



Dental dilemma

Every other Tuesday, a Rochester dentist confronts sacrifice and risk as he overrides the economic barrier between the working poor and dental care. See page 5.



Fitting finish

DeSales lost its regular season finale against Dundee last week, marking a fitting ending to an up-and-down hoop campaign for the Saints. See page 10.

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World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

'Positive vision' presented

Vatican City — The Second Vatican Council presented a "clearly positive vision" of the lay vocation, said Pope John Paul II. The laity shares an equal dignity with priests and religious as members of the people of God, despite a "diversity of roles," the pope said. The pope spoke Feb. 22 as part of his Sunday noontime Angelus series of talks on the October world Synod of Bishops. The synod will discuss the role of the laity in the Church and the world.

Knights' generosity praised

Vatican City — Pope John Paul II has praised the Knights of Columbus for their generosity in sponsoring a major facelift of St. Peter's Basilica. After two years of intense work, the pope said, the front of the basilica "has been returned to its ancient splendor." He said the repairs on the 17th-century facade had been urgently needed. The pope spoke Feb. 23 at a Vatican ceremony marking the conclusion of the project to clean and patch the marble front of the church and its giant outdoor statues, which had been damaged by pollution.

Nation

Supreme Court declines case

Washington — The U.S. Supreme Court declined Feb. 23 to consider the case of a Minnesota law requiring consent of both parents or a judge before a girl under the age of 18 can get an abortion. As usual, the high court provided no reason for its refusal. The court had been asked to consider the case, even though it has not yet been heard by a federal appeals court. In December, the Supreme Court had refused to grant expedited treatment of the same case, after being asked to merge the case with that of an Illinois parental-notification law pending before the high court.

Diocese 'tables' media request

Washington — The Diocese of Monterey, Calif., has "tabled" its request that television stations bid for rights to live coverage of a Mass to be celebrated by Pope John Paul II, diocesan spokesman Ted Elisee said Feb. 20. He said the diocese has not dropped the plan, but told media representatives in a statement Feb. 19 that the idea was being tabled and asked them for their input on how to raise money to cover costs of the papal visit. The request for bids came under heavy fire from officials at television stations, most of whom said they would not pay for news.

Archbishop clarifies opposition

Miami — The Church's opposition to condom advertising has nothing to do with its position on contraceptives, but rather with the issue of sexual activity outside of marriage, said Archbishop Edward A. McCarthy of Miami. In a Feb. 17 statement he said even condom advertising "done in so-called 'good taste' conveys an unacceptable message — namely, that extramarital sexual activity is just good, clean fun, but not worth risking death." Condom advertising has been approved for late-night broadcasts in several local television markets, including Miami, as a means of curbing the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.



TEAMWORK - Participants in the Cephas Attica program pair off to renovate Spirit House, a therapeutic community for women religious. For story and more photos, see page 6.

Task force to initiate study of homelessness

Parish contributions help to fill gaps in funding

By Teresa A. Parsons

Last Thursday evening, a priest walked into the emergency overnight shelter at Blessed Sacrament Church and asked a volunteer if she needed anything.

Having just arranged to lodge an extra female guest at a downtown hotel for the night, the volunteer answered, more than half in jest, "One hundred dollars would be nice for a couple more hotel rooms."

The priest returned several minutes later with two \$50 bills, which he tucked into the hand of the speechless woman before he left.

That kind of generosity has become almost commonplace in the five years since a network of Catholic parishes in Rochester opened shelters for homeless people during the winter months.

The same Monroe County pastors, parishes and religious groups that support those shelters with donations and volunteers are also largely responsible for a long-awaited study of homelessness in Rochester, which is expected to begin this week.

These long-term supporters have not provided the bulk of the \$15,000 needed to fund the study, which is being sponsored by the Mental Health Association Task Force on the Homeless. But they have bridged a critical gap between the study's estimated cost and the response from local government, corporations and foundations.

Last April, the Mental Health Association convened a task force to talk about homelessness. Represented were the city and county governments, public and private social-service agencies, the parish shelter network and a diocesan urban-ministry group.

Task force discussions pointed to the need for a study that would inform the community of new trends, and motivate community agencies to develop more comprehensive and permanent solutions to the problems of people living on the streets.

In July, 1986, the Center for Governmental Research submitted a study proposal to the task force. Through interviews with homeless people as well as city officials, landlords, and those who run shelter and meal programs, researchers hope to compile a profile of Rochester's homeless population, and its current and emerging needs. The center will also examine existing services for

the homeless, to determine how well such services address those needs.

Before they would begin the study, however, administrators at the Center for Governmental Research requested that at least \$10,000 be committed to the project.

To date, Monroe County social-service officials have indicated that they will con-

Continued on Page 13

Shelters' population is changing

The people who live out in the cold are a hotter topic than ever this winter.

Homelessness has turned up as the subject of television movies, network news reports and public policy forums all over the country during the past year.

As a sign of the times, Rochester's five-year-old parish shelter was one of 11 programs chosen from throughout the state to receive the Elcano Roosevelt Community Service Award, presented on behalf of Governor Mario Cuomo last December.

Due perhaps to publicity from a variety of sources, the shelters at Blessed Sacrament, Corpus Christi and St. Bridget's, which house in total up to 33 homeless men and women each night between November and April, have attracted dozens of new volunteers, particularly since the beginning of 1987.

But judging from the observations of shelter coordinators, Rochester's homeless population appears to be growing and changing at an equally rapid rate, as a new generation of people has begun to show up on the city's streets.

Between November 16 and February 20, Blessed Sacrament's shelter on the city's east side housed more than 80 different individuals, as compared to 108 from November to April of last year.

On any given night, as many as 10 or 15 extra men and women are turning up

for meals at Blessed Sacrament — a situation that's taxing the resources and imagination of volunteers who cook for guests at both Blessed Sacrament and St. Bridget's.

Many of those homeless men and women are younger than 20 years of age. Although the majority are not seeking shelter beds, coordinators are not convinced that they have homes to which they can return.

The number of women Blessed Sacrament will have served by the end of this season in April is also likely to have increased dramatically over last year. So far this winter, more than 20 women have sought shelter at the church, as opposed to 25 throughout last year's entire season.

Coordinators at St. Bridget's have noticed more blacks and younger men among their guests than in past years, and fewer alcoholics who are middle-aged or older.

"The old standbys just are not there," observed Father Bob Werth of St. Bridget's. "We haven't seen as many of the chronic homeless people this year."

All three church shelters, however, have remained at or over capacity since shortly after they opened.

"We seem to have had to violate our ceiling-of-10 rule quite a bit this year," Father Werth said.