# The woman is a minister

### By KRYSTYNA JONES

Everybody's mind at one time or another is frazzled by the thought "What can I do that is useful in life?" It usually hits somewhere in the teen years, gets bashed around for a while and then remains.

For Lynne Curtin, ideas of teaching and the ministry formulated when she was 17. Now it's Rev. Lynne Curtin, minister of Erindale United Church — as of three weeks ago. The first woman minister at Erindale brings a change to the congregation, whether conscious or not.

"I imagine that in some people's minds there exist misgivings and it's no wonder" admits Mrs. Curtin, with an understanding laugh. "It's new that's why.

'But the most important thing that the people must realize is that difference in sex has no bearing. Pastoral functions remain the same whether the minister's male or female."

Thoroughly convinced of this and blessed with such a bubbly personality that even the most devout chauvinist wouldn't have a leg to stand on, Mrs. Curtin approaches the situation very realistically.

"People assume right away that I'm a Women's Libber, but I'm not. I'm a minister who just happens to be a woman, and a woman who feels that her talents can be used most effectively as a minister."

The service of introduction, held two weeks ago in Mrs. Curtin's honor was in her words a beautiful ceremony. "The people have been great — very warm and receptive."

In the minister's message to the congregation, her frankness shone through again, when she said that "I have come to you as a minister and friend. Let me know what concerns you — the good things, the not-so-good things about our church's life and work. I am convinced that as we pull together, focus our sights on God's will, we shall be granted a sense of purpose and fellowship such as we have never before experienced."

It's been six years since Mrs. Curtin was ordained and 16 years since she took the initial decision to even become a minister. A graduate from the University of Toronto with a BA in Modern Languages, the minister speaks French, Italian and Spanish, which came in



Mrs. Lynn Curtin, new Erindale United Church Minister, combines spiritual and temporal life in her home.

handy when she was student minister at St. Paul's Italian United Church during field experience.

Gaining her BD from Emmaneul College in 1967, she continued her studies at Syracuse University, obtaining her MSc, specializing in communications. Upon graduation, Mrs. Curtin was ordained in 1969. Of the 29 students at Emmanuel she was one of three women.

Step one began at Fairlawn United Church in North Toronto where she worked as Assistant Minister for a year and a half. Called to Hornby, Milton, Mrs. Curtin stayed there for more than three years, leaving as a married woman, with the ceremony being performed in her own church by an imported minister.

Life in the Curtin home, is a merger of the spiritual and temporal as Mrs. Curtin's husband holds an executive position in Toronto.

"I get insights into the business world" explains the minister. "And my husband is active in church work so we have our two minds working together, with our personalities complementing one another. There's no use being heavenly minded if you're not earthly good. Relating religion to life is what it's all about."

With this philosophy in mind, Mrs. Curtin is prepared to work with and for her new congregation.