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AN EVALUATION
OF THE
INSTITUTIONAL APOSTOLATES
OF THE
ST. JOSEPH PROVINCE OF THE GREY NUNS OF MONTREAL

MOUNT ST. ANN CHILD CARE CENTER

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Communication • Evaluation • Planning

February, 1979

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AN EVALUATION
OF THE
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Since their foundation, the Grey Nuns have been distinguished by their commitments to serve the poor and the most neglected. This commitment, combined with the recognition that "there are fewer vocations to religious life," led the Grey Nuns to conduct an evaluation of all of their institutional apostolates.

In April of 1977, the Chapter of St. Joseph Province adopted a proposal entitled, "A Call to Disengagement from Corporate Sponsorship of Some Institutional Apostolates." The rationale for this call was presented under four headings:

A. "Our Charism"

1. In founding our Congregation it was the intention of Blessed Marguerite d'Youville and her companions to consecrate themselves "to the service of the destitute" (cf. Original Commitment).
2. The spiritual heritage of the Congregation is historically recognized as bearing witness among the poor to the love of the Father revealed in Christ. (cf. Life, Fr. Faillon, p. 267).
3. In response to the directives of Vatican II urging religious to continuous return to the original inspirations of their Congregation, (P.C., No. 2), the Special General Chapter at its second session in 1969 adopted a resolution calling for evaluation of the institutional apostolate and movement toward those in greatest need and deprived areas (cf. Decisions of the Second Session of the General Chapter, 1969, p. 30).

4. The 1971 Provincial Chapter of St. Joseph's Province reiterated this resolution in one of its own asking that ways and means be found for insertion into new apostolates among the poorest of the poor in the United States. (cf. Provincial Chapter Resolutions, 1971, No. 11).
5. Sister Denise Lefebvre, Superior General, in her keynote address to the meeting held April, 1976, called for communal discernment regarding the works and services in which the Grey Nuns can best incarnate their mission to the poor (cf. The Mission of the Grey Nun Today, p. 13).

B. "The Call of the Church"

6. The Church has called for religious to respond to "the cry of the poor" (cf. E.T. No. 17, 18).
7. The Bishops assembled for the Roman Synod in October, 1971, in a statement "Justice in the World" remind us: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.

C. "Trends in Society"

8. For millions of Americans there exists blatant poverty: severe want for the basic necessities of daily life-- food, clothing, shelter, medical care. According to Census Bureau statistics for 1974, there were 24.3 million poor people in the United States. (Poverty Profile USA, Chapter 2, pg. 7)
9. There is a growing availability of others capable of assuming the corporate sponsorship of obligations and tasks of the Grey Nuns in some of our institutions.
10. The number of people requiring health care outside of the traditional institutions is increasing and becoming a serious problem aggravated by the trend "Deinstitutionalization" as regulated by governmental and state agencies.

D. "Personnel Resources of the Province"

11. There are fewer vocations to religious life and a diminishing number of Grey Nuns with the training and experience to effectively assume administrative responsibility or fill other positions in institutions we sponsor.

After reviewing the rationale, the Provincial Chapter mandated the Provincial Council to:

1. Proceed with disengagement from some of the corporate institutional apostolates of St. Joseph's Province applying in the process of disengagement the Evaluative Criteria set forth in, "A Call to Disengagement from Corporate Sponsorship of Some Institutional Apostolates of St. Joseph's Province."
2. Explore means of strengthening the corporate institutional apostolates which are to be retained by the Province.
3. Explore a variety of means of enabling Sisters to incarnate mission to those persons deprived of the basic necessities of life.

The evaluative criteria adopted by the Chapter are listed and discussed later in this report.

INFORMATION SOURCES

Interviews were conducted with members of the Board of Trustees, members of the staff, and representatives of the Group Referral Service in Boston, the Children's Emergency Service in Worcester, Catholic Charities, and the United Way of Worcester.

In addition, interviews and meetings were held with the sister staff during the January 30th to February 1st visit.

