

Men

Continued from page 1

good, and something I need in my life."

Most of the conversation during a recent two-hour meeting at St. Charles centered around the emotional relationship each of the 13 men in attendance has or had with his father — and how those relationships affect the men's perspectives as they raise their own children.

One of the more poignant observations came from Tim Andrews, who said that he and his father rarely made verbal expressions of their mutual love. Yet one evening about 20 years ago, they exchanged "I love you" as Andrews stopped on the way to a hockey game to visit his father in the hospital. Later that evening, his father died unexpectedly.

Andrews remarked that being able to express such personal issues openly has helped strengthen his spiritual life.

"Catholics tend to be private in our faith, but every day I grow in my faith when I share it with someone or they share it with me," Andrews commented.

Brother Joseph Kilikevics, OP, cites Jesus Christ himself as a model for spreading male spirituality, especially in the close friendships he shared with such disciples as Peter, James and John.

"I think every man has the capacity for anger and rage, as Jesus did," Brother Kilikevics commented. "And I also think every man has the capacity for gentleness and caring, as Jesus did."

Brother Kilikevics is co-founding director of the Creating Male Spirit retreats and a contributing editor for *Male Spirit*, a national men's newsletter. He also operates the SPIEM Center for Male Spirituality in Oak Park, Ill.

"Men have been accused, and rightly so, of staying in their heads," said Brother Kilikevics. "Our work takes us pretty deep."

He charged, however, that males are inaccurately stereotyped as beings incapable of feeling or expressing deep emotion.

"I watch men struggle with their lives of quiet desperation, depression, workaholic, other major addictions and lone-

liness. But all you have to do is look at "Married With Children," and the image of the American male is that the guy's the chump," remarked Brother Kilikevics, referring to the syndicated program on the Fox network.

The Dominican brother has conducted male retreats nationwide since 1976 — a time, he said, when the male-spirit movement was just beginning to gain in popularity.

Father Palumbos emphasized that the men's movement is not meant to discredit the role of women as effective communicators with men. Yet, he said, "the cultural belief is that all the needs we have are taken care of in our marriage. That's not true — for our wives, or for us (men)."

