

Books * Music * Videos

FitzGibbons to shelve job

When Mary Ellen FitzGibbons became the diocesan Audiovisual Resource Center librarian in 1986, she recalled, only two shelves contained religious videotapes. The rest were filled with — remember these? — filmstrips and 16mm films.

These days, approximately 2,000 videotapes are packed onto 14 shelves in the center, which is located in the basement of the Pastoral Center in Gates. According to FitzGibbons' departmental director, much of this growth has been due to the longtime librarian's expertise.

"She changed the way the library operates. We now have an extensive video collection, and that is a result of Mary Ellen's dedication, vision, hard work and excellence," said Maribeth Mancini, diocesan director of Evangelization and Catechesis.

FitzGibbons, 61, is scheduled to retire from her duties Dec. 31. Mancini said that the diocese recently began advertising for a full-time replacement. The position will be retitled as video resource librarian.

"It's time," FitzGibbons remarked. "My husband has been retired for five years, and I have four daughters with 10 grandchildren and another one on the way."

FitzGibbons, a parishioner at Rochester's Corpus Christi Church, began working at the Pastoral Center in 1985. Prior to that time, she served for nine years as religious-education coordinator at Church of Christ the King in Irondequoit.

Along with expanding the diocesan AV center's videotape collection, FitzGibbons has also fostered growth of its subscription service. FitzGibbons noted that more than 125 organizations utilize this resource. Parish staff and volunteers, campus ministries, schools and diocesan departments comprise the list of subscribers.

Mancini acknowledged that FitzGibbons' "courteous and friendly attitude" will be missed by subscribers and Pastoral Center employees.

"I think one of the things that makes Mary Ellen effective is that she truly cares about people," Mancini said.

FitzGibbons added that she has developed many friendships even though she assisted the majority of subscribers by telephone.

"Most of the people I know, I cannot put a face to. But you form this relationship over the phone," FitzGibbons said. "I love the people in the field. They're dedicated to what they do, and very knowledgeable."

— Mike Latona

Video libraries get 'thumbs up'

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Do you wish your cable TV company or video rental store offered more religious and family-oriented fare?

Are you or your children sometimes unable to attend religious-education classes?

Do financial concerns prevent your parish from covering the fee of a prominent guest speaker?

Any of these dilemmas could be good reasons for your parish to maintain its own videotape library. According to staff members at diocesan parishes that offer such services, videotapes are both informative and timely.

"Video is the way of the '90s," said Sister Barbara Bartkowiak, OSF, pastoral associate at St. Theodore's Church in Gates.

"The quality of videos has improved so greatly over the years. And they're so easy to use," added Mary Ellen FitzGibbons, librarian for the diocesan Audiovisual Resource Center.

Although she doesn't have exact statistics, FitzGibbons said that several diocesan parishes have estab-

lished video libraries over the last decade.

Whatever the subject, Pat Younglove considers her parish's video library invaluable.

"If I'm teaching a certain theme, I'll hand people a video for reinforcement," said Younglove, religious-education coordinator for the Catholic Community of the Blessed Trinity cluster in Cayuga County.

Another advantage of videotape, Sister Bartkowiak said, is that "you can always stop the tape and say, 'Let's talk about this.'"

"You want to have those videos that parents can take home with their children, or that a study group can use," FitzGibbons said. "There's a value in seeing things together and discussing them."

"It can be so rewarding when it's discussed," agreed Mona Mattuzzi, religious-education coordinator at St. Mary of the Lake Church in Ontario.

Younglove noted that some parishioners struggle to attend religious-education classes because her cluster is located in two rural communities, Wolcott and Red Creek. However, she said, she can get those people caught up to speed by lending them a pertinent video from the parish library.

In addition, Younglove offers mainstream videos with religious themes. Her shelves contain "some of the biggies," she said, such as "The Ten Commandments" and "Ben-Hur."

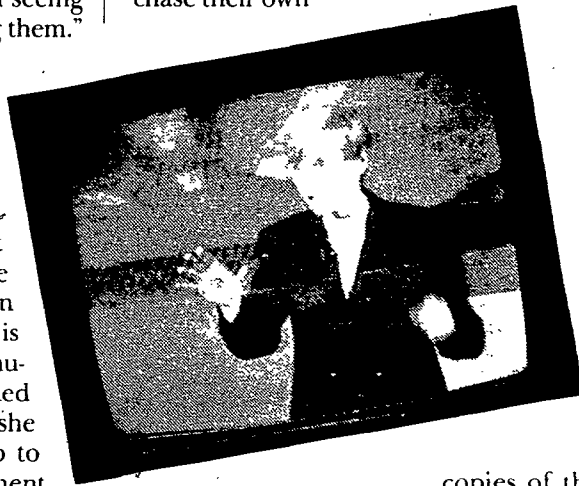
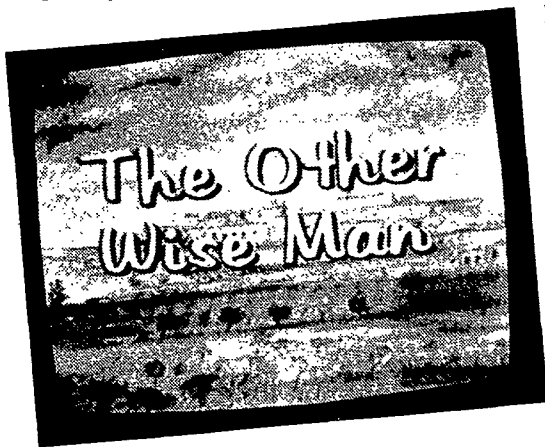
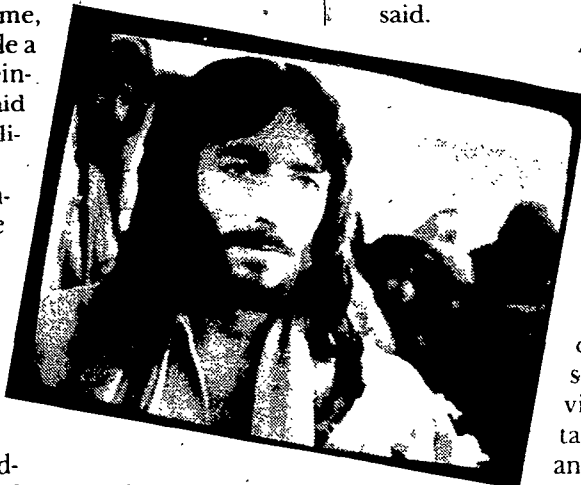
Mattuzzi noted that movies in the St. Mary of the Lake video library "don't have to be religious, as long as they tell a good moral story." One example, she said, is "Quiz Show," which examines the scandalous actions of or-

ganizers and contestants involved with a 1950s TV game show.

"Movies like that can offer so much. You don't just sit and watch them; they can open up good discussions," Mattuzzi said.

Although new videos don't come cheap, Sister Bartkowiak pointed out that they're less costly than live appearances by such nationally known speakers as Molly Kelly, a teen chastity advocate. Instead, St. Theodore's video library features a tape by Kelly, "Teens and Chastity."

Parishes have discovered many videotapes through the diocesan AV Resource Center, which lends videos on a subscription basis to parish staff members and volunteers. FitzGibbons strongly advises that parishes purchase their own



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