

Theologian is settling into routine at university

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

Father Curt Cadorette, MM, has only held the chair of Catholic theology at the University of Rochester since mid-summer, but he has already discovered something about the staff, faculty and students at the university.

"I expected more indifference," the Maryknoll priest remarked. "I find that not to be the case. People have been very responsive. People are open to an informed Catholic perspective."

Indeed, 90 students — many of whom are non-Christian and few of whom show the "narcissism" that is supposed to be typical of today's students — are taking the priest's History of Christianity course at the U. of R.

"I'm enjoying seeing the interest and the energy and the curiosity about what Catholicism is," Father Cadorette said.

Meanwhile, a seminar on Catholicism and the social order has spurred lively discussions on the contemporary Catholic social teachings and the church's interaction with society as a whole.

In addition, the priest said, "I'm delighted by the Catholic life of in the Newman community here (at the university)."

Likewise, Father Cadorette, whose official title is the John Henry Newman associate professor of religious studies, has begun to discover the Rochester diocese's nature and character.

"I think this is a healthy diocese," Father Cadorette said. "There's a lot of diversity, a healthy diversity, as far as I can see."

And the diocese, he continued, under the leadership of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, is filled with people who are committed to a pastoral approach that takes into account the community's needs — especially the poor.

This latter characteristic fits well with Father Cadorette's background. He has written extensively on liberation theology, and has spent his priestly career working in the United States and with the poor in Latin America — largely in Peru and Bolivia.

Father Cadorette was called upon to share some of his knowledge about liberation theology at the Colgate Rochester Divinity School during a Nov.



Wendy Longlade/Photo Intern

Father Curt Cadorette, MM, lectures on 'Liberation Theology and the American Catholic Community: Confrontation and Challenge' at Colgate Rochester Divinity School. The Nov. 28 talk was sponsored by St. Bernard's Institute.

28 talk sponsored by St. Bernard's Institute, 1100 S. Goodman St. During his address, he discussed the origin of liberation theology — which promotes commitment to the poor and oppressed — and applied it to current issues facing the United States.

The Catholic Church, Father Cadorette noted in an interview prior to his talk, has a role to play in social policy issues in the United States, particularly in light of the current political climate stemming from the recent vic-

tories by politicians who are calling for restrictions on welfare recipients, the poor and immigrants.

"This is precisely why we are called to articulate our vision in a clearer, more concise way," Father Cadorette said. The church's vision has been to stand with the poor and oppressed, he explained, noting, "I think we have something to say. We certainly have a track record."

In addition to discussing liberation theology, Father Cadorette will also speak about Peru on Wednesday, Dec.

7, at the Episcopal Diocesan House, 935 East Ave., Rochester. Titled "Peru: It's People and the Land," the 8 p.m. talk is being sponsored by the Rochester Committee on Latin America (ROCLA).

During the course of his talk, the priest — who worked in a rural Indian village in Peru — will describe many of Peru's problems, the U.S. role in the drug war there, and how economic restructuring is affecting the Latin American nation and its people.

In addition, Father Cadorette Feb. 8, 1995, will address contemporary Catholic issues as part of the biennial John Henry Newman Lectures. The 8 p.m. talk in the university's Interfaith Chapel is being sponsored by the Newman Community of the University of Rochester.

Meanwhile, Father Cadorette is also beginning to take a more active role in the diocese at large. On the weekend of Dec. 3-4, the Spanish-speaking priest will begin to assist on a bimonthly basis at Rochester's St. Francis of Assisi Parish, part of the St. Francis of Assisi/Ss. Peter and Paul Parish Cluster. The parish has a large Hispanic population.

In the future, Father Cadorette is also looking to organize a trip — most likely during the summer of 1996 — to Latin America by students, and possibly people from the broader diocesan community. Among the possible destinations are Mexico, Peru and Bolivia. In addition, the priest will return to Peru next summer to continue his work there and to help prepare the way for the group's trip.

For now, however, Father Cadorette is settling into his responsibilities at the University of Rochester.

"It's becoming a routine, a generally enjoyable experience," Father Cadorette said. "I find the environment very energizing."

Obituaries

Sister Marie Rene Pegnam, SSJ; teacher for 34 years

Sister Marie Rene Pegnam, SSJ, who taught in diocesan elementary schools for 34 years, died at Park Ridge Hospital in Greece on Tuesday, Oct. 11, 1994. She was 80 years old.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Marie Rene was celebrated Oct. 13 at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, 4095 East Ave.

A Rochester native, Sister Marie Rene entered the Sisters of St. Joseph order from Sacred Heart Parish in 1932. She later graduated from Nazareth College of Rochester with bachelor's and master's

degrees in both English and history.

Sister Marie Rene taught in several diocesan grade schools, including St. Mary's, Elmira; St. Aloysius, Auburn; St. Monica's, Rochester; St. Joseph's, Wayland; and St. Anthony's, Elmira. She also served as principal at St. Joseph's and St. Anthony's while teaching there, and as principal at Holy Rosary School in Rochester.

In addition, Sister Marie Rene taught at the former St. Agnes High School in Rochester for 14 years.

After leaving teaching, Sister Marie

Rene served as the medical secretary for six years at the Sisters of St. Joseph St. Joseph Convent Infirmary, where she eventually became a patient.

Sister Marie Rene is survived by one sister, Mary Alice Pegnam, of Rochester; several cousins in Canada; and members of the Sisters of St. Joseph community.

Sr. Ernestine Scheg; SSND served 43 years as teacher, secretary

Sister Ernestine Marie Scheg, SSND, a Rochester native who served as a teacher and secretary for 43 years, died on Monday, Oct. 24, 1994. She was 81 years old.

Sister Ernestine entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1940 from Holy Ghost Parish. Her various assignments over the years included the following assignments in the Rochester diocese: as teacher at St. Boniface School (1961-63), St. Michael's School (1963-69) and Ss. Peter and Paul School (1969-71); and as secretary at Ss. Peter and Paul School (1971-72) and St. Boniface School (1980-83). In 1983 Sister Ernestine retired to the SSND motherhouse in Wilton, Conn., where she performed community service.

A Mass of the Resurrection was held for Sister Ernestine on Oct. 28 at the motherhouse chapel. Interment was at St. Mary's Cemetery in Bethel, Conn.

Donations in memory of Sister Ernestine may be made to the SSND Development Fund, 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, Conn., 06897.

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