

# Diocese Presses to Alleviate Migrants' Lot

By John Dash

As migrant laborers continue to enter the diocese to go to work, Albany legislators continue to debate legislation on migrant wages and unemployment insurance as they prepare to close up shop.

On both fronts, the diocese is involved.

Through the New York State Catholic Conference, the diocesan Office of Human Development, and

the position of Father William Spilly at the helm of Rural New York Farmworker Opportunities (RNYFO), and through the diocesan Spanish Apostolate, Rochester Catholics are trying to better the lot of those who seasonally work the fields.

Of immediate concern to both Father Spilly and Tim McGowan of OHD is legislation pending in Albany which would raise the minimum wage for farmworkers under state law from the present \$2 an hour to

\$3.35 over the course of two years.

Father Spilly, chairman of the board of directors of RNYFO, noted that such a bill has been passed in the Assembly and defeated in the Senate for four years running.

McGowan said last week that the measure, despite intensive lobbying by the state Catholic Conference and other groups, remains in a state of limbo for a variety of reasons. He characterized most of those reasons as "political."

days of agricultural labor in any calendar quarter of the preceding calendar year.

"The above results in nearly 20,000 farmworkers in New York State not being protected by federal minimum wage laws. In New York State, the state minimum wage for farmworkers is currently \$2 per hour.

"If the employer is classified as a farm operator, overtime regulations in the federal wage and hour laws do not apply.

"Farm laborers are excluded from coverage under disability benefit laws.

"Unemployment insurance is available to only 25 percent of those farmworkers working in New York State."

That list, a partial one, demonstrates problems which can be remedied legislatively, Father Spilly said.

In addition, a broad range of concerns voiced by farmworkers themselves, in-

cluding upgrading housing, working conditions, transportation, telephone access and emergency services, are addressed in a comprehensive bill (A.412) introduced by Assemblyman Arthur Eve in 1980.

However, Father Spilly observed, there has been no significant movement on the bill.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

## Old Friends And Many Miles

Father Henry Adamski was my splendid assistant for five years in Clyde-Savannah, 1956-1961. By happy coincidence my engagement to celebrate Mass at Elmira Correction Center for Father David Gramke, and his 40th anniversary celebration were on the same day, and St. Casimir's church where the celebration was being held was just down the road from the prison. The Mass was glorious. The dinner at 2 p.m. was full of joy. The chairperson, Anna Kamas, and her committee produced an anniversary brochure and program worthy of a bishop.

When Father Adamski was with me he was a concern because of his speeding: to State Troopers, honest citizens and people who loved him and their children. One day I said: "Father Henry, you drive too fast. You worry people." He grunted: "I'm fast, but I'm a good driver." "Well, do you remember when you hit a horse in Rose village coming back home at night?" His rejoinder was: "The horse had no business being in the road."

Father Adamski had been with Msgr. Joseph V. Curtin in Clyde six years before my coming fresh from the military services in San Antonio, Morocco and El Paso. While my military experiences have been valuable, they were not exactly the best preparation to take over the new apostolate as pastor of a civilian parish. A curial person, with great wisdom, had said: "Men coming out of the service should serve as assistants in a parish for a year or two." At the time I did not believe it. But in retrospect it seems true. Thanks to Father Adamski the parishioners of Clyde and Savannah survived some of the untoward expectations and decisions of their new pastor, for which I will always be grateful.

Father William Cosgrove of Clyde-Savannah had engaged me for a week beginning the same evening of the Elmira day sessions, June 6. So enroute to Clyde I stopped at Father Joseph Gaynor's at St. Charles

Borromeo, E. Elmira. He had succeeded Father Adamski at Clyde. Then on to Watkins Glen to greet Father Andrew Kalafsky. The cheerful Brother Casimir, OPM, who praises God for his 80 years and is still able to serve the parish, welcomed me. "You're just on time. Father Andy is having a dinner for the CCD teachers in the parish hall." Father Kalafsky broadcasts the 11 a.m. Mass from Watkins Glen church every Sunday for a full hour. The air time is paid for through some zealous parishioners. On Sunday morning, April 18, I was returning from the Elmira Eucharistic League 50th anniversary breakfast at Saint Anthony's, Elmira, and tuned in on the Watkins Glen Mass. It was impressive. Father Kalafsky spoke kindly but as a man with authority and conviction. The choir was excellent. And the finale was a bunch of little shrill children who sang a child's hymn gloriously off-key, giving a touching authenticity in this praise of God. Three Sisters in religious habit, the only Filipino Sisters in our diocese, and several parishioners were preparing the dinner. After greeting all I said to Father Kalafsky, "I heard your broadcast of the Mass a month ago and intended to write to say how well impressed I was. So I've stopped to tell you in person." That weekly broadcast reaches even to Binghamton. How often we intend to express our appreciation, but do not. This is a loss. I did not stay for dinner.

About 6 p.m. a stop at Ovid but Father Edwin Wedow was out at a graduation. Then on to Waterloo, where Father Albert Shamon with his contagious energy discussed the currents in the Church including his new book on Confirmation, and his coming July sabbatical with Father Foster Rogers at Louvain University, Belgium. And finally at 10 p.m. I arrived at the rectory in Clyde. Father Cosgrove had left in the afternoon, but retired school teacher, Miss Ann Buckley was holding the fort until my coming. She fixed us some Sanka to celebrate my arrival for a week's mission to Clyde and Savannah, North Rose and Meringo, and to recall old days.

He explained that passage of such a bill is now linked to another bill which would exempt growers from paying unemployment insurance, but that the likely outcome of either measure "is anybody's guess."

Meanwhile, particularly in the Brockport area, the Spanish Apostolate is conducting programs for migrants particularly those from Mexico.

According to Father John Podsiadlo, SJ, the Spanish Apostolate works with the Migrant Education Project of SUNY at Brockport and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church there to serve about 200 migrant workers in the area.

The plight of migrant workers in this area was spelled out in a letter earlier this year from Stuart Mitchell, executive director of RNYFO. That letter, released to the public by Father Spilly, states:

"Farmworkers are excluded from all protections under the National Labor Relations Act. When workers attempt to negotiate better wages, hours or working conditions, through job actions they have no protection from being summarily dismissed by their employer...

"Federal income tax withholdings on behalf of farmworkers is still not a requirement for employers.

"Federal wage and hour laws for farmworkers exclude all those who work on farms with less than 500 people

## Infant Care Course Offered

A course in infant care is being offered to parents expecting their first child, from 7 to 9 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays, July 12-26, at the Rochester/Monroe County Chapter of the American Red Cross, 50 Prince St.

The course, sponsored by Nursing and Health Services, will cover specifics such as bathing and handling and breast versus bottle feeding, as well as information on growth and development in the first year.

Fee for the course is \$10. To register, call Red Cross Registration, 275-9800, ext. 222.

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