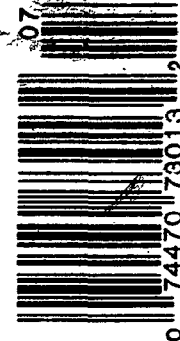


CATHOLIC COURIER

Celebrating Our 100th Year

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Look inside for special wedding section

For help in planning a wedding to last a lifetime, see the Catholic Courier's wedding supplement, beginning after page 8.

Activists fear return of NYS death penalty

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The death penalty refuses to die in New York state.

On Monday, Feb. 13, the state senate voted 39 to 17 to reinstate the death penalty in New York, and the assembly is expected to follow suit within a week. Governor Mario Cuomo is expected to veto the bill, as he and former Governor Hugh Carey have done for 12 years running.

The senate will then, in all probability, vote to override the veto for the 13th consecutive time, while the assembly is likely to fall short of the 100 votes necessary to override, as has happened each previous year.

But death penalty opponents are growing nervous. In 1985, the assembly fell eight votes short of an override. In 1988, the gap narrowed to just four votes. As a result of last November's election, opponents predict the vote this year may be as close as two votes — too close, they say, for comfort.

"There are some members of the the assembly who say they do have the votes (to override the governor's veto)," said Kathleen Gallagher, legislative associate for the New York State Catholic Conference. "The conference feels they will not make it — they have 98 or 99 votes — but they are closer than ever before."

Clare Regan is less optimistic.

"It's really hard to tell," said Regan, a member of the Judicial Process Commission in Rochester. She cited as key factors in the shrinking margin changes in the assembly due to last November's elections and growing support of capital punishment among New York City representatives because of the recent killing of a New York City police officer. "The general feeling is if a cop were killed between now and the override vote, the override would pass," she said.

Concerned about the potential closeness of the vote, the state Catholic conference included the death penalty in its Critical Issues Day, Jan. 31. More than 300 conference personnel and representatives of the state's eight dioceses met with legislators in Albany to discuss such targeted issues as the death penalty, public assistance grant increases, school asbestos aid and parental consent for abortions.

In addition, the conference's latest newsletter, which is mailed to approximately 10,000 individuals, parishes and diocesan offices, focuses entirely on the death penalty and the U.S. Catholic Church's opposition to its reinstatement. The U.S. Catholic Conference, for example, rejected capital punishment in statements issued in 1974, 1977 and 1980.

Meanwhile, the Diocese of Rochester has already begun to prepare for the override vote expected some time this spring. During the Critical Issues Day, diocesan representatives met with local legislators, including the senate bill's sponsor, Senator Dale Volker, who represents parts of Livingston and Ontario counties.

Justice and peace directors of the diocese's three regional social ministry offices

may revive parish case study groups — organized to focus on the issue of abortion — to study capital punishment, according to Father John Firpo, director of the diocesan Division of Social Ministry.

To focus attention on the death penalty issue, diocesan officials are also considering sending speakers to parishes, providing bulletin inserts and information packets for homilists, and calling upon parish social ministry committees to set up and staff information tables and circulate petitions. Parishioners will also be urged to write letters to their legislative representatives.

According to Sister Dawn Nothwehr, OSF, education coordinator for the Division of Social Ministry, the goal of these efforts is to inform people that the U.S. bishops have rejected capital punishment, and to explain their reasons for doing so. This rejection is based on several beliefs, she noted. The bishops hold that all human life is sacred; that the death penalty in this country has been unfairly administered along racial and economic lines, that possibilities exist for mistakes, and that its deterrence value is questionable.

Sister Nothwehr acknowledged that many Catholics disagree with the bishops because of what she described as "myths" about the death penalty. Chief among these myths, she said, are assumptions that the death penalty deters murder and that executing criminals is cheaper than keeping them incarcerated for life.

FBI statistics from 1976-86, however, show that states where executions are permitted had a murder rate of 108 killings for every million people, while states that did not permit executions had a comparable

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Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier

Lashondra Harris, a first-grader at St. Monica's School, Rochester, sings with her school's children's gospel choir, during a performance Friday, Feb. 10, at Guardian Angels School in Henrietta.

DPC studies diocesan budget reforms

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

SHORTSVILLE — The Diocese of Rochester has adopted a new system of budgeting that will force diocesan departments and divisions to evaluate program effectiveness and cost, and will affect the way Thanks Giving Appeal goals are set. The new system was announced at the Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting at St. Dominic's, Shortsville, on Saturday, Feb. 11.

As it was outlined to DPC members by Father John Mulligan, moderator of the Pastoral Center, the system may also lead to the elimination or consolidation of some programs and positions, and a process for staffing review and merit-pay increases.

Meanwhile, a budget committee that will report to the Diocesan Finance Council has been created to review budgets submitted by the diocese's eight divisions. This committee replaces the Ministerial Review Committee, a subcommittee of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, which formerly reviewed the diocesan budget.

In explaining the new budgeting system, Father Mulligan told DPC members that Bishop Matthew H. Clark had requested the development of a streamlined, briefer budgeting process for the diocese. The process was to be designed to allow greater

consultation of such bodies as the DPC and the Priests' Council in order to receive input before the budget is developed. In previous years, the DPC learned about the budget only after it had already been completed.

To achieve this goal, Father Mulligan assembled a Task Force for Budget Revision, which evaluated the former budgeting process, and found a number of weaknesses in the procedure.

Under the old system, 436 separate programs submitted budget requests, making the budgeting process cumbersome, Father Mulligan noted. Little or no attempt was made to evaluate whether these programs were effective, had completed their assigned tasks, or were duplicating services offered by other programs.

Meanwhile, budgetary increases were based not on need, but on increments dictated largely by salary increases. Thus little money was available for expanding programs or developing new ones. Increases, in turn, were controlled by the Thanks Giving Appeal goal and not tied strictly to the actual financial needs of the diocese.

"Our funding drove our budget," Father Mulligan explained.

Under the new system, programs with budgets under \$10,000 will be combined in

an effort to streamline the budgeting process. In the 1989/90 budget, for example, the number of programs submitting budget requests has been reduced from 436 to between 100 and 200. The eventual goal, Father Mulligan said, is to reduce the number to approximately 100.

Rather than simply submitting program budgets, departments, and then divisions, must develop a list of prioritized objectives. Using the list as a guide, each division's budget will be based on which programs meet these objectives, and how much money each program needs. In the process, unmet needs or objectives might be discovered, and new programs proposed. In addition, department or division heads may be forced to eliminate or reduce some programs because other programs need to be created or will require more money to meet their objectives.

The divisions will submit their budgets to the Budget Committee, headed by Father Mulligan. This committee will prioritize diocesan goals and financial needs, submitting the resultant budget to the Finance Council for approval. Final approval of the budget will be made by Bishop Clark.

The diocesan budget developed through

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