

### Haven for the homeless

The long-awaited study of homelessness in Rochester and Monroe County provides a few surprises on the nature and numbers of those seeking shelter. See page 3.

### Ice-cool icemen

With a team made up of mostly underclassmen, Aquinas Institute won the Section 5 hockey title with a resounding 6-3 win over Batavia at the War Memorial. See page 9.

# COURIER-JOURNAL

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## Bishop Clark issues pastoral instruction on AIDS

By Lee Strong

Declaring that "today we recognize the suffering of Christ in those who have AIDS and the grief of the families and friends of those who have AIDS," Bishop Matthew H. Clark issued a 12-page pastoral instruction on the AIDS crisis Tuesday, March 1.

The document, entitled *The Lord Himself Taught Me To Have Compassion*, "is intended to give fundamental direction to our local Church as we address the moral and theological issues around AIDS and educate ourselves and others about the disease and its prevention," Bishop Clark said in presenting the document.

The pastoral instruction was prepared by a consultation group convened last April by the Division of Social Ministry. At a press conference announcing the release of the document, Bishop Clark explained that the group was formed because diocesan personnel working in parishes, hospitals, prisons and with young people were increasingly aware of the growing AIDS crisis and the suffering that accompanies it. "Awareness of the human struggle of so many people of our region led us to do this," he said.

Additional motivation for forming diocesan consultative group was provided by the release last April of the Rochester Area Task Force on AIDS' study, *AIDS Action Plan: Five-Year Agenda for Rochester and the Finger Lakes Region*. The group was formed in part to study the task force's report and to decide what areas the diocese could address, Bishop Clark said.

The consultation group included Marguerite Dynski, SSJ, a physician at Rochester General Hospital; Evelyn Kirst, assistant superintendent for curriculum of the diocesan Division of Education; Sister Dawn Nothwehr, OSF, education coordinator in the diocesan Division of Social Ministry; Sister Marilyn Pray, SSJ, chairwoman of the theology department at Nazareth Academy; Sister Patricia Scholles, SSJ, a moral theologian at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore; and Carol Williams, R.N., of the Infectious Disease Clinic at Strong Memorial Hospital.

At the press conference, Bishop Clark said that "following in the footsteps of the suffering Christ, the Church seeks to express God's unconditional love and care to all whose lives are torn by the pain of AIDS." He noted that Pope John-Paul II, during his recent visit to the United States, called for Catholic health-care providers to "show the compassion of Christ and His Church" to all those affected by AIDS.

Bishop Clark further noted that the Administrative Board of the United States Catholic Conference, in its December 11, 1987, document *The Many Faces of AIDS: A Gospel Response*, encouraged each diocese in the United States to clarify its own policies



Many dioceses throughout the nation are taking steps to deal with the AIDS crisis. One example is the Farano Center in Albany, where Mercy sisters care for six babies diagnosed as having AIDS.

with respect to AIDS and to give guidance to their particular local churches.

In light of these precedents, Bishop Clark said, he chose to issue his own pastoral instruction addressing the topic at this time.

The document is divided into nine major sections. The introduction, Bishop Clark said, recognizes "the fact that the many issues of the AIDS crisis will affect each of us and that we must be prepared to respond as we believe Christ would respond."

The following three sections — entitled "Our Tradition," "Our Call" and "God's Love" — focus on the motivation for this response and the sources that will give insights about the manner of response.

"Centering on God's unconditional love and the tradition of the Church, we recognize that we are called to conversion from fears and prejudices, and to respond to the needs of all who suffer from AIDS, AIDS Related Complex or HIV infection with unconditional love, generosity and compassion," Bishop Clark explained at the press conference.

"God's Love" and the following section, "Sin, Disease, Community," confront the belief that AIDS is a punishment from God. In speaking about these sections, Bishop Clark noted that "the teaching, life and ministry of Jesus indicate that God does not punish the people through illness." He added that "the reason for illness is beyond our understanding."

During the press conference, Bishop Clark acknowledged that although no cure for AIDS currently exists, the disease — like other serious illnesses or the imminence of death — can be a source of healing. "The occasion of serious illness and death can also be the time for reconciliation of relationships within oneself, and between family, acquaintances and God," he said.

The closing sections of the document call for diocesan action in six specific areas. Parishes are asked to pray for and support AIDS patients; to offer education for parishioners that provides basic information about



At Albany's Farano Center, eight-month-old Tony receives loving attention. The Diocese of Rochester, meanwhile, plans to offer special support to pregnant women who have been exposed to the HIV virus.

the disease; to work with local health authorities; and to organize a pool of volunteers trained in the particular skills needed to provide support for people with AIDS and their families.

The document calls the local church to support people with special needs, citing in particular: those who have been alienated from the Church; those who have AIDS; pregnant women who have tested HIV-positive; prisoners; and intravenous drug users.

According to the document, the local

church's responses will include family and pregnancy counseling; hospice care; and support for increased private and public funding of major programs to create drug-treatment clinics, and provide counseling and support services for intravenous drug users.

The Diocese of Rochester will train its ministers to provide care to people affected by AIDS, and will not deny the sacraments of Christian burial to those with the disease, the document states.

In addition, each regional coordinator is

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