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Campus

Continued from page 1 A ministry of presence

Father Hewes emphasized that an ongoing commitment to campus ministry is vital, regardless of the staff's makeup. He remarked that 62 percent of people who leave the Catholic faith are between the ages of 16 and 25.

"To have both a priest and other adequate staffing is crucial," he remarked.

Sister Weider noted that Father Cool and Father Lee Chase, diocesan priests who were ordained in 1993, are both Nazareth College graduates who were part of the college's campus ministry program.

"When you look at the future of the church, where are you going to get vocations? College campuses," Sister Weider said.

"What we are doing is training future leaders of the church. I don't know if everybody sees that," said Mary Humenay, director of campus ministry at Ithaca College

Father Tyman, who will exit the University of Röchester this summer after nine vears to take a parish assignment, noted that many college students "relate more closely to the priest than they did in their parish."

Father Tyman said he recently guided a young man who was discerning the possibility of joining the Jesuit order. Had he not been available to work with this student, Father Tyman felt, the student "would have been less likely to think in that direction.

"With campus ministry, availability and approachability are very high commodities," Pickett acknowledged.

"It's a ministry of presence," added Father Hewes, who has led a number of prolife activities and Habitat for Humanity service projects during his time at Geneseo.

Presence and consistency seemed to be more important than whether the campus minister was a priest or not, in the eyes of Dawn Larzelere. She said that Father Scott Kubinski is the fourth priest to have staffed Ithaca College since she matriculated, even though she's only a junior.

"I became very attached to all the



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Deacon Leo Aman works with Nazareth College student Nicola Argese, left, in helping St. Michael School, Newark, first-grader Kristin Yonker write a story.

priests. So when each of them left, I was like, 'Again?'" said Larzelere, 20, a parishioner at Holy Cross Church in Ovid.

The situation did not stabilize until the arrival of Humenay in August 1997, Larzelere remarked.

"She's always here," Larzelere said. "People are always dropping by. She'll drop everything for 45 minutes and talk to us.' "She was our savior," Sindoni added.

Humenay contended that the best style of campus ministry is, indeed, to give totally of oneself. She does so not only by way of counseling but also through organizing retreats, prayer groups and social events.

"The only thing I can bring is who I am. I love young people; my heart belongs with this age group," Humenay said. "I mean, when these people leave, I grieve."

Meanwhile, Deacon Aman recently completed a one-week service project with his students at a work camp in Maryland. A more simple means of offering his presence, he said, is by taking frequent walks around the Nazareth College commons area, stopping to chat with both Catholic and non-Catholic students. About 50 percent of the 3,000-member student body is Catholic, he said.

"I like to meet somebody new every day," Deacon Aman said. "I ask them if I can be of help, and tell them about our outreach programs and retreats.

"Ninety-five percent of the time I feel

welcome. Quite often they'll say, 'Thank you for stopping."

Striking a balance

Franchi said that a Catholic Campus Ministry Association poll, taken two years ago, reflected a mix of staffing: 41 percent of campus ministers were priests; 24 percent, lay women other than women religious; 19 per

gious; 11 per cent, lay men; and 5 per cent, other. The CCMA survey also showed that 86 percent of the campus ministers possessed at least a master's degree.

Deacon Aman maintained that a campus minister doesn't have to be a priest in order to be a valuable commodity.

"Outside of two things - the Mass and hearing confession – I don't think anything's been denied to me in being a campus minister," Deacon Aman said.

However, since celebrating Mass is one crucial area that can't be covered by Deacon Aman or any lay person, priests will continue to be a necessary part of campus ministry even if their role is diminished.

At SUNY Geneseo, a priest will be available part-time after Father Hewes departs. Father Desmond O'Neill, the new pastor at two Livingston County parishes, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Lucy parishes in Leicester and Retsof, will have sacramental duty and some office time. A part-time lay person, not yet determined, will cover the rest of Father Hewes' current duties. That person will team with the college's other full-time lay chaplain, David Desmond.

