

Ministry to youth

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the ages of 13 and 18, meets twice each week. On Friday evenings, they gather from 7 to 9 p.m. in the parish youth center for discussion on a particular topic. On Sundays, Matos directs an all-girl youth choir known as Primavera — a performance other youth group members often attend.

Vatican letter

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"It's not a campaign," Sister Cheryl said. "But when people live honestly the truth of what they are, they hope that will bring a change in the teaching of the Church."

During her years of ministry to the gay and lesbian community, Sister Cheryl said, she has observed positive changes in the attitude of the local Church toward homosexuality.

However, the letter's eventual impact on an already fragile relationship between the Diocese of Rochester and Dignity/Integrity depends on the responses of Bishop Matthew H. Clark and of the nearly two dozen priests who have celebrated Mass with the organization.

Dignity/Integrity members have met with Bishop Clark in the past and have recently asked that he implement a diocesan educational program on homosexuality.

While the bishop told representatives of Dignity/Integrity three years ago that he could not agree with everything the organization stands for, he nevertheless has maintained the diocesan liaison with the group and has expressed his support for Sister Cheryl's ministry.

"I can see how much fear is out there . . . but I would like to see the bishops not support this (the Congregation's letter)," Sister Cheryl said. "He (Bishop Clark) could not allow priests to say Mass (for the Digni-

ty/Integrity chapter) anymore, but I would hope that Matthew Clark wouldn't do that.

Matos' approach to them is straightforward. He doesn't lecture, but tries to help kids sort out their own feelings and find their own answers to problems. "I tell them 'I'm going to listen to you, but that doesn't mean I'll agree with you. I'll tell you if I think you're wrong,'" he said. "Sometimes it's hard to tell a kid he's

My hope is that those priests who have prayed, have broken bread with, have ministered to and talked with these people would not turn their backs on them."

Personally, Sister Cheryl believes that the document will only make her ministry as the chaplain to Dignity/Integrity deeper and fuller.

She plans to meet with Dignity/Integrity members this week to discuss the Vatican letter.

"I know that they will pray," she said. "I know that they will want to meet with Bishop Clark to see what he'll do. And I know they will not want to respond in any violent manner . . . They are very kind and forgiving people."

As of Monday, November 3, neither Bishop Clark nor any other U.S. bishop had received an official copy of the Congregation's letter, according to sources at National Catholic News Service. The National Catholic Conference of Bishops (NCCB) office in Washington, which is usually responsible for duplicating and distributing such documents to the nation's bishops, had only received a copy on Friday.

According to Father Paul Tomasso, a spokesman for Bishop Clark, the bishop will ask Sister Mary Hilaire Gaeleens, diocesan director of special pastoral ministries, and Father John Firpo, director of social ministry, to study the document when it arrives.

wrong, but they've understood it . . . So far, I haven't had one kid come to me and say 'You screwed up my life.'

"The best thing I've accomplished so far is having kids realize that Church is a place they can find help and trust," Matos added. "My goal is to see that kids around here have something to live for."

The urban subsidy grants that fund youth ministers at Immaculate Conception and St. Michael's have been allocated by the diocesan Division of Urban Ministry since 1983.

Established in 1975, the subsidy program was a response to the collapse of the Council of Inner-City Parishes and the closing of inner-city schools, including St. Michael's, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and others.

To maintain the Church's commitment to the inner-city and to support the growth of new forms of ministry in the city's 28 urban parishes, the diocese began allocating \$200,000 annually to urban ministry. The fund was originally administered by Monsignor George Cocuzzi, then diocesan vicar for urban ministry.

"The whole idea was to stimulate new approaches to old problems," Monsignor Cocuzzi recalled. "Most of the time, it was a matter of trying to ease a parish's transition out of one kind of ministry and into another, of trying to get people to look at their own parish resources and at new ways of responding in ministry."

Approximately one-third of the diocesan fund was given to the Division of Education for tuition subsidies to inner-city Catholic school parents.

A small percentage of the fund was set aside for emergency grants to city parishes. The rest was distributed among urban parish programs. Currently, urban parishes are sent grant ap-

plications in November. In December, parish representatives are invited to a workshop explaining the process. Completed applications are due February 1, and awards are announced the following month.

Grants this year ranged in size from \$15,000 to \$1,000. In addition to youth ministry, this year's grants supported social ministry positions at St. Augustine's and Our Lady of Mount Carmel; religious education staff at St. Michael's and St. Anthony's; outreach programs at Assisi House and the House of Mercy; a cross-cultural language and ministry program for those who work with the Hispanic community, and the Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry, among others.

