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# **Rochester supports sanctuary**

#### By Teresa A. Parsons

To the enthusiastic approval of more than 200 people, Rochester City Council voted 6-2 in favor of naming Rochester "a city of sanctuaries" on Tuesday evening, May 27.

After three hours of emotional arguments on both sides of the issue, the council adopted with one abstention a purely symbolic resolution which supports the actions of the six Rochester sanctuary congregations.

Despite an amendment proposed by Councilman John G. Erb to "put some teeth" into the measure, the resolution does not offer illegal aliens protection from prosecution, nor does it encourage violation of any federal law or interference in lawenforcement efforts.

"I'm not sure offering sanctuary would be something a city could very well do," said Councilman Tim Mains, a co-sponsor of the resolution. "But we don't have to do that, because the people of Rochester already have."

"I believe what we're trying to do is to recognize and support that effort," he added.

The resolution points to Rochester's tradition of providing assistance to persecuted people, as exemplified by the participation of citizens in the underground railroad more than 100 years ago. It also supports the Moakley-DeConcini Bill (H.R. 822 and S. 377), which would provide temporary protection from deportation to Salvadoransalready in the United States, and asks Congress to require non-discriminatory compliance with the Refugee Act of 1980 on the part of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Immigrants, INS officials and lawyers, members of the Rochester Sanctuary Committee and concerned citizens put forth impassioned arguments during the public hearing segment of the council meeting. Public hearings were also held at several previous council meetings.

Several speakers, including a representative of the sanctuary congregation at Temple B'rith Kodesh, likened the deportation of Central American refugees to the plight of Jewish refugees who fled persecution in Germany, only to be returned to Germany by the United States and other countries and die in the Holocaust.

Julie Warner, a member of Lake Avenue Baptist Church, which has also declared sanctuary, visited El Salvador last year. During her trip, she told council members, she saw 300 Salvadorans who had taken refuge for several years inside a church in their own country. "Some of the children had lived their whole lives there," she said.

Many speakers pointed to INS officials' May 23 arrest of sanctuary refugee Alejandro Gomez as an attempt to influence the council's vote. "I am insulted by their disregard for the freedom of our streets," said Suzanne Schnittman.

Others argued that the sanctuary issue does not fall under the jurisdiction of a city council, that the resolution will "undermine the rule of law in the City of Rochester," and that it would spur a flood of illegal aliens into the city under the mistaken impression that they would be safe from prosecution.

"The sanctuary movement is entirely political under a humanitarian fig leaf," charged Jean Newberry, a city resident.

Still other speakers agreed with Councilman Erb that the resolution should be strengthened to make Rochester a sanctuary city. Erb proposed among other amendments that city employees and resources not be used to cooperate with INS investigations and that Mayor Thomas P. Ryan Jr. be asked to support the resolution by executive order.

Speaking on behalf of the board of directors of the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry, Father Michael Bausch favored a stronger resolution. "We have taken a hard look at current United States immigration practices relative to Central American refugees and find them discriminate in the extreme," he said. "We as a church body committed to assisting these refugees will strongly support you in a decision to affirm this resolution for our city."

Rochester joins Ithaca as the second city in the diocese to adopt a sanctuary resolution. Across the country, 20 cities and one state — New Mexico — have also passed sanctuary resolutions.

"None of the resolutions passed by any city purports to violate federal law," said Councilwoman Maxine Childress-Brown, who initiated the Rochester resolution. "But the INS does get the message when such a resolution is passed."

"To offer sanctuary is a very courageous act. To accept sanctuary is also a very courageous act," added Councilwoman Lois Giess. "This resolution is symbolic, but it is a powerful one that recognizes the courage of you who are in the sanctuary movement."

#### Foundation receives grant for rural home repairs

. Thanks to a new grant from the Affordable Housing Corporation (AHC), the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation will offer a new level of emergency home repair assistance this year.

The foundation — which provides housing assistance for low- and moderate-income families and organizations through loans and grants as well as education and advocacy received a \$25,000 grant to be used for repairs on 25 housing units. Statewide, \$23.4 million was awarded for work on more than 3,800 housing units in 28 counties and five boroughs of New York.