A tour was made of the agency, including the main building and one of the cottages.

FACILITIES AND CENSUS

Mount St. Ann is located on a hill overlooking Worcester. The present plant was built in 1970. It consists of an administration building and five cottages.

Mount St. Ann has a staff of 30, including 10 Grey Nuns. It was a capacity of 32 children. At the time of the visit there were 33 children, 27 in residence plus six who were there under emergency placements.

The majority of the children at Mount St. Ann at any time are in residence. The others who are there under emergency placement stay for only a few days. In fact, the most frequent length of stay is one day.

During the last six months of 1977, 54 children came to Mount St. Ann as "emergencies." Only six of these children were still at Mount St. Ann at the time of our visit at the end of January, 1978. During this same period, six children were referred to Mount St. Ann for "group care." All six were still there at the end of January, 1978.

Even though most children in care at any time at Mount St. Ann are in residence, by far the larger number received during any year are emergency placements.

The children live in cottages, each of which is intended to accommodate eight children and a child care worker. Meals are prepared in the main building and brought to the cottages where the children eat in a family setting. Because of the age and sex breakdown of the children currently at Mount St. Ann, only four of the cottages are being used for children. The fifth cottage is used by the sister staff. The grounds include recreation equipment and a swimming pool.

HISTORY

The Grey Nuns have been involved in child care in the Worcester area since the latter part of the 19th Century. The original building on the present site housed an orphanage. Because of their work and their long period of involvement in Worcester, the Grey Nuns are known and respected in the community. In 1970, the old building was replaced with the

present facilities and the type of care changed from the orphanage concept with large numbers of children to a "treatment" concept with smaller numbers of children receiving more specialized and intensive care and living in family-like groups.

PRESENT STRUCTURE

Mount St. Ann is owned by the Grey Nuns and the ultimate authority resides in the Provincial Council, since it appoints members of the Board of Trustees. The board, which includes four Grey Nuns, is responsible for policy decisions, hiring the Executive Director, approving the budget, and seeing that the philosophy of the Grey Nuns is followed.

The day-to-day decisions are the responsibility of the Executive Director who is a Grey Nun. She is assisted by a lay Program Director. In addition to the Executive Director, the other Grey Nuns at Mount St. Ann are four child care workers, the treasurer, the cook, a housekeeper, a tutor, and a medical assistant.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Since January of 1977, Mount St. Ann has provided service by contract with the Group Referral Service, a section of the Massachusetts Department of Welfare. All of Mount St. Ann's children, except those taken in emergencies, come through the Group Referral Service.

Group Referral Service regards Mount St. Ann as one of the best child care agencies in the greater Boston area. Several features were mentioned as being outstanding: the professional quality of the staff, particularly those in direct contact with the children; the quality of loving care given each child; the communication and interaction of the staff; and the high priority set on meeting the needs of each child. Also, Mount St. Ann is the only institution in the area which is equipped to handle day or night emergencies which involved both boys and girls. This makes it easier for child welfare officials to make some emergency placements.

Another group closely associated with Mount St. Ann is the Children's Emergency Service of Worcester. CES was formed by groups involved in child welfare in the Worcester area, including the staff of Mount St. Ann.

Mount St. Ann is one of the oldest participants in the United Way of Worcester. Some of the yearly operating funds for the agency come through the United Way. There appear to be no difficulties in the working relationship between the two agencies.

Contributions to the general operating budget from such sources as United Way do not increase the operating budget by the amount of the contribution. The state formula for reimbursement calls for a reduction of government assistance equal to undesignated contributions received from other sources.

STRENGTHS AND DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Mount St. Ann is the only child care treatment center in the Worcester area which accepts both girls and boys. It is the only agency of its kind which is available for emergency placements. Mount St. Ann is viewed by the County Welfare Department as an important component in its emergency placement program.

The children at Mount St. Ann are not isolated from the community. Relationships with the families of the children are good.