While the program's goals have remained consistent, the amount of money it has had to work with has steadily dwindled from an initial \$200,000 to \$100,000 in 1983 and not quite \$90,000 this year.

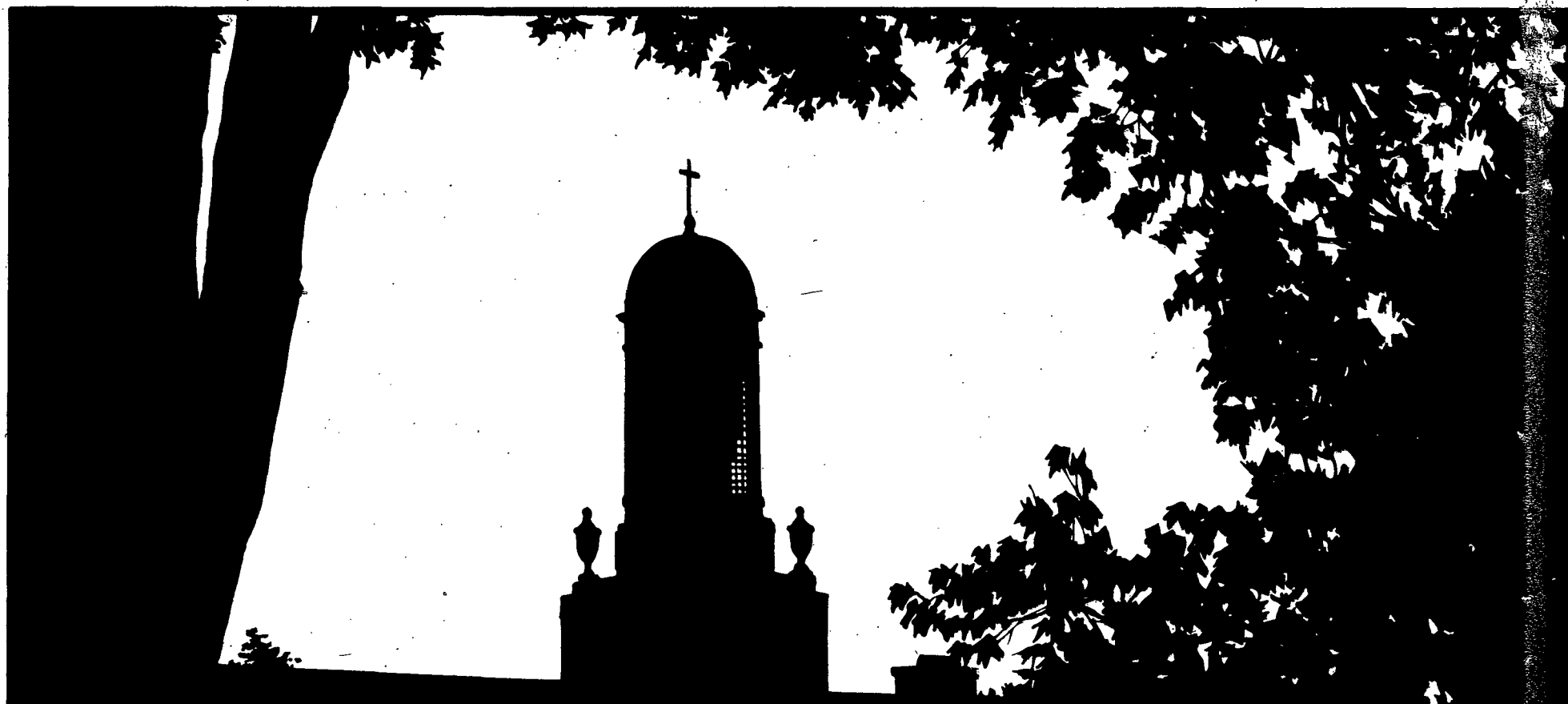
According to the program's current administrator and associate director of urban services, Rebecca Gifford, the reason is simple — budget cuts.

On the other hand, the costs for other areas of urban ministry have continued to rise.

"One of the things we're really committed to is sustaining programs that have already begun, that have a history," Gifford said. "On the other hand, we don't want to create such a dependency that a parish can't get by on its own . . . or that we're not able to fund new, creative programs."

Whether or not the division can balance current commitments with the need for expansion depends on the outcome of the Thanksgiving Appeal, which provides all of the urban subsidy program's funds.

"The city has its own special challenges and opportunities," Gifford said. "Unfortunately, the way things are, some aren't able to be realized."



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