

Features

Basilians to celebrate 50 years in Rochester

A liturgy of thanksgiving marking the 50th anniversary of the formal coming of the Basilian Fathers to the Diocese of Rochester will be celebrated Sunday, Nov. 8, at 3 p.m. at Christ the King Church, 445 Kings Highway, Irondequoit. Bishop Matthew H. Clark will preside at the liturgy.

Father Ulysse Pare, CSB, superior general of the Basilian Order will concelebrate the Mass. Other principal concelebrants will be Father Joseph Trovato, CSB, the order's eastern US regional representative; Father Donald McCarthy, CSB, pastor of Christ the King; Father Dennis Noelke, CSB, superior of the Basilian Fathers of Aquinas; and Father Norm Tanck, CSB, superior of the Basilian Fathers at St. John Fisher College.

In addition, Basilian Fathers presently working at Aquinas, Christ the King and St. John Fisher, as well as Basilians who formerly served in these institutions, will participate. This gathering of Basilians is expected to be one of the largest ever. They will be joined in the celebration by diocesan priests.

The Basilians are a teaching order founded

in 1822 at Annonay, France. Basilian priests arrived in North America in 1850, and can now be found in France, Canada, the United States, Mexico and, most recently, Columbia. Basilians staff and administer a number of high schools and colleges, serve as chaplains, administer some parishes, such as Christ the King, and assist in others.

Basilians first served in Rochester between 1927 and 1932, teaching at Aquinas Institute. At that time, Aquinas was growing rapidly and was constantly in need of additional staff, according to Fr. Robert F. McNamara, diocesan archivist. To resolve the staffing problem, Archbishop Edward A. Mooney, then bishop of Rochester, invited the Basilians to take over the administration and staffing of the school. They assumed control in 1937.

Martin Moll, who graduated from Aquinas in 1938, said the presence of the Basilians in the school was felt immediately.

"Teach me goodness, discipline and knowledge' is the motto of the order, and that philosophy was visible to the students from the

moment they arrived," Moll said. "They believed in developing the entire person, body, mind and spirit. They also believed in getting close to the students and serving them in any way in terms of the whole person. A lot of camaraderie developed, and over the years they've touched thousands of lives in this diocese."

The order strengthened its ties to Rochester in 1948, establishing St. John Fisher College. Basilians assumed the administration of Christ the King parish in 1976. They continue to assist in a number of other parishes.

"The Basilians are committed to the Diocese of Rochester and the work of the diocese," explained Fr. Dennis Noelke, CSB. "Our commitment includes not only Aquinas, St. John Fisher and Christ the King, but however else we can serve the diocese."

A reception will follow the liturgy in Christ the King Church hall. The public is invited to both the liturgy and the reception.

For further information, call Fr. Richard C. Kinsky, CSB, at (716) 647-2990.



St. Basil the Great

Welfare

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also required to enroll in an experimental system known as Medicap — through which, recipients asserted, medical care was almost inaccessible.

EMPOWER tackled the telephone problem by organizing welfare recipients to testify before the Human Services Commission of the Monroe County Legislature during a public forum. Those without telephones related how neighbors, churches and social-service agencies refused to allow them to tie up their telephones. Those with phones brought in bills illustrat-

ing the cost of repeated attempts to call DSS. Others told of using laundry and grocery money on pay phones, only to be repeatedly cut off.

"The level of courtesy and respect on the phones improved immediately," Ingram recalled. Last April, the Department of Social Services installed a new telephone system that allows recipients to call their caseworkers directly.

In fact, EMPOWER members have witnessed action on all three of their original objectives. Housing allowances in Monroe County will increase between 32 and 57 percent in January, 1988, and Medicap has since been abandoned.

Whether or not those victories were a direct result of EMPOWER's advocacy, they have triggered a rise in the self-esteem of members. The same has been true of those individual recipients whom EMPOWER has helped. "Some people will call and say, 'Here's my problem. Now you take care of it,'" Pitts explained. "We say, 'No, here's what you do. Go take care of as many steps as you can, and when you run into a brick wall, we'll help you!'"

Not all the battles EMPOWER undertakes are as sweeping as housing allowances or Medicap. Currently, members are trying to persuade county social-service officials to provide receipts for papers and documents left at the welfare office's front desk — a time-saving

procedure caseworkers often recommend.

EMPOWER is also advocating an increase in the amount of basic public assistance grants, and targeting caseworkers who fail to keep appointments or who send recipients on repeated "scavenger hunts" to discourage them from applying for assistance.

Above all, EMPOWER members want to reach more of their counterparts on welfare who are still too frightened, ashamed or uninformed to assert their rights. "Most of the people who call us are the ones who already know their rights," Pitts said. "We're hoping to get more people to understand that they have rights, that even though they're on welfare they don't have to be treated like third-class citizens."

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