The children in residence at Mount St. Ann have special needs. They have not been able to function in a family structure, and they require treatment and loving support before they can return to their families or to foster or adoptive homes. One of the distinctive characteristics of Mount St. Ann is the quality of the care provided. Both the religious and lay staff feel that the quality of care is excellent, and those outside the agency who relate to it on a professional basis rate the quality as extremely high.

One of the factors in the quality of care is the presence of the Grey Nuns and their dedication. It was mentioned by the lay staff and by outside observers that the continuity of the religious staff (most of the Grey Nuns have been there since the new facility opened in 1970) and their dedication

(they are either on duty or on call most of the time) were a source of strength to the children and of inspiration to the lay staff.

Because of their long association with quality child care in the Worcester area, the Grey Nuns and Mount St. Ann are highly regarded. There is strong community support for the institution manifested in donations from local merchants. There is also strong community identification with Mount St. Ann, which is still referred to affectionately as "the Orphanage."

NEED

It was observed both within and outside of the institution that even though the first priority for placement of children is to return them to their own homes, or to a foster home, some children are not able to be placed in homes. They require a loving, homelike care which is provided at Mount St. Ann. There are no other institutions in the area providing the type of care that Mount St. Ann provides. One board member said, "If Mount St. Ann were not available, it would have to be established."

Because of its contract with Group Referral Service in Boston, Mount St. Ann receives children from beyond the immediate Worcester area.

SERVICE TO THE MATERIALLY POOR AND NEGLECTED

All of the children at Mount St. Ann come through the Massachusetts Department of Welfare. They are materially poor. They have often suffered neglect. They usually have special emotional needs.

It is the policy of the local Department of Welfare to try to place children, even in a crisis, with family members, neighbors, or in foster homes. The children at Mount St. Ann are the ones whom the Department of Welfare has not been able to place in homes. The charism of Mother d'Youville is fulfilled in the service to the children of Mount St. Ann.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING SERVICE

Several suggestions for improving service were made by the staff. Among these were:

1. The locating, training, and supervising of foster parents linked to the agency.

The staff of Mount St. Ann have felt the need for specialized foster homes which could be an extension of the service provided by the agency. The staff could provide training, supervision, and support for foster parents in such a program.

Funding and staffing are two of the problems, but the need for this program is recognized, and funding is being sought. There is encouragement for the program at the state level. The long range policy of the

Massachusetts Department of Welfare is toward provision of more specialized foster homes. It is also the Department's policy to encourage private agencies to develop these programs.

2. Establishing a group home for older children who need help in making the transition to living and working outside the institution.

The need for "half-way houses" for teens is recognized at the state level; funding and personnel resources are being explored by the staff at Mount St. Ann.

Both of these programs are needed and means of meeting the financial and staffing difficulties are being sought.

3. Strengthening the Board.

Some lay members of the Board of Trustees observed that the Board should be strengthened by the addition of members with management skills and that the Board should have additional responsibility and accountability. This suggestion is consistent with provincial policy to strengthen the apostolic institutions of the Grey Nuns and to prepare others to take them over. Some Board members stated that the present lay members of the Board would not be capable of continuing Mount St. Ann if the Grey Nuns were not present.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

STRENGTHS

Those interviewed were asked, "What are Mount St. Ann's greatest strengths?" Everyone mentioned the unique or superior care. All of the sisters described their strong and supportive community life as a major strength. Most of those interviewed referred either to the high quality of the staff or the positive attitude of the staff. Most of the sisters emphasized how fully the Grey Nuns charism of serving the poor and neglected was being fulfilled. The long history of involvement in the Worcester community was mentioned several times. Strengths which were referred to once or twice included Mount St. Ann's ability to admit several children from the same family together, the excellent facilities, and the witness value of this apostolate.

The following are representative descriptions of Mount St. Ann's strengths.

1. Unique Service (mentioned as a strength 13 times)

"It's the only facility of its kind."

"Mount St. Ann is the only child care center in the area which provides residential care and emergency placements for both boys and girls."

