



## CAMPUS MINISTRY (2)

08-C-34

### 4. Special projects

Before I launch into a particular project of *this* Campus Minister allow me to mention 2 projects that the priests on our team accomplish. We have a high percentage of students from singleparent families in our school (i.e. over 50%). Father Roger Gagne conducts a ten week group session for those students who wish to explore their family situation vis-a-vis themselves. Hundreds of students take advantage of this peer situation to find solace in the fact that they are not alone. My fear is that this need will become much greater in the future.

The second project is directed by Father Jim Hamilton. His hope is to make the liturgy more accessible and meaningful to the students. He visits each religion class 2 or 3 times a year asking for a small group of student volunteers to plan a liturgy based on the current theme of their course work. This gives him an opportunity to educate the students to good liturgy then to actually celebrate the student planned service the following week. Both of these programs have received wide-spread approval from students and teachers alike.

A special project of mine is Christian clowning. My office is «cluttered» with clowns; sad clowns. I take very seriously St. Paul's exhortation to be «a fool for Christ's sake». Only the fool knows the price of fidelity. Only the fool can laugh in the face of despair and see hope. And so.. I'm a fool'.

Many times I put on the white face of the clown to portray in mime and dance that the Gospel is possible, personal, joyful and demanding. My clowning leads me to many diverse audiences in many different places, but one point is always clear: The fool merely captures the attention of the crowd so that it can then be directed toward the main act. My role as clown and brother is always to call others to the presence of God and never to be ashamed that I am His. The best way for me to do this is just to be myself. This is really the core of my ministry. It invades all that I do.

In August of 1984 four other brothers and I mimed and danced the Last Judgement story from St. Matthew's gospel for over 600 Brothers at our Regional Convocation in California. The response was profound. From the youngest to the oldest, the brothers were inspired by the reverence, creativity and imagination shown. It was a new way of worship for us; opening up new avenues and freeing the creative spirit in prayer.

This past spring Brother Michael McKenery (Auxiliary Visitor L.I.N.E.) Sr. Liz Engel and I worked with 20 students to put on a Holy Week Mime Experience for our student body. Listen to a student's reaction as it appeared in the school newspaper:

«On April 2nd the La Salle Student body filed into the school auditorium expecting a boring and drawn out prayer service. We did receive a prayer service, but it was in no way boring or typical. When the students settled down the lights went out. Bro. Charles appeared dancing on stage wearing fluorescent gloves and clown make up. Rock music and wild dancing appeared throughout the play as the parable of the Prodigal Son was retold through popular songs. Then there was the retelling of the crucifixion as the fool for

Christ, played by Bro. Charles, was brought down by imaginary gunfire while scenes of war and famine flashed on a screen. A resurrection followed; the fool brought back to life by the power of God, gathered the other clowns into a circle of light with him. The resurrection occurred, the narrator recited a message of celebration and sharing of our love. In brief, this was the most creative, ingenious and enthusiastic play I've ever seen...».

A reporter from our local paper had this to say:

«Peppered with colorful costumes, intricate dance steps, an engaging opening number complete with black light and a fog machine and a variety of pop and rock tunes depicting scenes from the Gospel the show was a delight to the senses yet delivered an important message - that fools for Christ's sake can make a difference in this world».

The show ran about an hour and a half and demanded everything we had. From the day I began to write the script to the final bow on the stage it was a prayer. The message was always clear: By putting on Jesus Christ we can touch a world that so desperately needs us.

The spirit was contagious. We presented the service on another occasion for parents and raised \$ 850.00 for our missions in Ethiopia. Students are already asking to be included in the next service planned for the Spring of '86! This ministry of clowning has enabled me to find creative and innovative ways of expressing the age-old symbols of our faith within the culture of our own day. To mime, to clown and to dance are each a strong part of me. Now I use them to be brother, to be minister and to be teacher.

### **In conclusion**

My work in Campus Ministry has provided me with the freedom to expand horizons; my own and those whom I serve. I think the task is vital in any school that calls itself Catholic and especially one that is declared Lasallian. The *gospel* must be the core of the curriculum and permeate each discipline. St. La Salle inspires us to pray «for the grace to be able to touch hearts». Isn't this what it's all about? We have to educate minds but if we can touch hearts at the same time - that is Christian Education!

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