

Parish staff members seek meeting with bishop

By Richard A. Kiley
Staff writer

Some members of the ministerial staff at a Brockport parish, unhappy with the Rochester Episcopal bishop's stance on abortion, will request a face-to-face meeting with him.

Katie Fechter, director of religious education at Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Brockport, and two other members of the staff decided to seek the meeting with Bishop William G. Burrill after the entire staff held a meeting Monday night, April 11.

Fechter wrote to the Episcopal bishop of Rochester in late February after a dozen Episcopal clergy — including Bishop Burrill — joined the Rochester chapter of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, publicly stating their support for a woman's right to choose abortion.

She was troubled by statements made by Bishop Burrill in light of a covenant he signed last May with Bishop Matthew H. Clark. The covenant called for the two dioceses to move toward a closer understanding through dialogue and prayer.

Bishop Burrill wrote back to Fechter, stating that "it is a rare circumstance in which abortion is the morally correct choice, but I also believe we must protect individual conscience.

"It is quite incorrect to suggest that if I support individual conscience I am promoting or supporting abortion," he added.

Fechter said she and her colleagues were not entirely satisfied with the bishop's response. "As we went through his answer, there were statements he referred to as truths that were really not truths. We dis-

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Bishop William Burrill



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**Katie Fechter
Nativity staff member**

agree with some of the statements he made," she said.

In his letter to Fechter, Bishop Burrill wrote that he believes "pro-life and pro-choice are both truths that must be upheld." He also enclosed the statement on childbirth and abortion passed by the last Episcopal General Convention. Fechter called the statement "nebulous."

"He's not really taking a stance; he skirted the issue," Fechter said. "Truths don't oppose each other."

Fechter's letter was signed by five other members of Nativity's ministerial staff: Father Roy J. Kiggins, pastor; Deacon James H. Gillett, parish deacon intern, and his wife, Dolores; Sister Margaret Mancuso, school principal; and Sister Helen Goschke, pastoral assistant.

Although Fechter said that all six staff members support the idea of meeting with Bishop Burrill, "only three will take it further and meet with him."

Fechter quoted one member of Nativity's staff, whom she would not identify, as

According to Lennox, this year's campaign goal of \$34.5 million, represents a 7.4 percent increase over the 1988 goal, and is the largest amount ever attempted nationwide by a United Way of Rochester's size.

Looming state and federal budget deficits currently threaten many area non-profit agencies, Lennox said, noting that increased community need was another prime reason for this year's higher goal.

Corporate and individual contributions slightly in excess of \$5.5 million, or 16 percent of the goal, have already been raised, Lennox said.

The United Way campaign continues through May 10. Those wishing to contribute may do so by calling the United Way at 716/454-2770.

United Way kicks off ambitious fund drive

Bishop Matthew H. Clark was one of several speakers at a luncheon Thursday, March 23, kicking off the United Way of Greater Rochester's most ambitious campaign in its 71-year history.



During the luncheon, which was attended by more than 1,100 volunteers, Donald D. Lennox, 1989 general campaign chairman, challenged the community to get involved.

"The only way we will be successful is by increasing the number of people who give and volunteer," Lennox said. "The best way to do that is simply by asking."

St. John Fisher raises tuition, begins drive

Tuition for full-time undergraduate students at St. John Fisher College will increase by 9.25 percent, the administration has announced. Tuition for the 1989-90 academic year beginning in September will increase from the current rate of \$7,030 to \$7,680.

The cost of room and board will increase from \$3,630 to \$4,020, bringing the combined cost of tuition, room and board to \$11,700, an increase of 9.76 percent.

New initiatives to enhance academic programs and college life, as well as higher costs for utilities and insurance, are the main reasons tuition is increasing, according to President William Pickett. He added, however, that the school will reduce

the impact of the tuition hike on students and their families by increasing scholarship and grants money by 15 percent.

The college has begun the public phase of a \$7.5 million capital campaign. Funds from the campaign will be used to finish reconstruction of the Lavery Library, renovate Ward-Haffey dorms and establish an honors program at the college.

The campaign, the first by the college in 12 years, has already netted approximately \$5.3 million from trustees, alumni and area businesses and foundations. Organizers hope to raise the additional \$2.2 million by Dec. 31, 1989.

For more information about the campaign, call Miriam Shapiro, St. John Fisher's director of development, at 716/385-8426.

Sister to celebrate jubilee

Sister Clare Stoe, religious education director at St. Joseph's Parish, Rush, will celebrate 25 years as a School Sister of Notre Dame on Saturday, April 22. The celebration will begin with a noon Mass at Holy Ghost Church, 220 Coldwater Rd. Following the Mass, a reception will be held in the school hall.

Anyone interested in helping with the reception, please contact either Ann Enright at 716/247-3905 or Kathy Murrer at 247-3661.

Camp needs workers

Cancer Action, a United Way agency, is seeking volunteers to work at Camp Open Arms for one or more days between July 10 and 21. All volunteers must be at least 16 years old.

Camp Open Arms is a two-week day camp for children with cancer and related blood diseases, and their siblings aged 3-15. The camp is held at Cobles Elementary School in Penfield daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Call 716/423-9700, or write Cancer Action, Inc., 255 Alexander St., Rochester, N.Y., 14607, to apply.

Thursday, April 13, 1989

saying that Bishop Burrill's statements regarding the issue of abortion "would affect (that staff member's) working relationship to some extent" with the local Episcopal church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Brockport.

She added, however, that the two parishes will continue to plan a jointly sponsored forum on aging, and will hold future discussions about sharing youth ministries.

Certain public statements on abortion by Bishop Burrill — some of which Fechter read in the Jan. 21 issue of the *Democrat and Chronicle* — could have "a lot of repercussions" on the ongoing covenant relationship between Rochester's Roman Catholic and Episcopal dioceses, she said.

One immediate result of the covenant was for churches in both dioceses to begin praying "for our bishops, Matthew and William, and for each other" during the liturgical Prayers of the Faithful.

Fechter said that, in the spirit of the covenant, Nativity parishioners "will pray for local Episcopalians" rather than Bishop Burrill himself.

"We don't want to isolate him (Bishop Burrill)," she explained, "but there still are very strong feelings about his response."

She added that "something good could come out of this whole situation" if Bishop Burrill "decides to take a stance.

"If he's interviewed again in a news-

paper, he can do some teaching to his people," Fechter said. "Most of what he's saying in his letter is his personal opinion. I wonder why he's so hesitant to shepherd his flock."

Bishop Burrill did write about his position on abortion in his column in the Lenten issue of *The Chronicle*, a publication of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Rochester. The Episcopal ordinary, who has two adopted children, wrote that "I consider myself both pro-life and pro-choice. I believe that abortion is rarely the best answer for a given situation.

"I also deeply believe that the woman must make the decision and I believe that as Christians it is our task to assist in the formation of a world which supports them in this moral decision-making with education and compassion," he continued.

Several times, Bishop Burrill also urged better education of youth and care for women and children to "radically reduce the number of abortions and at the same time radically improve the moral decision-making of the people of this nation.

"It is my deep conviction that the woman, supported by the responsible man, if possible, must make the final decision. The fetus is within her body and its future is her responsibility," the bishop wrote. "I will, as her pastor, support her whatever her decision may be."



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