

# Over 70 Jesuit Lay Volunteers Gather to Begin Orientation

Over 70 Jesuit Lay Volunteers gathered at Copper Valley School in Glennallen on August 18th to begin an orientation period into the Alaskan mission program.

The volunteers, from as far away as Maine and as close as Glennallen, have all come to Alaska to serve for a year at one of 17 mission stations throughout the state.

The purpose of the five day program, held before the volunteers branch out to their specific destinations, was to acquaint each new member with Alaska, its people and problems, and also to acquaint each other.

Dr. William Loyens, S.J., the head of the anthropology department at the University of Alaska, was the main lecturer of the orientation. He gave the volunteers a detailed background of the development of Alaska and her native people.

Dr. Loyens stressed the diversity of the Alaskans, in the hope of making the volunteers

aware of the wide range of people, customs, and ideals with which they will be working.

Warning the volunteers of "culture shock", Dr. Loyens said that they have left their own culture and are now beginning a life in an area where previous values and ideas are not necessarily accepted or understood.

The integration of Alaskan culture into the volunteer's life will be an important factor of of his success in his field, Dr. Loyens stressed.

Emphasis at the orientation was on the development of "community" and on how to effectively live together as a group.

Father Charles Suver of Seattle opened the program with a kind of sensitivity session and brought to the volunteers an awareness of the importance of communication both between themselves and with the people with whom they will be working.

Various priests and laity who

have been working and living in Alaska for most of their lives helped the volunteers by explaining details of some of their experiences in the communities they have worked in.

Veteran volunteers were also on hand to relate experiences and give as much advice as possible to the new members. Some of the volunteers are returning for their sixth, seventh, or eighth years of service.

The volunteers have all been recruited since last year for jobs as laundresses, teachers, kitchen help, maintenance men, secretaries and nurses.

Most are recent college graduates, but there are several married couples and others who have taken a year out of their lives in the lower 48 to work in Alaska.

On Sunday, August 23rd, the volunteers left for their various missions, catching planes to all corners of the state: Ketchikan, Nelson Island, Kodiak, Fairbanks, and Nome.