"Mount St. Ann is superior to other programs in many ways:

- The Grey Nuns live here full time, and therefore provide a continuity with the children.
- The staff is more dedicated here and shows more true concern.
- There are better staff relations with fewer frustrations on the staff.
- There is a mixture of ages, and both boys and girls are included.
- There is greater openness here."

2. Quality of Care (mentioned 7 times)

"The children are not isolated from the community. They use the public schools."

"We work to return the children to family. The staff has a good and trusting relationship with the families. It is better here than at other child care institutions. This is because of the attitude of the staff."

3. Strong Community Life (mentioned by all 10 sisters)

"Except for weekends, we are together at all meals, coffee breaks, community prayer, and liturgy."

4. Quality of the Staff (mentioned 7 times)

"We have a great staff here; there is openness, honesty, and mutual respect. The staff is excellent at accepting the children's behavior and caring for them and loving them."

"There is good communication between administration and the staff. There is a high degree of professionalism. There is an openness and readiness to listen. In-service training and staff growth is emphasized. We hold regular staff conferences."

5. Positive Attitude (mentioned 2 times)

"We feel a sense of accomplishment. We have a real opportunity to give, to care, and to nurture."

"Our work does not make the headlines, but I could hardly feel more needed or more fulfilled."

6. Serving the Poor (mentioned 7 times)

"This is Mother d'Youville's work."

"We don't have to go somewhere else to serve the poor; they are here."

"Children come to Mount St. Ann out of a crisis situation. Usually there is a breakdown in family life. The problem may be one of drugs, alcohol, child abuse, desertion, or family breakup. These are children who have the most desperate needs."

7. History in the Community (mentioned 3 times)

"Mount St. Ann has over 80 years of community respect built up."

8. Flexibility (mentioned 1 time)

"We are able to admit several children in the same family and, therefore, preserve some of the family ties."

9. Witness Value (mentioned 1 time)

"Mount St. Ann provides a witness to the support of persons in crisis. This witness is helpful to the pro-life movement."

PROBLEMS

Those interviewed were also asked to describe problems or difficulties experienced at Mount St. Ann. Most of the Grey Nuns mentioned the pressures they felt because of the lack of any sisters to replace them and the fear that they could not carry on if even one or two sisters left Mount St. Ann since they were already so tightly scheduled. The only other difficulty which was mentioned frequently referred to problems related to government funding and controls. Problems mentioned once or twice included difficulty in finding qualified lay staff members (particularly child care workers), the need for a more active board, the orphanage image, and the view that some of the children at Mount St. Ann should be in foster homes.

1. Pressure on the Grey Nuns (mentioned as a problem by
8 sisters)

"Because they live here and because of their commitment, it's like the Grey nuns are on 24-hour service seven days a week."

"The sisters don't like to lose the stability which their presence gives in the cottages, but this means that they have very little time off."

"There have been no new Grey Nuns in child care work in the last eight years. We are the same crew now as we were eight years ago. Therefore, each of us has a fear of leaving Mount St. Ann because we know there is no one to replace us, and we are afraid that if any one or two leave it may mean that Mount St. Ann would close."

"We want to be working directly with the children; however, it is tiring after eight years. Many are giving out."

"The consistency of the Grey Nun staff at Mount St. Ann is a major strength, and it is also our biggest worry."

"The children who are placed here are difficult to work with. They have been alienated and rejected."

"Our energies are flowing totally into Mount St. Ann. Not many Grey Nuns are interested in child care work; those who are are already here."

"With no replacements, you just stay with it."

2. Limitations Due to Government Funding and Control
(mentioned 7 times)

"There are some problems in relating to public agencies because of the regulations and limitations which they specify and because of funding restrictions. There are some programs which we believe are necessary but which cannot be funded."

"The need is great. More children could benefit, but there are no finances to expand or increase the numbers served."

"There are more and more government controls. It raises a question of whether we can survive as a Grey Nun institution under these controls."

