



Seeking refuge

Last week, eight Salvadorans arrested as illegal aliens risked their freedom to plead for an end to deportation and military aid for El Salvador. See page 3.



Bridging the gap

From his hybrid perspective as a geneticist and theologian, Father Matthew Temple offers insight into the Vatican's bioethics document. See page 7.

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World & Nation in Brief from NC News

World

Clergymen talk with pope

Vatican City — Pastoral issues facing the American Church were the subject of a series of mid-March meetings among 20 leading U.S. churchmen, Pope John Paul II and other high Vatican officials. A Vatican spokesman said the series is "part of a process" which could lead to a "much more substantial meeting" involving American Church and Vatican officials.

"The issues are those connected with the papal visit, but they are pastoral not technical issues. The topics are whatever the bishops want to talk about — without hiding anything," Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said March 18.

Nation

Archdiocese filing appeal

New York — The Archdiocese of New York announced March 19 that it was appealing a U.S. district court decision that mandates a new system of foster care in New York City. The move delays the archdiocese's pending decision on withdrawing from the city's foster-care system.

The appeal stems from U.S. District Judge Robert J. Ward's October ruling in a religious-discrimination suit the American Civil Liberties Union had brought against the city of New York.

Under the settlement arranged by Judge Ward, foster-care agencies signing contracts with the city in the fiscal year that begins July 18 would be required to provide clients with "meaningful access" to contraception and abortion, and to avoid displays of "excessive" religious symbols.

Teens asked to 'choose life'

Bergenfield, N.J. — During the funeral Mass for two of the four New Jersey teenagers who committed suicide together March 11, a priest urged young people to "choose life."

The four Bergenfield teens — Cheryl Burrell, 18; her sister Lisa, 17; Thomas Olton, 18; and Thomas Rizzo, 19 — killed themselves together in an idling car that was parked in a locked garage.

At the March 14 funeral Mass for the two sisters at St. Joseph's Church in Oradell, N.J., Father Thomas Iwanowski urged others to "choose life" and said that suicide "only causes more pain and suffering in the world. The pain and grief we're feeling now is proof of that."

Archbishop bans practice

Detroit — In a Lenten pastoral letter on penance, Archbishop Edmund Szoka of Detroit has declared that conditions for general absolution do not exist in his archdiocese.

Parishes holding sacramental communal-penance services must provide in advance for enough priests to hear confessions individually, he said.

"Even if more persons than expected come to the (communal-penance) service, general absolution is not to be used," Archbishop Szoka wrote.

Lay people send pre-synod signals to Rome

Southern Tier speakers advocate expanded roles for women in Church

By Teresa A. Parsons

More than 30 people from across the Southern Tier convened in Elmira last week to begin diocesan preparations for the World Synod of Bishops later this year. Although the gathering was billed as a listening session, most people came to speak their minds.

Participants called for equal recognition of women as people of God. They discussed education and encouragement of lay people to prepare them for leadership in their churches. They also asked the Church's hierarchy for understanding and openness.

"Does Rome really want the synod on the laity?" wondered Michael Stanley of St. Catherine of Siena in Ithaca. "Do they really want to hear our input? Are they going to do anything with it?"

Rome has indeed asked for widespread consultation of lay people around the world, in preparation for October's worldwide synod, which will focus on the role and mission of the laity.

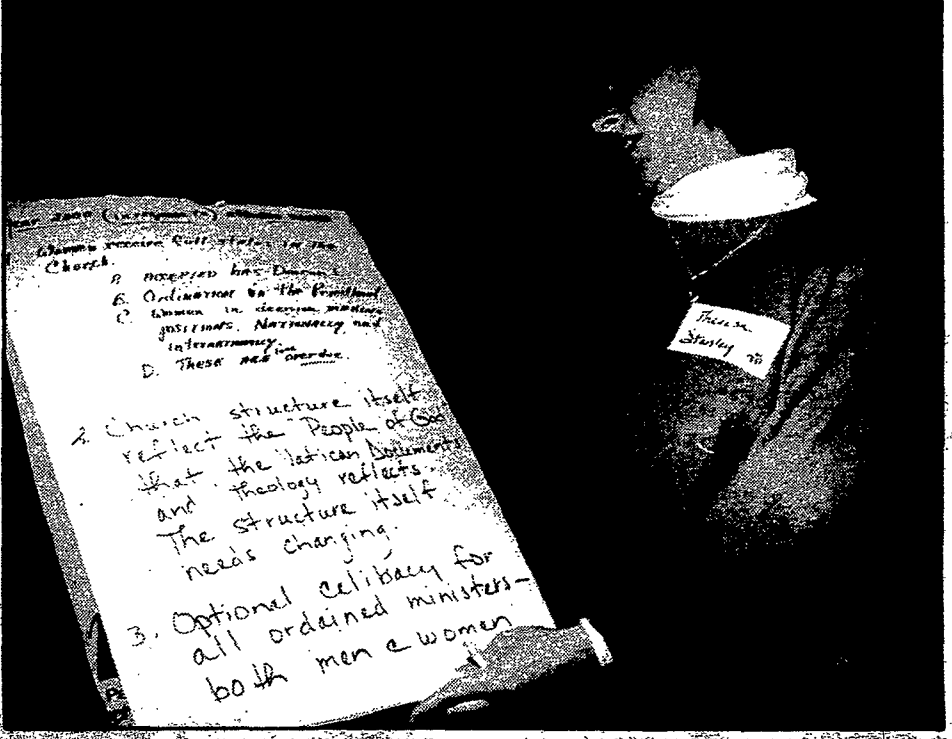
In response, officials in the Diocese of Rochester have scheduled three listening sessions — one in each region of the diocese. The aim of the sessions is to collect lay people's thoughts and reflections about their parish communities, their experiences of God and spirituality, and their visions for the future.

