

# How can the church reach upcoming young adults?



Fr. Eugene Hemrick

The Human Side

fering, for one thing, more "theology on tap" (as these gatherings with a speaker in a local bar are called) than beer. This means offering young adults opportunities to raise gnawing questions about the meaning of life and one's role in it or to discuss the emptiness that is felt when a person realizes that possessions aren't everything in life.

In contacts with young adults we might encourage a search for self-fulfillment, but along different lines — by volunteering to help others to become more fulfilled. The wisdom of a great many volunteers is that by serving others they themselves grew in exciting ways.

Many young adults might not be aware of the possibilities for making weekend retreats where their deeper questions about life could be explored. Some might welcome this as an alternative to the usual weekend search for excitement.

Maybe I'm overly optimistic, but I can't help believing there are a great many more young adults than some people think who would relish learning of opportunities and possibilities for capitalizing in new ways on this most vigorous period in their lives.

Father Hemrick is a columnist for Catholic News Service.

only watch so many sports events and movies and can only attend just so many crowd-filled events. Even the hard work of maintaining a good physique gets tiresome.

How to break into this young-adult world in a meaningful way is a critical question for the church. Nonetheless, though they may not admit it openly, in confidence many will tell you that they need the church and faith.

How does the church turn to reach this highly energetic population?

Let's say the church has parish lay teams willing to contact young adults. The big question is: How do they reach beyond the doorways of these condominium/loft-apartment enclaves? Many of the inhabitants are like moving targets — on the go continuously.

How does a parish target them, and when is the right time to do this? And then, if these teams succeed in making the necessary contact, what do they have to offer?

I could foresee them of-

On a raw, overcast Sunday afternoon, my brother and I drove to downtown Chicago where we discovered something that not only dazzled us but raised a critical question for our church.

Three blocks from Lake Michigan and Chicago's Field Museum, condominiums, loft apartments and town houses now occupy what was once a rundown slum. The flight into pricey, renovated, inner-city neighborhoods is now the in-thing in Chicago, as I guess it is in most big cities.

The price of these apartments ranges from \$200,000 to three-quarters of a million. Those who own or rent them are often young adults with high-powered jobs searching for the good life.

For many, the good life consists of a newly decorated apartment complete with an entertainment room, membership in a health club, good restaurants and an exciting social life. For those who are single, it may also include an intriguing search for the right husband or wife.

Undoubtedly, many young adults are dazzled by all this. The church is challenged to ask how to out-dazzle it.

Many young adults I'm talking about are Catholics. Most have common sense and know there's more to the good life than this. Bar scenes get old, and you can

on time for dinner, so that we would alleviate the need to spend our time so wastefully and uncomfortably.

The above scenario took place when our family went to Mass in a church where the Blessed Sacrament, the Real Presence of Christ, had been removed.

Little wonder that congregations dwindle. Little wonder the sound in the church building is now a roar of small-talk noise instead of the quiet wherein we find God.

Awake from your slumber, the psalmist tells us. Twenty-first century Catholics awake! Know your faith, study it, live it, pray and sacrifice for it!

If it were known what a Treasure lies in our tabernacle, who would dare move Him from the altar? Who would put Him out of His own house? Who would in the name of "renovation" shift the focus of the Eucharistic Sacrifice and Meal from The Host to the guests?

Barbara A. Fredericks  
Birr Street  
Rochester

when I read my local (daily) paper today when it stated that "the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester has asked a judge to dismiss a lawsuit brought by 8 men who allege they were abused as children by the Rev. Robert O'Neill."

Victims need to speak their truth. Any move by the diocese that prohibits this negates the claim that care and healing are put above all else.

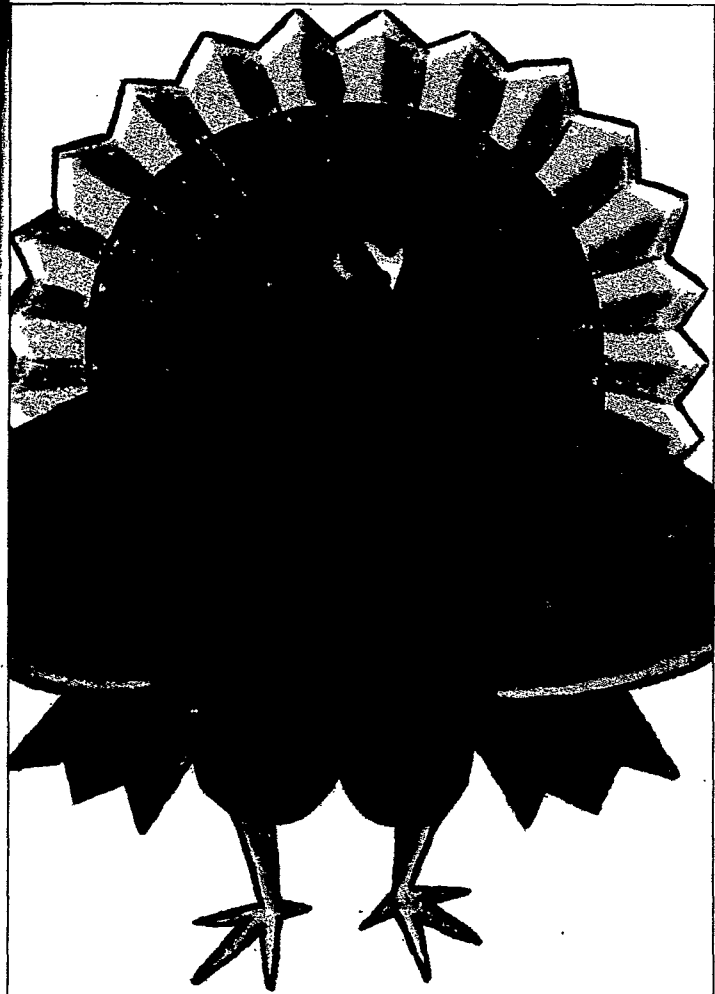
Protection of our own is all that I see coming from the diocese.

Margaret Fletcher  
Washington Street  
Geneva

## Dinner guests missed 'host'

To the editor:

Recently our family visited a friend's home for dinner. When we arrived there, the door was opened, so we walked in. The host, however, was nowhere to be seen. Feeling a bit uncomfortable we made small talk while thinking that the next time we visited, we'd arrive just



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