

AIDS outreach

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Impressed by the efforts of other dioceses to educate and activate the Church on behalf of AIDS sufferers, Father Michael Bausch, director of the Genesee Valley office, returned from the conference determined to initiate similar actions in Rochester.

His enthusiasm was matched by that of Judith O'Brien, chairwoman of the GVOSM's Catholic Charities Committee. "She picked up on it and right away asked, 'What are we going to do about it?'" Father Bausch said.

"We are just beginning to be aware that this is a need, that there are things we can do, and that the needs will grow," O'Brien said.

Health officials estimate that by 1991, there will be as many as 225 AIDS victims in Rochester. Already, 20 cases of AIDS have been diagnosed in Rochester during the first five months of 1986, as compared to two cases diagnosed in all of 1982.

Those numbers could increase even sooner if Strong Memorial Hospital is designated as an AIDS treatment center by the New York State Department of Health next month.

That would come in addition to a five-year, \$8-million contract to test new drug treatments for AIDS and AIDS-related diseases awarded last June to Strong's Infectious Disease Unit by the National Institute of Health.

Not only are the numbers of AIDS victims growing locally, but incidence of the disease is also spreading beyond the ranks of homosexual men and intravenous drug abusers. And despite public education campaigns about AIDS conducted through television and print media, misunderstandings still persist about how the disease is spread and about what rights AIDS victims have in regard to housing, jobs and medical treatment.

In response, the diocesan Office of Social Ministry offered an educational conference on AIDS to diocesan and parish staff last December.

Then, last spring, members of the GVOSM's Catholic Charities committee began consulting with a group of local people knowledgeable about AIDS to determine what services the Church community could provide.

Consultants included: Father William Lum,

University of Rochester chaplain; Dr. Karen Bell, deputy director of the Monroe County Health Department; Father Daniel Torney, Strong Memorial Hospital chaplain; Dr. Vito Laglia, medical director at St. Mary's Hospital; and Jackie Nudd, executive director of AIDS Rochester.

As the disease spreads, Nudd explained, such support agencies as AIDS Rochester are serving a more diverse population. "We're having a lot more clients with families and children. We need people to interact with them, not on a religious or saving level, but just on the level of relating," she said. "Our program has been targeted to single males . . . but now we're running more and more support groups for families and couples."

Groups like AIDS Rochester also need "non-threatening" sites at which to offer educational programs. "If we have a safe-sex workshop at a gay bar, for instance, no heterosexual or IV-drug user is going to come," she explained. "On the other hand, these people could go very easily to an open education program at another location. Churches are very good, non-threatening locations."

Diocesan social ministry board approves resolution on South Africa

The diocesan board of social ministry has invited the staff and the people of the Diocese of Rochester to use "all their moral and political power to work towards peaceful and just change in South Africa."

Following the lead of the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Southern Africa Bishops' Conference and Anglican prelate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the board has approved a resolution opposing the system of apartheid in South Africa and recommending local and international action designed to bring apartheid to an end. The board accepted the resolution at its September 6 meeting.

In a statement, members said the board will follow the leadership of the Southern African bishops. They also enumerated the following steps the board will undertake "in identifying and challenging any expression of racism within our own country and diocese."

1. Preparing an educational and action packet on apartheid and the situation in South Africa for use by parish social ministry committees.

2. Sending copies of the resolution to federal legislators and expressing to them the

board's support of economic sanctions if significant progress against apartheid has not been seriously undertaken by January, 1987. The board noted that these sanctions should include, but not be limited to: a ban on new commercial investment; the denial of most-favored-nation status; a ban on the importation of South African coal, uranium ore and uranium oxide; and continued prohibition on the importation of South African gold coinage.

"These measures should provide a mechanism for increasing the severity of our actions if necessary and should minimize any potential harm to non-whites in South Africa and neighboring countries," the board stated.

3. Informing the Bishop's Financial Advisory Board of the resolution and asking that the resolution be taken into consideration when voting diocesan proxies for annual corporate meetings and when deciding on future investments.

4. Asking the regional Social Ministry Boards to take appropriate actions regarding the resolution.

"For every two or three bad incidents, there are a multitude of good ones," she said.

Father Bausch and Nudd agree that most leaders of most mainstream churches have rejected the idea that AIDS is a punishment by God. But, Nudd added, leaders of those churches are still needed to speak out against the idea.

"We look to them to take the sting out of the reaction from fundamentalist groups," Nudd said. "We need to get ministers to talk about AIDS from the pulpit, to help take the forbiddingness away from the word and the disease."

So far, the proposed plan has won support from one influential pastor. Bishop Matthew H. Clark has reviewed the draft and complimented the committee's work, Father Bausch said.

Nevertheless, he expects some negative reaction when and if the plan is adopted. "I'm sure there will be particular elements that react negatively, although I hope it will be a small element," Father Bausch said. "We still have our fundamentalists, too!"

5. Providing the copies of the resolution, a related background papers and the May, 1986, statement of the Southern Africa Bishops' Conference to corporate officers of major corporations doing business in South Africa. The board plans to contact corporations within the diocese and those outside the diocese with whom the diocese holds investments and ask them to reconsider the moral implications of their continued presence in South Africa in light of the material provided.

6. Asking Bishop Matthew H. Clark to communicate the prayers and moral support of the diocese to South African Bishop Denis Hurley.

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Premier of 'Movie Nights'

The first of this year's "Movie Nights" at Aquinas is September 19 at the Aquinas Auditorium, 1127 Dewey Ave., Rochester. The film will be "Just One of the Guys." All are welcome for a good time and a good movie.

Aquinas students are admitted free with I.D.; all other students are \$2, adults cost \$2.50 and students under 12 are \$1.

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