

et cetera



Before his arrest for disorderly conduct last Friday, David Van Waes described life in the abandoned subway bed he called home for a year.

the homeless study and the city's willingness to rezone property for the project that converted Mount Carmel School into apartments for low- to moderate-income families.

In addition, Privett pointed out that the county, not the city, funds human-service operations in Rochester. County government has not done much for the homeless in the past, he said, but even that is changing. The county convened 15 social-service agencies — including Catholic Charities — to prepare a grant proposal for a \$600,000 project to work with mentally disturbed homeless individuals. The proposal was submitted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation last week. County officials have agreed to assist with the project once funding is approved.

Privett also expressed reservations about last Friday's demonstration. "My preference would be that we sit down and develop a plan for the future with representatives from the city," he said.

But he acknowledged that the protest might draw needed attention to the issue. "We need to develop a sense of impatience in this community in dealing with this issue," he said. "Sometimes the community needs someone to stand up and draw attention. We're talking about peoples' lives."

Sister Marjory Henninger, who has been involved with the shelter network since its creation seven years ago, was even more blunt in expressing reservations about the protest. She questioned its timing, noting that the "middle steps of meeting with the city and discussing

the problem" had been neglected. Sister Henninger, the pastoral assistant at Corpus Christi Parish, also pointed out that while the city had not always been openly supportive of shelter efforts, it had shown signs of cooperation lately.

One such sign is the allocation of federal funds the shelter network hopes to receive through the city's help (see C-J November 19: "Emergency shelters face long-term future"). "We're beginning to see signs of hope now," she concluded. Because of these signs — and the absence of prior discussions with the city — the directors of Corpus Christi's homeless program chose not to officially endorse the protest. At the same time, however, Sister Henninger said she hoped the protest would focus public attention on the needs of the homeless in Rochester.

Affleck acknowledged that the protest was controversial, describing it as "an experiment" and "a weak attempt to communicate our sense of urgency on this issue." Shelter organizers began talking about a city shelter five years ago, he observed, and "after five years it's still talk. It's important that the dialogue continue. It's also time to send a signal that's stronger."

"We chose to start (the campaign) on the traditional day to begin Christmas shopping because we want to reclaim the meaning of Christmas," Affleck explained. "Christmas is the celebration of the birth of the homeless Messiah. If he came now, he wouldn't sleep in a manger. He'd sleep where (Rochester's) poor have to sleep — in the subway."

Protestors

Continued from Page 1

principle with the idea of a municipal shelter, Erb said he would have to see a concrete proposal before making any decisions.

City Councilwoman Joan Hensler, in an interview on WXXI AM 1370, disagreed with Erb's contention that the city has done little for the poor and homeless. She cited aid given to the Salvation Army, the Volunteers of America and Sojourner House. She also pointed out that the city paid a third of the cost of a study of Rochester's homeless, which was conducted for the Mental Health Association by the Center for Governmental Research earlier this year.

Hensler said the study indicated that a sufficient number of beds are available for Rochester's homeless, but that they are not be-

ing used. "The answer isn't putting money into shelters," she argued. "It's to find out why the shelters aren't being used and to provide services to help get people back in the mainstream of life."

Hensler concluded that the city has provided and will continue to provide assistance to the homeless, even though it has no legal responsibility to do so.

William H. Privett, director of Catholic Charities for the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry and a convener of the Parish Emergency Shelter Network, confirmed that no formal proposals for creating a permanent shelter had been submitted to the city council. "We have had informal conversations with the city at a staff level," he said, "but nothing formal has been done at this point."

When the shelter network has gone to the city in the past, however, Privett noted, "the city has been helpful." He cited as examples

Radio show focuses on black Catholic life

Thanks to a nationally syndicated program, radio listeners in the Rochester area will now have a chance to learn more about the Black Catholic community.

"This Far By Faith: The Black Catholic Chapel of the Air," a half-hour weekly program, will air for the first time Sunday, Nov. 29, at 4 p.m. on WSWG-1460 AM.

Sponsored by the Diocese of Rochester's Office of Black Ministries through the Division of Urban Services, "This Far By Faith" features celebrations of the liturgy, readings and homilies by Black bishops, priests and deacons as well as songs by Black Catholic gospel choirs from around the country. A portion of the show will be hosted

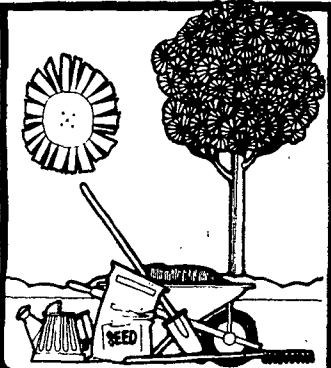
by Jacquelyn Dobson, director of the diocesan Office of Black Ministries. The nationwide program is produced by the Black Catholic Televangelization Network and the Archdiocese of Detroit.

"We are very excited about 'This Far By Faith' because it will offer the audience...the valuable opportunity to see what is going on today inside the Black Catholic community," Dobson said. "We hope the program will change some old stereotypes of the Catholic Church in the Black community."

The producers are also hoping to change perceptions by offering a new and vital image of Black Catholicism, Father Clarence Williams, CPPS, said.

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Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

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