

# FOCUS ON EDUCATION

## Educators consider how to teach social tradition

By Jerry Filteau  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — A key part of forming Catholic college students in Catholic social teaching is exposing them to both the thought and action aspects of that teaching, Joan Rosenhauer told more than 60 Catholic educators gathered in Washington for the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering Feb. 24.

"Unfortunately, my experience with dioceses and parishes and even educational institutions is that a lot of times you get one or the other," she said.

Catholic higher education, she said, does "a whole lot better about getting students involved in service projects than getting them involved in working (for justice and peace) in public policy."

Rosenhauer, special projects coordinator for the U.S. Catholic Conference Department of Social Development and World Peace, cited the U.S. Catholic bishops' 1998 statement on social teaching and Catholic education, which said: "Many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the church is an essential part of Catholic faith. ... If Catholic education and formation fail to communicate our social tradition, they are not fully Catholic."

Rosenhauer urged that Catholic social teaching be "infused" across the curriculum, not limited to the few who take a theology course on the topic.

"In many educational programs we do a pretty good job of communicating that we have social ministry ... by providing opportunities for people to be involved in

social ministry. But that doesn't mean that we're teaching the doctrine."

How many Catholic college graduates would recognize as Catholic teaching that "participation in the political process is a moral obligation," contained in the U.S. bishops' recent statement on citizenship?

Father J. Bryan Hehir, head of the Harvard Divinity School and a consultant for Catholic Relief Services, one of the sponsors of the gathering, said Catholic social teaching has been made more explicit, "but the social was always embedded in the scriptural and the sacramental" dimensions of church thought and life.

"Catholicism," he said, "cannot be faithful to itself without a social vision," based on "the dignity of the human person (as) the clearest reflection of God among us."

Because "the person is not only sacred but social," Catholic teaching reflects on the communities — family, civil society, the church — in which the person lives.

He said Catholic social teaching faces enormous new intellectual challenges in such areas as globalization, the rapid evolution of genetic technology and the role of religion and religious institutions in secular society and social policy.

"If you can't think straight about these issues, you can't talk straight about them," he said. "It won't only be done in Catholic higher education, but it must be done there."

In Rochester, Nazareth College's "Urban Plunge," a "break for service," brings in elements of Catholic teaching, according to Lynne Boucher, campus minister.

Students spend a week on retreat at the



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

## Cheers for books

Kindergartners Raymond Rivera (left) and Calro Hemingway, both 6, cheer at a St. Andrew's School, Rochester, reading parade June 1. The parade was held to celebrate the students' surpassing their goal of reading 5,000 books for the school year. They read almost 7,000.


Urban Center, a former convent at Rochester's Holy Apostles Church, and perform daily service with the homeless, an elderly outreach and schools. The program's consultant, Joe Kenney, helps them connect their experiences with Catholic values and eight major themes of Catholic social teaching.

"Catholic social teaching talks about feeding the hungry," Kenney said, but Catholics are also called to work against

systemic poverty, for example.

Students in the program also worked at Hope Hall, a private, nondenominational school for children with learning disabilities, and relate work there to valuing the dignity of the human person.

"They treated the students not as a kid with a difficult background-or problem, but were seeing them as individuals and were reaching out one-on-one," Boucher said.



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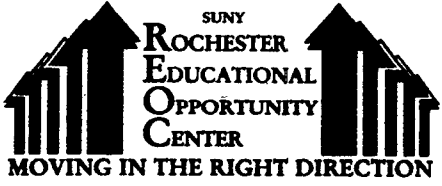
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