Since July, 1985, the foundation has helped 52 families with such requests as plumbing, hot water tanks, electrical systems, roofing and furnace repairs. Previously, grants were limited to a maximum of also be of an emergency nature. Foundation officials are signing contracts now and hope to begin work next month. For information, call (716) 461-4263 or 554-6253.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following appointments, which are effective June 24:

internship to priest internship, Holy Name Church, Greece.

Father Dennis Sewar from priest

Father James Jaeger from deacon



A favorite photograph of mine is one taken of Bernard McQuaid, the first bishop of Rochester, at the turn of the century. In the shot he wears a top hat and a knee-length coat, and sports a healthy head of mid-length, fairly curly white hair. His stance is strong, and his aspect is stern.

I enjoy the photo of McQuaid, not only because it captures something of his character as I understand it, but because it reminds me of our spiritual bonds with him and with our mothers and fathers in faith who established the Diocese of Rochester.

They did a great job, and the task was not an easy one. There were parish communities to be established and schools to be built. There were all of the challenges of integrating a largely immigrant church into a young nation suspicious of and often hostile to its presence.

As is true today, there were questions of Church teaching and policy to be settled. Could we speak with the certainty of faith about the infallibility of the pope when certain very specific conditions were met? And whose concept of Catholic education in our country was the better one: Bishop McQuaid's, which called for selfcontained Catholic schools, or Archbishop Ireland's, which called for collaboration with the public school system of the day?

In those years, — and it's good for us to remember it today — there was a vigorous dialogue between the bishops of the Church in the United States and the Holy See about what accommodation could be made by our community of faith to the culture in which it existed. The questions were not easy. Could one be at the same time a loyal citizen of the United States and a loyal Roman Catholic? What were the ways in which the Catholic community could appropriately relate to other religious groups in a nation in which all religions were free to exist but in which none were established or favored?

These questions of eligious liberty and ecumenism exemplify issues that have been with us for a long time and in which we still need to grow. We have made progress, thanks to the struggles of those who have gone before us. We express true gratitude to them and serve the next generation well if we accept and give the best thought we can to the issues we face today.

Many years ago, in fidelity to what he judged to be his duty as a bishop, McQuaid barred from the sacraments parents who permitted their children to attend the University of Rochester. He did that consistent with his judgment that matriculation at the university would be severely determental to the faith of Catholic students.

That altered cultural circumstances and ongoing reflection on them, in the light of faith, can change theological positions and pastoral pfactice recently came home to me very strongly. That was the occasion of 3 visit to our excellent parish community at the University of Rochester. I had the pleasure of presiding at the Eucharistic liturgy. Celebrating with the community was Dennis O'Brien, the new president of the university, who is a Catholic.

I thought fondly of Bishop McQuaid that day because he had the courage to do what his convictions told him to do, even when that made him unpopular. And I thought with pride of our Church which, ever renewing herself, goes beyond even the decisions of her heroes when the truth leads her in that way. Peace to all.

## Microfilm project preserving parish records

Through a joint venture between Nazareth College and the Genoelogical Society of Utah, the Diocese of Rochester will preserve on microfilm the sacramental records of its oldest parishes. Among the records being duplicated are: registers of baptisms, marriages, confirmations, first Communions and deaths through January 1, 1911.

Nazareth and the Geneological Society of Utah proposed the year-long project to Bishop Matthew H. Clark last year. The Utah society has recently been engaged in duplicating the archives of various religious denominations in the United States and Canada.

Five centralized locations throughout the diocese have been established as sites for microfilming. Eventually, the microfilmed records will be placed in the Nazareth College Library.

"Microfilming our parish rolls is doubly important," according to diocesan archivist, Father Robert F. McNamara. "Thanks to the Nazareth-GSU consortium, we will be able not only to preserve records that are of value to both church and state, but to make them accessible to qualified scholars."



Photographer Arvel Rasmussen (right) measures the light on a parish ledger prior to copying it, as part of the diocesan-wide microfilming project. Röger Adams (left) chairman of the Nazareth College Art Department, and Father Robert F. McNamara, diocesan archivist, supervise the first phase of the program.

\$500, but this year the maximum grant will be \$2,500.

To be eligible, families must live in the rural areas of 13 upstate counties and be classified as low-income. The repairs must

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