

# AIDS

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Continuing Education in sponsoring workshops on Bishop Clark's pastoral letter.

In Elmira, the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry is preparing to submit to New York state a funding proposal that would call for the establishment of a home for people with AIDS. The facility would be operated by the social ministry office.

"We're not aware of similar projects like this funded in the state right now," said Anthony Barbaro, executive director of the Southern Tier office. Barbaro expressed confidence that the state would

eventually fund the proposal, which he said will be submitted in the next few months.

The Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry, meanwhile, provides such emergency assistance as food, clothing and shelter to AIDS victims, according to Meg Byrne, director of Finger Lakes Catholic Charities, which operates under social ministry's auspices. Rochester's Catholic Family Center and the Southern Tier office provide similar services when requested, according to officials in both agencies.

Meanwhile, a house owned by Corpus Christi Parish is slated to open as a home for pregnant mothers with AIDS, according to Mary Anne Ramerman, pastoral assistant. Three women and one child will be

able to live in the home at a time, Ramerman said, noting that the parish is keeping the house's location secret to protect the women's privacy.

A handful of other parishes have hosted educational workshops on AIDS, Sister Heverin said, but she asserted that parishes could do much more. "I would like to see every parish council study (Bishop Clark's) pastoral and use it as criteria to evaluate how they have responded," she said.

Catholics must respond to people with AIDS because AIDS patients so often are judged negatively by others, according to Alice Robeson, director of the Hemophilia Center in Rochester and a community health educator who has spoken on AIDS at a number of Catholic parishes.

A Catholic herself, Robeson noted that she has struggled to reconcile church pronouncements on AIDS with her own feelings. "I work with a lot of people who (have AIDS)," she said. "My sense is that

often those who are involved in proclaiming church teaching have not informed their teaching by listening to the pain of the people about this."

Robeson added, however, people with AIDS most often suffer rejection at the hands of their families and friends, not from church ministers. Paul echoed her sentiments, commending Bishop Clark for setting a compassionate tone towards AIDS victims in the diocese, but bemoaning individual stories of Catholic AIDS victims suffering from ostracization.

"I know many people who have literally been thrown out of their house because they told their families that they were gay or had AIDS," he recalled.

Education about AIDS is the primary tool in piercing the ignorance that clouds so many Catholics' minds, Sister Heverin said.

"The only weapon we have to fight this disease is education," she said. "It needs to happen now, not when people come to us in need."

# DPC

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made the problems of the poor more complex, he said.

Consequently, Deacon Graff said, the training that deacons originally received has now become inadequate. As part of a process of evaluating the diaconate program, he said, the diocese had surveyed a number of groups, including deacons, deacons' wives, and parishioners in parishes to which one of the diocese's 70 active deacons is assigned.

DPC members had been asked to respond to a survey on deacons prior to the meeting, and the results of that survey were used to create four questions for small-group discussions at the meeting. These questions focused on recruiting more deacon candidates, the changing role of deacons in the diocese, changes in the diaconate program, and ways of improving the preaching of both deacons and priests.

In terms of changes already made to the diaconal program, Deacon Graff noted that deacons must now complete master's degrees in theology as part of their training, put a greater emphasis on spirituality and spend more time in collaborative ministry.

In addition, he said, deacons will be required to take more courses to prepare them for preaching, and the diocese will spend more time and effort on interviewing and meeting with wives of deacon candidates and of current deacons.

DPC members were also told that the task force writing a status report on family ministry in the diocese was scheduled to release the report in December. The report is expected to look at which family needs are being met by diocesan services, which needs are not being met, and ways to improve services for families.

A set of questions was distributed to DPC members to help prepare them for a discussion of the report at the Jan. 13 meeting of the council.

# Council

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organize ourselves and to conduct ourselves in a way that is responsible and flexible in response to the changing needs of our times.

"As Catholics," Gill continued, "we recognize the critical role the church plays not only in our personal lives, but also in the fabric of our total community. With the skills and experience represented on this broad-based new council, I hope and believe we can assure the continuing vitality and effectiveness of the diocese into the future."

Members of the council are: Joseph Bell; Francis Benedict; Rose Marie Beston; Carl Carballeda; Thomas E. Clement; Angelo Costanza; Father Peter A. Deckman; Thomas R. Frey; Susan Holliday; Father Charles J. Latus; Sister Elizabeth Anne LeValley, SSJ; Jesu (Jay) Marrero; Father James J. Marvin; Sister Ann Miller, RSM; Judith O'Brien; William Pickett; James Ryan; Barbara Stokes; Frank Stotz; Robert Tarnow; Robert Turrissini; Robert Wegman; Bishop Matthew H. Clark; and Father John Mulligan.

Mark Seeborg, diocesan development director, will serve as president.

— Lee Strong

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