"Payments from the state are late and irregular and sometimes the payments cover only part of the cost."

"Some resources, such as psychotherapy, are needed but are not available."

3. Lay Staff (mentioned 2 times)

"There is a high turnover among the lay staff."

"It is difficult to recruit new lay staff members. The salaries we can offer are too low."

4. The Board (mentioned 2 times)

"The board should have more "management responsibility" and authority."

"The board only has four regular meetings per year."

"The board is not set up to be an independent governing body."

5. Image (mentioned 2 times)

"Mount St. Ann still has the image of being an orphanage."

6. Improper Placement (mentioned 1 time)

"Some of the children should be in foster homes rather than at Mount St. Ann's. However, there is a limit of good foster homes."

"There should be fewer emergency placements in order to give more room for additional children who need residential care."

SUGGESTIONS MADE DURING INTERVIEWS

The interviewees were invited to suggest improvements or changes which they believed should be made at Mount St. Ann. Most of the suggested changes related to program expansion such as the development of foster homes and small group homes supervised by Mount St. Ann and the strengthening of their after care program. Finding ways to reduce the pressure on the sisters was emphasized. An increase in the responsibilities of the board was also mentioned.

1. Small Group Homes and Foster Homes (suggested 4 times)

"It would be beneficial if Mount St. Ann were able to sponsor some foster homes and specialized small group homes. We would like to recruit and train the foster parents ourselves."

"Some of the children here should be in foster homes."

"If sisters were available, it would be valuable to establish halfway houses for problem children and to provide long-term care for children who were not able to go into foster homes."

2. After Care (suggested 3 times)

"There is a need for follow-up care when children are released. This would require counseling and a homemaker service when needed."

3. Reducing the Pressure on the Sisters (suggested 4 times)

"Mount St. Ann's staffing patterns should be restructured so there would be more time off for sisters."

"Perhaps lay staff members could be hired and trained to handle children who are placed under the emergency care program."

"It would be helpful if we could hire couples to serve as cottage parents; however, we do not have the finances to do this."

"We should try to recruit sisters from other religious communities to serve."

4. Responsibilities of the Board (suggested 1 time)

"More decisions should be made by the board."

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE GREY NUNS

Those who were in a position to know were asked whether the Grey Nuns were adequately prepared to perform their responsibilities at Mount St. Ann. There was unanimous agreement, both within and outside the agency, that the sisters were well qualified and that it was their leadership and dedication which made the quality of care at Mount St. Ann so outstanding.

ROLE OF THE GREY NUNS

Staff and board members were asked, "In which positions is it most important to have Grey Nuns?" Everyone agreed that Grey Nuns should be Child Care Workers and four people mentioned the need for the Grey Nuns to be in contact with the families as well as with the children. Almost everyone also mentioned the desirability, or - for some - the necessity, of having a Grey Nun as Executive Director.

IMPLICATIONS OF A GREY NUN WITHDRAWAL

Board members were asked what they believed would happen if the Grey Nuns were no longer able to sponsor or staff Mount St. Ann. All agreed that if the agency survived, the quality of care would be diminished.

Other comments were:

1. "Mount St. Ann would have to continue in some form even without Grey Nuns, because it is needed; but without Grey Nuns, the quality of care would go down."
2. "We would need a stronger board."
3. "Mount St. Ann would lose its identity as a Catholic institution, and it would lose its witness value."
4. "Lay staff dedication is linked to Grey Nun dedication."
5. "The Grey Nun philosophy would be in jeopardy."
6. "There are no lay people available to take over."

SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION
OF
MOUNT ST. ANN CHILD CARE CENTER
BASED ON
THE CRITERIA IDENTIFIED BY THE PROVINCIAL CHAPTER OF APRIL 1977
TO SERVE THE POOR

1. "Is this corporate institutional apostolate consistent with the charism of the Congregation, i.e., through this service, do Grey Nuns serve the poor and most neglected?"

