

SACRAMENTO DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

Vol 2

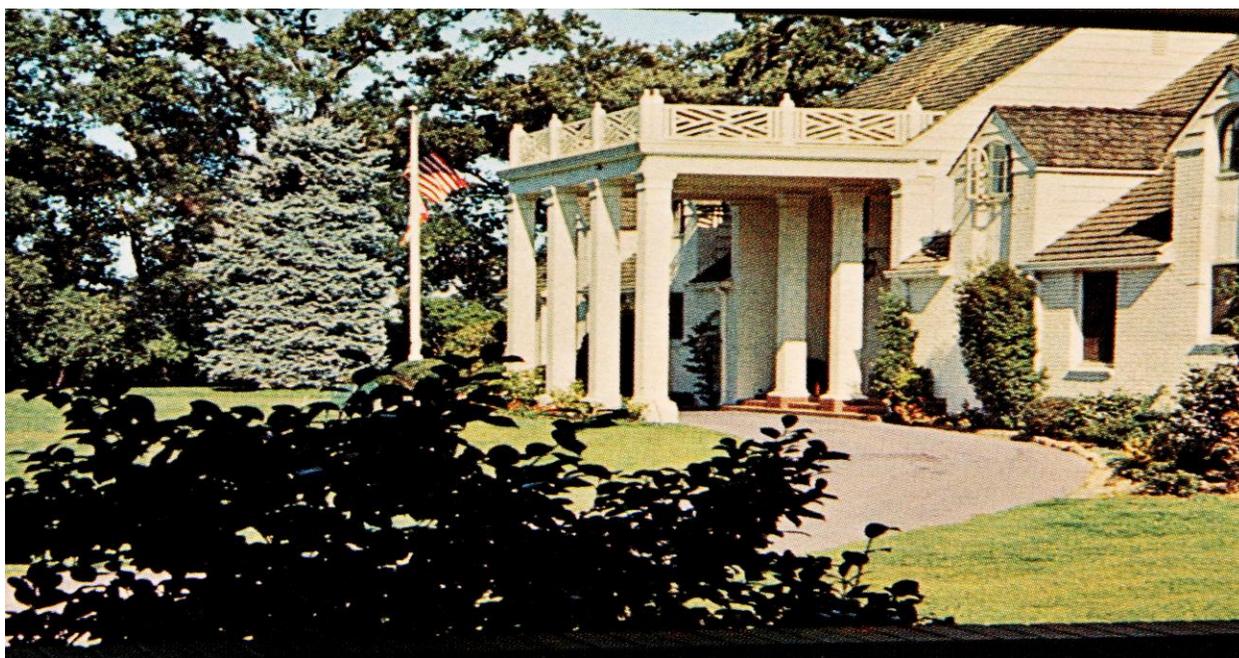
Fr John E Boll, Diocesan Archivist

No 65

RETREAT-MINDED WOMEN FIND SPIRITUAL RICHES AT THE CENACLE

Printed in the March 6, 1969 issue of the *Catholic Herald*

A groundswell movement among diocesan Catholic women in the early 1950s was chiefly responsible for a new facility, the Cenacle Retreat House for Women in Carmichael. These retreat-minded women already were able to assess the influence of the nearby men's retreat house, Christ the King in Citrus Heights, and it whetted their appetites for something similar to handle their own spiritual needs. As the movement started to gain momentum, they chaffed at the fact they had to drive far and long to find an accommodation for weekend retreats.



Archival Photo

The Cenacle Retreat Center, Carmichael

It was this desire for a house geared for women that led to a contact with the Religious of the Cenacle, whose special apostolate is the retreat movement. In July, 1953, three members of the community arrived in Sacramento from the provincial headquarters in Milwaukee, and started negotiations to obtain a suitable site or residence which could be converted into a proper retreat facility. After much investigation, they purchased the Dudley Saeltzer residence at 5340 Fair Oaks Boulevard and the first steps soon were in motion for remodeling and expansion of the spacious home, nestled in a sylvan setting which is conducive to the needs of retreatants. In February, 1954, seven members of the founding community, including the superior, Sister

Eleanor Fitzgerald, RC, arrived to begin the Cenacle apostolate in the Sacramento diocese. As construction got underway on a large wing, with an area for a chapel, the Cenacle Religious sponsored 22 days and evenings of recollection for various women's groups in order to spread the news and benefits of retreats.

On July 31 of that year, the late Bishop Robert J Armstrong blessed the Cenacle Retreat House and the first weekend retreat took place August 13-15, attended by 40 members of the Cenacle Retreat League.

According to Sister Patricia Burgoon, RC, current directress of retreats, some 20,000 women and girls have benefitted these past 15 years by the various retreats and spiritual programs offered by the Cenacle.

Retreat groups, geared along special vocational and interest lines, include married women, business women, high school girls and collegians, Portuguese and Spanish speaking, AA and Alanon, widows, divorcees, handicapped, CCD teachers, deaf and hard of hearing, ecumenical groups, engaged couples and married couples. The Cenacle can accommodate 44 persons overnight from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon.

In a cacophony-of-sound world, the Cenacle is one of the few places where women and silence meld together in harmony. But the talk-less and tranquil weekends, when groups of women seek spiritual renewal, are only part of today's Cenacle picture. Recently, the traditional silent retreats have been interspersed with discussion sessions and dialogue weekends geared to the spiritual needs of women with common goals and problems.

Monthly guild meetings also provide spiritual stimulus and renewal for business women, housewives, students, and married couples. Study groups are planned for members of AA and Alanon, as well as women interested in Scripture. Preschool classes groups cater to the younger and grade school and YCS generation. There also are special classes conducted for retarded and deaf children.

Groups may arrange for preached days and evenings of renewal. Individual women may stay at the Cenacle at any time for private renewal days or for longer private retreats. A Cenacle Sister plans the retreat program according to individual needs.

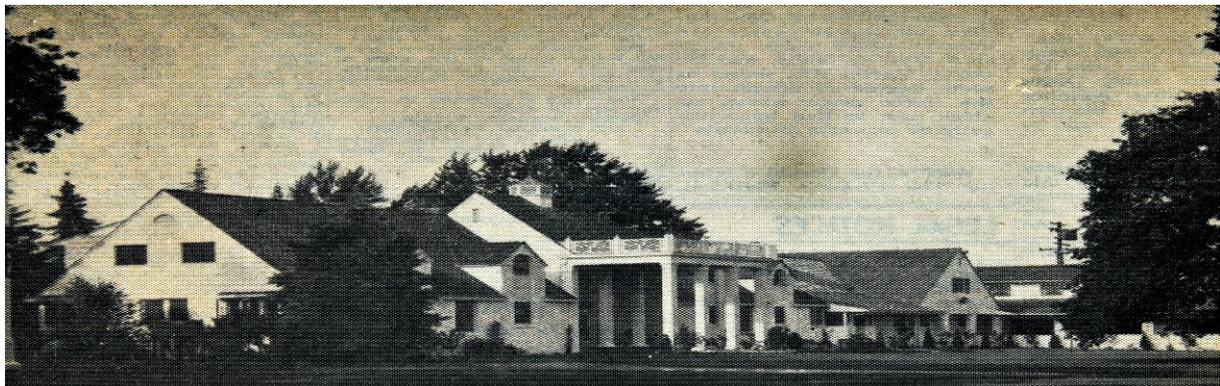


Photo from the Diocesan Archives

The Cenacle Retreat Center for Women in Carmichael