Actually, the St. Charles Borromeo pastor credits the women's movement

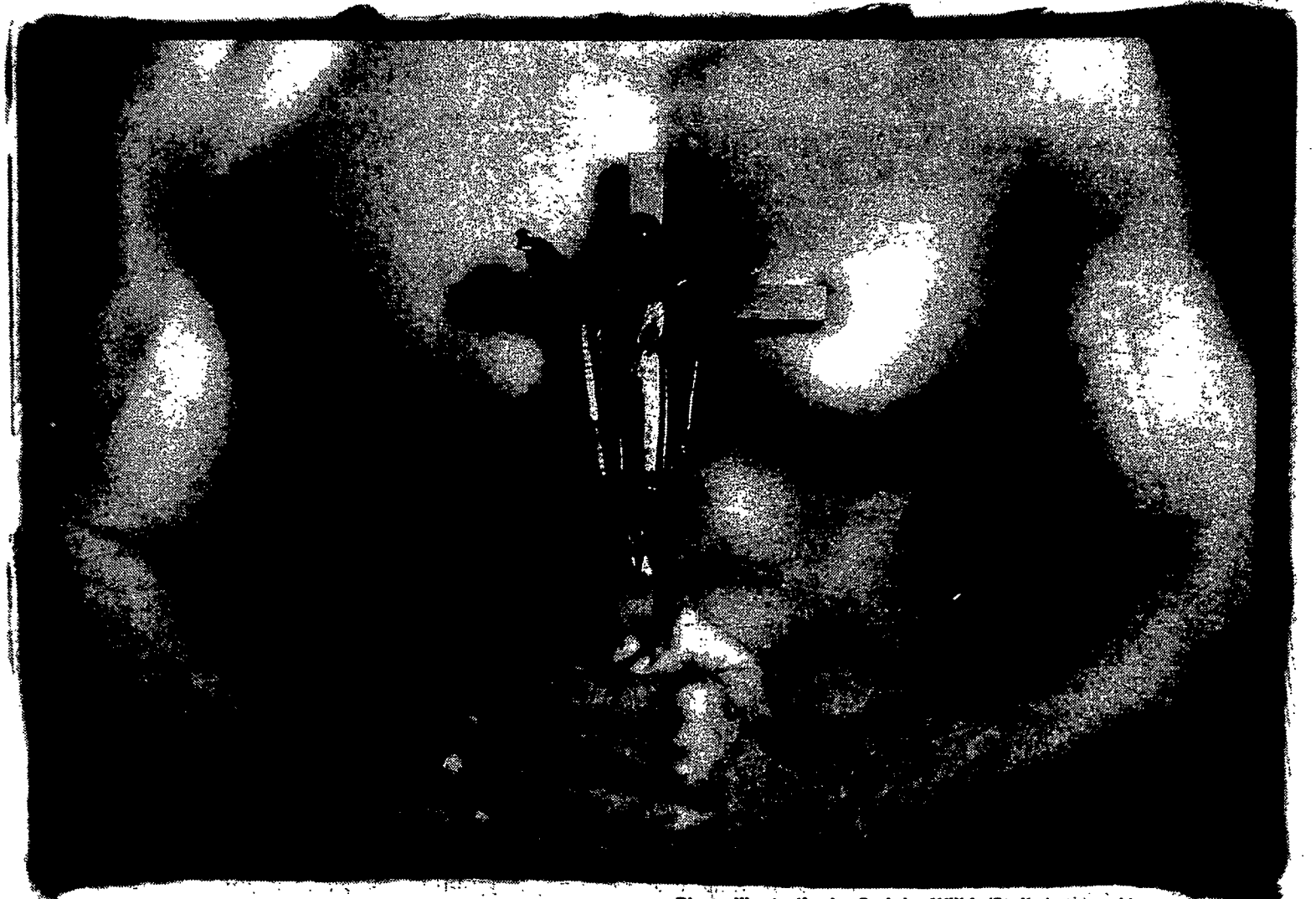


Photo illustration by S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Catholics tend to be private in our faith, but every day I grow in my faith when I share it with someone or they share it with me.

— Tim Andrews

"It's becoming more and more acceptable for men to share their feelings. Men are insisting upon it," Post added.

These annual men's convocations are conducted by the Ithaca Men's Network. According to Post, the network began in the early 1980s and has spawned several smaller support groups that remain active today.

Further north in the Rochester diocese, an ecumenical men's retreat is scheduled for the Rotary Sunshine Camp in Rush on Nov. 11-12. According to Paul Kuhl, one of the camp's organizers, this marks the first time a convention has been designed for groups from the Rochester area to discuss men's issues.

The retreat, titled "Sharing Wisdom," will comprise a wide array of workshops and activities, including a session on Native American spirituality. In fact, the promotional flyer for this event refers to participating groups as "tribes."

"It's an old concept of how Native American men used to get together in tribes. It has a spiritual meaning," said Kuhl.

Brother Kilikevics admitted that such ritual activities as dancing and chanting, which are featured at many of these retreats, are open targets for criticism.

"The news media have not been kind to men's work. They've picked up on aspects that are easy to ridicule and trivialize," said Brother Kilikevics, who added that homophobia is another fear common among outsiders.

On the other hand, such men's organizations as the one at St. Charles Borromeo simply limit themselves to sharing thoughts and stories in a small-group setting. This marks the second such association begun by Father Palumbos; he founded his first parish men's group in 1989 as pastor of Henrietta's Church of the Good Shepherd. Even after Father Palumbos moved to St. Charles in 1992, Good Shepherd's "Breakfast Club" has continued to meet every other week.

At this point, only a handful of diocesan parishes offer men's gatherings such as these. Yet Tim McGowan, who helped form a similar organization at Rochester's Corpus Christi Church in 1993, said this kind of connecting among men will continue to grow in the years to come.

"I think there's an enormous untapped need and desire," McGowan remarked. "To work out issues, to laugh and to enjoy each other — that's a wonderful gift and blessing."

of recent decades as being a catalyst for men's spirituality groups.

"Women needed to take ownership of their own identity, and in the late 1970s and the 1980s they've come into their own. They carved out the importance of their identity, and as that happened, courageous men said, 'Hey, we need to do that too,'" Father Palumbos observed.

However, Brother Kilikevics explained that this progression, most commonly referred to as "men's work," is not a completely direct response to the women's movement.

"The women's movement was very much political," he remarked. "Men's work starts within ourselves, not out there (in the political arena). You have nothing to offer out there if you don't have yourself together first."

Although some groups are based out of Catholic parishes, men's work is a growing movement that is very much ecumenical, the brother added.

"It's no secret that I'm Brother Joe, and my connection with the (Catholic) church is very clear. We just have this mutual respect for where everybody is in this journey," he said. "Catholic thinking gets to be like a ghetto if you don't get some fresh ideas. There's a whole world of spiritual journeys."

One such ecumenical gathering occurred the weekend of Oct. 8-9 in Tompkins County, where approximately 75 men attended the Ithaca Men's Festival at Camp Barton.

"We explored the changing nature of what it means to be a man," said David Post, who helped organize a similar event this past spring.

MISSION NEWS



I could do this forever, Lord, hold this warm baby, cradle his head to my heart, smooth the blanket, stroke his cheek and whisper over and over, Lord, may the only shadow in his life be the shadow of Your wings. For my child's precious child, Lord, let there be light, let there be Christ.

Millions do not yet live in the light that is Christ.

How can they believe in Him, if they have not heard of Him?

On World Mission Sunday, October 23, in prayer and through financial assistance, help provide for the work of mission priests, Religious and lay catechists throughout the world as they bring the Gospel to their people.

The Society for THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH
Fr. Robert C. Bradley
1150 Buffalo Rd.
Rochester, NY 14624
Attention: Dept. C

Enclosed is my gift for World Mission Sunday:

\$100 \$50 \$75 \$25 \$10 Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Please remember The Society for the Propagation of the Faith when writing or changing your Will. 4344-1013/94