The apostolate at Mount St. Ann is clearly consistent with the charism of the Grey Nuns. The children are poor and come from poor families. These are children who have been neglected and who show the scars of neglect.

2. "If the institution is serving all classes of people in need, what is the number and proportion of those served who are materially poor?"

All of those served are materially poor.

CONTROL AND INFLUENCE BY GREY NUNS

3. "Does the ultimate control reside in the Provincial Council?"
4. "Is the Chief Executive Officer a Grey Nun who is well qualified for the position?"

The answer to both of the evaluative questions is yes. The Provincial Council appoints the members of the Board. In addition, four Grey Nuns are members of the Board. The Chief Executive Officer is a Grey Nun who is well qualified.

NUMBER AND QUALIFICATIONS OF GREY NUNS

5. "Are there sufficient Grey Nuns adequately trained for their respective positions to enable this institution to visibly witness to the Church and the charism of Blessed Marguerite d'Youville?"

All of those who were interviewed agreed that the Grey Nuns at Mount St. Ann were well qualified. There were also a sufficient number of Grey Nuns to "visibly witness to the Church and to the charism of Blessed Marguerite d'Youville;" however, there is great concern that there are not sufficient numbers of Grey Nuns in the province to maintain an adequate number of Grey Nuns at Mount St. Ann in the future.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS

6. "Is this institution and its program sufficiently developed so that the withdrawal of Grey Nuns would not be detrimental to the further growth and development of the work?"

No, the withdrawal of Grey Nuns from Mount St. Ann would be detrimental to the quality of the work and perhaps to the survival of Mount St. Ann as a child care institution. The lay members of the Board are dedicated and informed; however, the Board has been meeting only four times a year, and it has assumed only limited responsibilities for planning, program evaluation, and direction. As a result, lay board members are not presently prepared to assume full responsibility for the operation and further development of Mount St. Ann. During the interviews, lay Board members agreed with this assessment.

The Grey Nuns speak highly of the qualifications and commitment of the lay staff members working at Mount St. Ann; however, they have also described the difficulty or near impossibility of finding lay personnel to replace them in some of the direct child care functions. Therefore, neither lay Board members nor lay staff members have been expanded and developed sufficiently to continue the program and the quality of the work at Mount St. Ann.

NEED

7. "Is there a real need for services being rendered by this institution, or are they available elsewhere? (Could this institution be closed?)"

At the present time there is a definite need for the services provided by Mount St. Ann. The services are available elsewhere only to a limited extent. That is, no other agency in the Worcester area has the type of program and facilities which can receive boys and girls in the same family. In addition, the sisters indicate a sharp contrast in quality between Mount St. Ann and lay run child care centers.

It may be that as the State of Massachusetts moves to implement its policy of reducing the number of children in child care institutions and increasing the number of specialized foster homes and group homes that the overall need for child care institutions will decrease.

Mount St. Ann as it is presently run compares very favorably to other alternatives which would be available for the children; however, the Grey Nuns at Mount St. Ann support the state's policy of moving toward more foster homes and small group homes. They regard these alternatives as superior to the type of care which is available in most of the lay run child care institutions.

ALTERNATIVE SPONSORS

8. "Is there another corporate entity - diocesan, religious, or lay - ready and willing to take over and insure the continuity of this institution and its responsibility to those served?"

As was suggested in the paragraphs above, a fully lay owned, lay sponsored and lay staffed child care center would not necessarily be the best way of continuing to meet the needs of the children presently served by Mount St. Ann. The possibility of sponsorship by the diocese or by another religious community is presently being explored.

ALTERNATIVE SERVICE FOR SISTERS

9. "If we should disengage from this institution, would there be other apostolic opportunities available to the sisters presently serving in this institution?"

Yes, the sisters presently serving at Mount St. Ann are qualified to respond to other apostolic opportunities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. "How will our disengagement from this institution affect the financial condition of the Province?"

The sisters serving at Mount St. Ann should be qualified to earn the salaries which are comparable to what they are receiving at this time.

