

Priesthood for women

Historic conference begins this weekend

BY MARGARET MILLER

If women ever are ordained into priesthood in the Catholic Church, Judy Kaltz of the Schoolcraft College campus ministry staff will know she has played a part in a giant step.

She's one of a group of Catholic women—both inside and outside religious orders—who are working behind the scenes to set up a Thanksgiving weekend conference that is bound to take on major milestone proportions.

"Women in Future Priesthood Now—a Call for Action" is the title of the conference drawing some 1,200 people from all over the country to the Southfield Sheraton to talk about why women have so far been excluded from ordination and what kinds of effective action can be taken to change that.

For most of those attending feel, as the program for the three days of sessions states—that "so long as women are excluded from ordination, there participation in the sacramental life and ministry of the church can only be secondary and auxiliary, reflecting a theological view of them as diminished persons."

MISS KALTZ, a former parochial teacher who has been working with the movement's original steering committee in helping with arrangements, said she feels the fact that the conference is being held and its location speak eloquently to the whole issue.

"We are saying we, women people of God, are calling this conference," she said, "and we are doing it by the authority within ourselves."

"That's a pretty powerful statement to make, and we are realizing that as that gravel comes down to open the

conference, history will be made." The Southfield location, she added, was picked because the response was so great when the flyers first went out that it became apparent the University of Detroit center, originally designated as the place for the meetings, would not be adequate.

"Interest is increasing so much we now have delegates coming from 44 states and six foreign countries."

Miss Kaltz went on: "We've had to turn many away, and that's too bad, because parishes are getting more interested and preparing to send delegates, and there's no more room."

TALK ON ORDINATION for women has been going on for some time, Miss Kaltz said but plans for this meeting were pulled together by a task force of feminine church leaders about a year ago. The task force has representatives from all over the country, she added, and the session is being held in the Detroit area "because the members here moved fastest in getting the arrangements started and the invitations out."

"I have been very impressed," said this Catholic woman, "by the reasonableness with which the task force has acted."

"With an issue like this one, you might think those behind it would be flaming radicals who want to upset things. But these people are not radical, and their planning has been very deliberate."

"What is at issue is the opening of discussion of a very important issue—women have come into their own in recent times and it is time to start discussing this in the church."

THE CONFERENCE will include a number of major sessions, with leading women addressing specific issues and others serving as respondents to the question.

A number of men, including Richard P. Mc'Brien, professor of theology of Boston College and former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, will take part in the sessions. "So," said Judy Kaltz, "everyone should understand this isn't just a bunch of women getting together."

Topics to be considered include "The Proper Place of Women in the Church," "The Church in Process: Engendering the Future," "The moral imperatives for the Ordination of Women," "Models for Future Priesthood," and "Possibility and Vision: Synthesis and Strategy." The meetings will end with a Eucharistic liturgy the first Sunday of Advent, and its theme will be "Certain as the Dawn Is His Coming."

MISS KALTZ WILL PLAY a busy and important role in the conference's ongoing, since she will be in charge of press room arrangements.

"We expect coverage from major newspapers from all parts of the country and from wire services and radio and television," she said, "and a major worry is that reporters unfamiliar with the history of the movement will report statements of individuals out of context."

One precaution she is taking against that is arranging a major press conference at the meetings open to give newsmen a chance to interview some 40 women who are presenting themselves for ordination.

"These are all fully accredited," she said, "graduates of seminaries—with advanced degrees. These are the people who are right there right now, and we want the press and the rest of society to know about them."

Miss Kaltz also will be working

after the sessions with a documentary film of the conference for Channel 56. "It will be aimed at giving a conference overview," she said.

WHAT DOES Judy Kaltz see coming out of these unprecedented meetings?

"Probably not a radical step," she said. "We have worked with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in planning these sessions, and we have no wish to isolate ourselves."

"Pope John said we should listen to each other before we speak, and that is what we will be doing, listening to the voices of those who have important things to say on an important issue."

"Then it will be up to us to prayerfully reflect and carefully consider what our next steps will be."



JUDY KALTZ

INFORM spreads word on new school programs

Michigan educators are eager to try new and successful approaches in the classroom, according to the director of a federal project designed to spread educational innovation throughout the state.

Dr. Clare A. Keller reports that Project INFORM, which stands for Information Network to Facilitate Organizational Renewal in Michigan, has far exceeded the goal forecast for it in 1972.

What INFORM is spreading around the state is one or more of the 66 innovative education programs which have been nationally validated by the U.S. Office of Education as being capable of improving learning.

Each of the programs, which range from preschool to vocational education, was conceived and developed by some local school district during the last 10 years with the aid of federal funding.

Now, the federal government wants a all school districts to have a chance to see what the programs will do.

"We anticipated that a half-dozen school districts might adopt one of the validated programs during the first year," Dr. Keller said. "But we already have had 40 adoptions and we have 75 applications waiting."

The validated programs cover special education, career education, read-



DR. CLARE A. KELLER

ing and alternative high schools among many others.

One of the most popular programs nationally, Dr. Keller said, is the Parent Readiness Education Project (PREP) developed by the Bedford Union School District.

It is aimed at involving both parents and high school students in preparing preschool children to read.

"The PREP program is one of the best we have," Dr. Keller said, "and it has been adopted by many school districts throughout the United States, including Detroit's Region 8."

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