

Features

Arts festival contributing to interfaith understanding

By Sharon McDaniel

"Call to Praise: A Festival of Religious Arts" continues this week, hosted by St. Bernard's Institute and Colgate Rochester Divinity School. The festival, which opened April 6, runs through Saturday, with workshops, concerts, lectures, liturgies and exhibits all showcasing the rich diversity of the arts and the ways in which they enhance worship.

"The arts festival allows us to show how the arts play a special part in the harmonious whole," said Jura Litchfield, St. Bernard's director of development and public relations. "We're unique in the Northeast in that a number of different religious denominations worship together daily in a creative way. A festival of religious arts expresses this whole."

Guitarist and composer Marty Haugen will give a guitar concert at 8 p.m. Friday, April 15, and a day-long workshop for area musicians on Saturday, April 16. The events are co-sponsored by the Diocese of Rochester's Office of Liturgy. Admission for the concert is \$5 for adults and \$3.50 for children and senior citizens. Registration fee for the workshop is \$10.

Not all of the festival's events are taking place on the divinity school campus. For example, the St. Bernard's Juried Art Show, an ongoing exhibit of 39 pieces of religious art, is on display in the Ward Gallery of Sibley's, downtown. The exhibit includes photography, calligraphy, oil painting and collages. "Visitors are surprised by the Sibley's show," Litchfield notes. "Instead of a traditional religious art exhibit, it is a show broadly based on Christian and Jewish themes, balanced with humor, fresh images and unusual interpretations." The artwork will remain on display through Saturday, April 16, and most of the pieces are for sale.

Visitors to the campus can view 16 large liturgical tapestries that have been borrowed

from area churches and synagogues and are now hanging in the auditorium. "They create a sense of festivity by their sheer size and bright colors, and show the care that goes into decorating churches," Litchfield remarks. The exhibit was coordinated by Father Robert Bourcy of St. John the Evangelist Church, Greece, who scoured the region in search of interesting tapestries in all media, from batik and needlepoint to one work that follows the style of an Early-American quilt.

In the Ambrose Swasey Library Catalogue Room, meanwhile, a variety of Jewish artifacts are on display. The items come from the personal collection of Rabbi Abraham Karp, whose special interest covers historical and traditional art for home and the synagogue. "Rabbi Karp's exhibit is very unusual," Litchfield said. "It adds to the sense of an open-house on campus."

Concluding the festival will be Rochester performances of "The Raising of Lazarus," a medieval mystery play performed in music, mask and mime. The joint production of the Genesee Early Music Guild and the MIMeworkshop, under artistic directors Dana Maiben and Eliot Fintushel, will take place at 8 p.m. on Saturday, April 23, and 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 24, at Calvary St. Andrew's Church, 95 Averill Ave. Tickets — \$7 for adults, \$5 for students and senior citizens — may be purchased at the door or at Village Green Bookstore and Recorded Classics at the Village Gate/Square.

Litchfield observed that the festival's strong components add to a sense of sharing within the Rochester community. Through the festival, she said, "People can pay attention to their own traditions and remain open to others'. And we are demonstrating to the clergy how worship can be inspired through the power of creativity and art."



Martha, portrayed by Mitzie Collins (left) and Mary Magdalene played by Colleen Liggett, grieve over the body of Lazarus (Eliot Fintushel) in the production of "The Raising of Lazarus."



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