Mount St. Ann is currently repaying a loan of over \$100,000 to the Province. If withdrawal would take place in such a way that the payments on this loan would

continue or that it would be paid off in a lump sum, there should be no long-term financial impact in a withdrawal from Mount St. Ann. There probably would be a short-term financial impact during the transition period between the time when sisters at Mount St. Ann withdraw and the time they begin a new salaried apostolate.

CONCLUSIONS

The quality of child care at Mount St. Ann is seen by lay staff members and outsiders to be a direct result of the Grey Nuns participation. The high standards which they set for themselves and the level of dedication they bring were cited as major factors in the overall excellence of child care at Mount St. Ann.

This positive contribution which the Grey Nuns are making to the quality of the child care at Mount St. Ann also creates a problem for the institution. The sisters of Mount St. Ann report that they have been so over-extended for so long (eight years) that if any one or two of them leave Mount St. Ann, they fear that none of them will be able to continue because:

- (1) It is not physically possible for the Grey Nuns at Mount St. Ann to assume additional responsibilities which would be left by any Grey Nuns who withdrew, and
- (2) The sisters indicate that they would not be willing to accept a lowering of the quality of care to the children which would make Mount St. Ann more like other child care institutions which they have observed.

Since the interviews were conducted at Mount St. Ann, the Grey Nuns who are there have indicated that they will not be able to continue to serve in that apostolate. If this had not been the case, the major conclusion which would be drawn in the evaluation of Mount St. Ann would be that it has so successfully

fulfilled all of the Grey Nun priorities (except that of developing an institution in which others could replace the Grey Nuns) that the Grey Nuns should continue at Mount St. Ann as long as there were sisters available to serve there. Additional recommendations would have been that the Board of Directors should be strengthened by the addition of more members, by more frequent meetings, and by added responsibilities. We would have also recommended that the Board and administration of Mount St. Ann continue to develop plans and seek funding for foster homes and group homes which would be related to Mount St. Ann.

All of these recommendations, however, would have had to be subject to the qualification that they could be pursued only as long as Grey Nuns were available to serve at Mount St. Ann.

The rationale which underlies the sisters' decision not to attempt to continue serving at Mount St. Ann on a more limited basis is:

- (1) They are unwilling to compromise the quality of child care provided in a Grey Nun institution.
- (2) They are in agreement with the new priorities of the Department of Welfare of the State of Massachusetts which call for an expansion of foster homes and specialized group homes along with a reduction in the number of child care centers.

- (3) While they are confident of the value of the contribution which Mount St. Ann has made, they lack confidence in the quality of care which they observed and heard about in other child care institutions.
- (4) They operate under the philosophy of putting the needs of the children first and making a total dedication to the child rather than building a strong institution which could survive with fewer or even no Grey Nuns.

If one were to say that the decision of the sisters to leave Mount St. Ann was incorrect, one would have to argue that they overestimated the difficulty of hiring and training qualified, dedicated, lay child care workers, and that they should have been willing to accept some reduction in quality of care in order to extend the survival of Mount St. Ann.

It should be emphasized that the refusal to compromise the quality of care to the children is consistent with the apostolic priorities identified by the Provincial Chapter of 1977.

The sisters had foreseen this problem. One of them commented on the link between the quality of care and the presence of the Grey Nuns as follows: "The consistency of the Grey Nun staff at Mount St. Ann is a major strength, and it is also our biggest worry." The continuity of having the same sisters

for eight years who could be with or available to the children almost all of the time contributed greatly to the quality of caring and loving, and it challenged the lay staff members to an even greater commitment. However, the Grey Nuns are working at what would ordinarily be regarded as more than full capacity. They sometimes commented during the interviews, "With even one less sister, we're not sure we could manage."

The quality of the service provided by the Grey Nuns at Mount St. Ann, as well as their present decision to leave, is based on the decision to work as hard as they can for as long as they can to provide the highest level of care to the children rather than gradually reducing the quality of that care by replacing themselves with lay child care workers.