Organized by Deacon Claude Lester, diocesan director of parish services, the sessions revolve around four questions proposed for individual reflection and small-group discussion.

"We're not going to answer any of these questions," Lester explained to the initial group. "This is really an occasion for you to search your own mind and heart, to write some things down and share your reflections ... What we're really trying to be is good listeners to and for each other."

The people who came to St. Casimir's Parish for the first listening session on Wednesday evening, March 18, were from Corning, Elmira, Ithaca and Horseheads. They represented diverse age groups and occupations. But the messages they asked their delegates to take to Rome were surprisingly similar.

Most favored a broader role for women in the Church. Expressing her group's unanimous opinion, Theresa Stanley, a parishioner at St. Catherine of Siena, said that the Church's structure must change to reflect all



Theresa Stanley of St. Catherine of Siena, Ithaca, speaks for her group about its discussions on the projected role of the laity in the year 2000. The tablet she is holding expresses the group's common ideas.

of the people of God.

"We want women as priests and as deaconesses. We want to see them in decision-making positions, both nationally and internationally," she said.

Stanley and the other members of her small group also supported optional celibacy for male and female clergy.

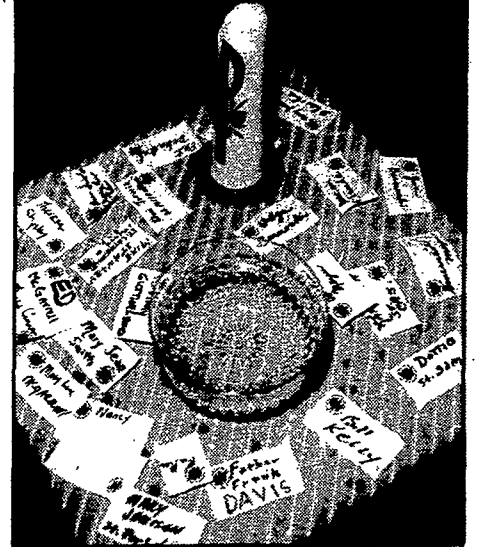
"We would like this to be effective yesterday," Stanley added. "We don't want to wait until the year 2000."

Margaret Driscoll, another member of St. Catherine's in Ithaca, agreed that the Church would profit by recognizing that women have a special sensitivity to others and are generally more willing to listen than men.

"I would hope that the special gifts of women would be recognized," she said. "I think women should be given more of a share in ministry."

Because the number of priests is diminishing, most participants agreed that lay people will have to soon assume greater responsibility in their parishes. In the meantime, dioceses should be preparing them through education and training.

"We need a laity that's going to serve ... and an awareness that each person is the Church," said Genevieve Mezur, a parish-



After the listening session, participants were asked to bless themselves and leave their name tags on the makeshift altar.

ioner at St. Casimir. Pastors should now be warning parishioners of future realities, according to Driscoll. Continued on Page 6

Courier-Journal wins New York Press Association honors

The Courier-Journal won eight awards at the New York Press Association's annual Better Newspaper Contest, held March 20-22 at the Marriott in Albany. The NYPA, a statewide association of weekly newspapers, presented the awards for journalistic excellence, in recognition of entries published during 1986.

The C-J was awarded two first-place plaques, for photographic excellence and best special section cover. In their comments on the diocesan paper's entries in the photographic excellence category, the judges cited "excellent photos displayed and cropped extremely well, strong local emphasis, good quality and well-explained captions."

Two special section covers — both of which were illustrated with photographs taken by C-J photo editor Jeff Goulding for last year's wedding and education supplements — were displayed at the conference after the awards presentations.

Goulding was also awarded a second-place certificate in the NYPA Photographer of the Year competition, and won a second-place award for best spot-news photo and a third-place award for best sports feature photo.

Associate editor Emily Morrison won a third-place certificate for special coverage of the arts, for a story about the National Dance Company of Senegal. In addition, Goulding and sports writer Richard Kiley

shared third-place honors for sports coverage in Division IV, the largest circulation category represented in the contest.

The Courier-Journal also received an honorable mention for best use of color on the front page of the 1986 Christmas edition.

The NYPA recognized weekly newspapers for excellence in such categories as news, features, in-depth and investigative reporting, humorous writing, editorials, advertising, promotion, graphic design and photography, as well as coverage of education, local government, business, health, science, agriculture, the arts, the environment and sports.

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