectly connected with sexual connotations to stimulate our sensual appetites, it is, admittedly, exceedingly difficult to ply the straight and narrow path. But with God's help, it can be done.

Jerry J. Paladino
Route 14
Rock Stream, N.Y.

Weddings well worth the expense

To the editors:

I would like to make a comment after reading my friend Father Cuddy's remarks about weddings in last week's *Courier* (May 16).

Weddings are memorable occasions for families to get together. Every girl dreams of going down the aisle on her father's arm to say her wedding vows in the church in the presence of those she loves.

Most parents provide the kind of wedding they can afford. The Lord once said, "The poor you always have with you!"

As for elopement — most couples who do this never bother to be married in the church — look at many of our young people living together without benefit of clergy.

Didn't our Lord perform this first miracle at a wedding feast in Cana?

Incidentally, funerals are costly too and not as much fun.

Mrs. Ethan Welch Sr.
North Country Club Drive
Rochester