Priest staffing at Ithaca College has been reduced from full-time to part-time over the past two years. Father Kubinski, parochial vicar at St. Mary Our Mother Church in Horseheads, has been part-time at the college since November 1998. In addition to celebrating Mass, Father Kubinski keeps office hours during the week. Pickett said that this level of priest pres-

ence on campus is the optimum. "It wouldn't be very smart, on our part,

to say we don't need priests on campus and can just have lay people, and priests only coming in to administer the sacraments, Pickett said.

Maintaining resources

Thriving campus ministry, Franchi remarked, does not hinge so much on the distinction between priests and lay people, but the financial capacity to maintain proper levels of staffing.

"Some campus ministry programs do such a good job of realizing their (fundraising) potential that they're able to expand their staffs," Franchi said.

However, Olsen said that although some colleges in the diocese allocate "substantial" funds of their own for campus ministry, a number of the ministries are also supported through the Thanks Giving Appeal. Olsen noted that \$150,000 in TGA funds was allocated in the past year.

Olsen said he'd like to see more colleges establish their own development programs for campus ministry. Currently, he noted, Cornell University is the only campus ministry in the diocese with a well-established development program.

"My feeling is that we should not depend on TGA," Olsen said.

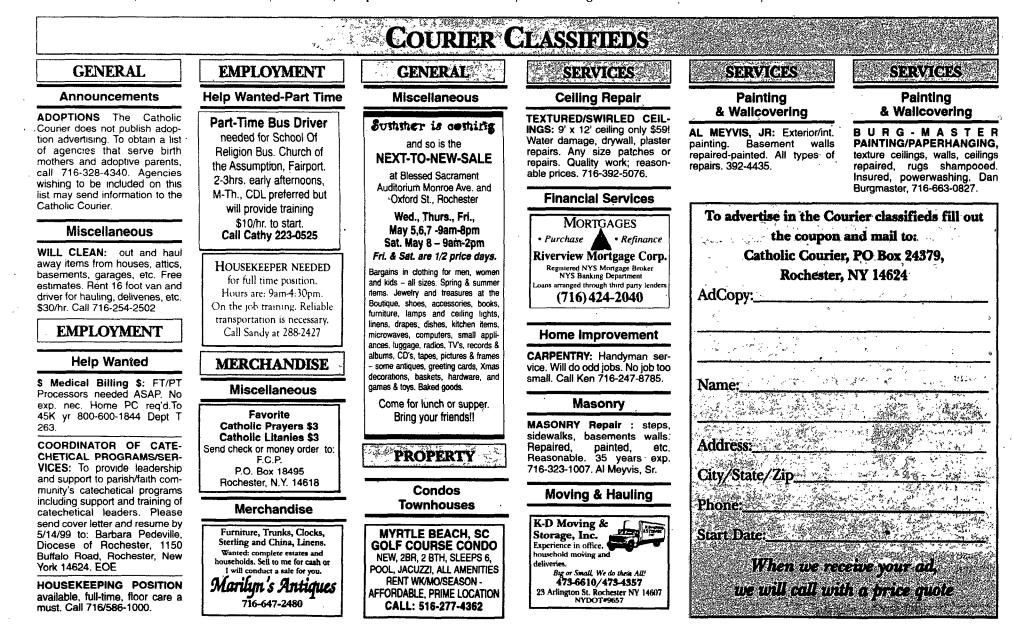
Olsen added that when he has met with college students, he has encouraged them to step up their weekly support of their campus ministries.

"I asked them, 'If campus ministry is truly important to you, are you willing to redistribute your money to support it?' Their answer was, 'Yeah, I think we can,'" Olsen said.

The diocese is also helping the cause, Olsen said, through a newly created position, director of Vocations Awareness. The director, Patricia Finnerty, who begins her position April 26, will be "very locked in with campus ministry throughout the diocese," Olsen said.

Pickett said that parishes in pastoral planning groups seem to be generally supportive of campus ministry as well.

"Nobody's saying, 'Let's pull back,'" Pickett said.



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