

## Lay missionary pioneer urges risk-taking

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

BRIGHTON — At a big dinner party given in her honor before she left her native England for Chicago, Edwina Gateley listened intently as her mother was called upon to speak at the testimonial.

By the end of her mother's remarks about her independent-minded daughter, the founder of the Volunteer Missionary Movement was cringing in embarrassment, she recalled in a speech at Our Lady of Mercy High School, Friday night, March 10.

"Our Edwina was always a bit queer," Gateley's mother said. "She was never like the other children. We don't know what went wrong."

Like it did several other times throughout the evening, Gateley's audience laughed loudly as she spun the tale of a Catholic laywoman who has always been on the church's outskirts breaking new ground in ministry.

In 1969, Gateley founded the church's first major lay missionary movement, whose 1,400 members serve in 26 countries, including the United States, Central America and Africa.

An author and a speaker, Gateley in 1984 also started Chicago's Genesis House, a home of hospitality for women involved in prostitution or who are seeking to leave that life. About 7,000 women have used the house's various services, she said.

She was also recently featured on the CBS news program "60 Minutes" for her support of "Call to Action," a group of Catholics urging, among other things, the church to open up priestly ordination to women and married men.

Gateley also spoke at Mercy High School on Saturday morning, March 11. Her visit to Rochester was sponsored by Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave.

Gateley first became a lay missionary in 1964 after she graduated from college with a teaching certificate. She spent three years in Uganda, where she discovered what she said is the most fundamental theological truth about God: "God is big."

Before going to Africa, Gateley said she thought God was white, male, Catholic and "of course, British."

"The biggest shock I got in Africa was that God got there before me," she continued.

She returned to England feeling she had been called to found a missionary movement that would use the talents of lay Catholics to spread the Gospel. Yet she found tremendous resistance among the English Catholic hierarchy to any kind of lay Catholic missionary movement. After 18 months of discouraging

conversations with congregations and clerics, she returned to Africa.

"I felt betrayed by God," she said, noting that she told the Lord "if you want this bloody movement, you start it."

Apparently, God heard her plea. While in Africa, several of the people she had met through her travels on behalf of her lay missionary idea decided to put together \$6,000 in start-up funds for Gateley, whom they contacted by letter.

They also gave her a huge house in London where she could headquarter her movement.

And the same bishops who had turned a deaf ear to her idea came to the house and blessed it, she said with a laugh, adding that in 1979 she was named Catholic Laywoman of the Year in England and Wales.

Sensing the need for a new direction

in her spiritual journey, and fearing what resting on her laurels might do to her, Gateley moved to Chicago and obtained a master's degree in theology.

She then experienced a call to spend time alone in the Illinois wilderness, and went through her own dark night of the soul. Living in a trailer with only her Bible to read, Gateley waited nine lonely months to hear a new call from God.

She told her audience to resist the temptation to "abort" the seed of God's presence within us during similar dark times in life because God will eventually make His will known.

"When we abort God's thrust in us, it is because we want everything in front of us," she said. "We cannot tolerate the darkness."

Feeling she had been called to work with prostitutes, Gateley went back to

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Provided photo

### St. Ambrose reunion slated

Members of the class of 1945 from Rochester's St. Ambrose School will celebrate their 50th reunion on April 29. A 5 p.m. Mass will take place at St. Ambrose Church, 25 Empire Blvd., followed by dinner at The Spring House Restaurant. Class members who have not been contacted for this event should call Bill Dougherty at 716/288-8295, or Carol Simmons Stenglein, 716/247-4877.

## Obituary

### Father Robert Casey, 89; longtime Syracuse pastor

AUBURN — Father Robert J. Casey, who lived at St. Alphonsus rectory since retiring as pastor of St. Mary of the Lake Church in Skaneateles, N.Y., in 1981, died Thursday, March 9, 1995, at Auburn Memorial Hospital at age 89.

A native of Syracuse, Father Casey attended St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester before he was ordained a priest of the Syracuse diocese on May 26, 1934. After serving in that diocese as

associate pastor or pastor at several parishes, he was named pastor of St. Mary of the Lake Parish in 1962. He remained there until he retired and was invited to live at St. Alphonsus rectory.

During his retirement years, Father Casey said the early Masses and made hospital visits at St. Alphonsus, said Father Foster P. Rogers, pastor, who was the homilist for Father Casey's funeral Mass March 12 in Skaneateles.

### Supernatural events subject of writer's talk

IRONDEQUOIT — Michael Brown, author of five books on Marian apparitions and angels, will speak on "Descent of the Angels" at 8 a.m. on March 25 in St. Cecilia's Church, 2782 Culver Road.

Brown's most recent book is "Trumpet of Gabriel," a report on supernatural phenomena from across the religious spectrum as well as prophecies about the future.

Brown's speech will be preceded by the St. Louis de Montfort Consecration prayers beginning at 7:30 p.m. For information, call Carol Leary at 716/621-8106.

### Nazareth Irish Pub Nite scheduled for March 24

ROCHESTER — Nazareth Hall, 180 Raines Park, will host the Nazareth Academy Parents Association's fifth annual "Irish Pub Nite" on Friday, March 24, from 8 p.m. to midnight.

The event will feature music by The Dady Brothers as well as dancing by the Drumcliffe Traditional Irish Dancers. In addition, the \$25,000 winning ticket from Nazareth's Blue and Gold Sweepstakes will be drawn that night.

Tickets for Pub Nite are \$13 each and may be purchased in advance at Nazareth Academy, 1001 Lake Ave., or at the door. For details, call 716/458-8583.

### Parish census April 2

PITTSFORD — St. Louis Parish, 60 S. Main St., will conduct a parish census on Sunday, April 2, from 1:30 to 5 p.m. The information gathered will assist the parish staff and leaders in determining current needs and future planning.

For information, contact Father James Schwartz at 716/586-5675.

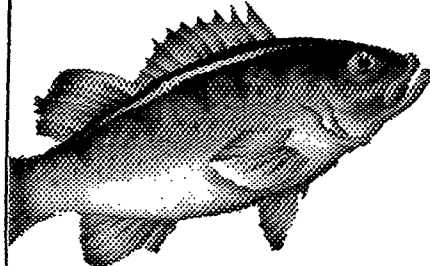
March 2nd

## ASH WEDNESDAY BEGINS THE LENTEN SEASON!

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David Parks, tenor  
Patrick Mason, baritone

Eastman Bach Children's Chorus  
Preconcert lecture at 2:15 PM  
by Alfred Mann

TICKETS AND INFORMATION  
716-377-3537  
Asbury First Methodist Church  
1050 East Avenue, Rochester

Turn to me,  
Lord,  
Give me a  
new heart!

LENTE  
SERIES

March 22, 12:15 pm Mass

Guest Homilist  
Rev. James Schwartz  
Pastor, St. Louis Church  
Pittsford, NY

A coffee hour in the rectory will  
immediately follow the mass

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