

Religious Pluralism

It was very fitting that Paul and Mary Filben should have represented the Diocese of Mobile at the National Workshop on Christian-Jewish Relations in Southfield, Mich. April 19-21.

Two years ago, the Mobile Diocesan Ecumenical Commission worked with the leaders of the Temple to get the program started. Today, there are eight groups in Mobile that meet in one another's homes four times a year. Each group has approximately 14 people representing both the Jewish and Catholic traditions. In addition to these meetings in the homes, there are also several other get-togethers during the year which brings all of the participants together for study, discussion and socializing.

Mary and Paul Filben are participants in these

discussions and they had the pleasure of seeing the Mobile model of Jewish-Catholic dialogue featured at this third National Workshop on Christian-Jewish Relations.

The theme of the 1977 workshop was "Living Together In An Age of Pluralism". In trying to arrive at the focus of interreligious dialogue, Rabbi Jakob Petuchowski, a professor at Hebrew Union College, suggested that Jews and Christians might understand each other better if they would acknowledge that they are different religious traditions and that whatever their common convictions, their different beliefs are significant.

"It is perhaps even more important for us that we come to terms with those differences than we always

and continually rehearse our areas of agreement", he said. Ignoring differences, Petuchowski warned, can lead to religious relativism or spawn "a hybrid form of religion which is neither one thing or another".

Religious pluralism need not be threatening, he added. "I can believe in the contemporaneous validity of the various covenants, so that no one covenant, made by God with a particular segment of the human race, invalidates the other....After all, who am I to dictate to the Almighty into what covenantal relationship he can or cannot enter?"

Approximately 200 participants representing the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant traditions attended, and our diocese can be proud that we are one of the relatively few dioceses that has had a successful on-going dialogue for the past two years.