

Priests' sabbaticals bring blessings, not expenses

To the editor:

The gentleman writing about priests' sabbaticals (CC: March 8) is to be commended; he raises an issue and opens a door to matters needing clarification. The diocesan sabbatical program has three objectives: spiritual, intellectual, and physical enrichment and upgrading. Now, let's look at who pays for what and why.

Every penny of a priest's traveling expenses to Rome, Jerusalem, or wherever, is paid by the priest himself. Moreover, how he chooses to spend his relatively small salary ought to be a purely private prerogative — certainly outside the arena of criticism when in worthy intent. Thus it must never be thought or implied that his traveling expenses are paid by the diocese or his parish.

When a physician is able to save an eye, leg or life because he has invested time, effort and money to become skilled in the latest postgraduate research, he's rightly applauded. Similarly, priests who travel to Rome, Jerusalem, or wherever to study Vatican-approved biblical or theological

matters will also bring home blessings and benefits to their people.

But who pays for the tuition in these biblical and/or theological schools? Does the priest pay for his tuition also? No. His salary is simply inadequate. He needs help. But the money definitely does not come from any diocesan annual appeals, drives, etc. Nor from the priest's parish! It's money from an outside source of diocesan funding which helps the priest in this.

As I write these lines, I reflect upon the six parishes where I have relieved priests on sabbatical. What's the thinking, the feeling, of the people in the pews in these parishes where their pastor is away on sabbatical? In my three-and-a-half years in this substituting I have never even once heard anyone complain that their pastor was pursuing this enrichment program. Contrariwise, they anticipate their pastor shall return in a better capacity than ever. And this is exactly what happens.

Lastly, referring to the gentleman's letter about sabbaticals vs. clergy shortage, the program can do more to alleviate the shortage than to worsen it. Recalling the threefold objectives, the sabbatical program becomes a type of holistic input to the priesthood. Beyond the spiritual and intellectual enrichment to the priest, the "relaxation response" through change of pace cannot be discounted among assets assisting longevity.

Dr. Paul Dudley White, M.D., renowned cardiologist and personal physician to several presidents, said, "Body, mind and spirit are so totally interwoven, that whatever helps any one of the three helps the other two simultaneously." J. Webster gives us the bottom line, "Gold that buys health can never be ill spent."

Father Robert Klee
administrator
St. Andrew's, Rochester

SSJs celebrate chapter in Brazil

To the editor:

We write this from Brazil as we finish the first regional chapter of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester in Brazil. You who have been so generous in supporting us will be happy to know that the 12 sisters from Rochester with our four Brazilian members, Suzette and Sisters Rubia, Joana, and Ireney, continue to be committed to our work among the people in Brazil. Sister Joana Alves Mendes renewed her vows while we were gathered for the chapter. Suzette Torres de Carvalho will soon become a novice in our novitiate house in Goiania. Sister Sue Wills will be living and working with the Myky tribe in the northwest corner of the state of Mato Grasso, a new area of ministry for our sisters. Others continue in pastoral and health works and in service at the diocesan level.

In addition to our walking with and working in mutuality with the people of Brazil in building the Church and a society of justice and compassion, we desire to continue and strengthen the bonds of support and care with the people of our Rochester Diocese. Father Bradler has recently sent us a check for our mission from the generous donations you made at the time of the Latin American Mission Appeal. We are most grateful for this and assure you of our prayers. We wish that all of you could visit us to know our people by name and to understand the mission that you help.

Sr. Elizabeth Anne LeValley
superior general
Sr. Katherine Popwich
regional coordinator

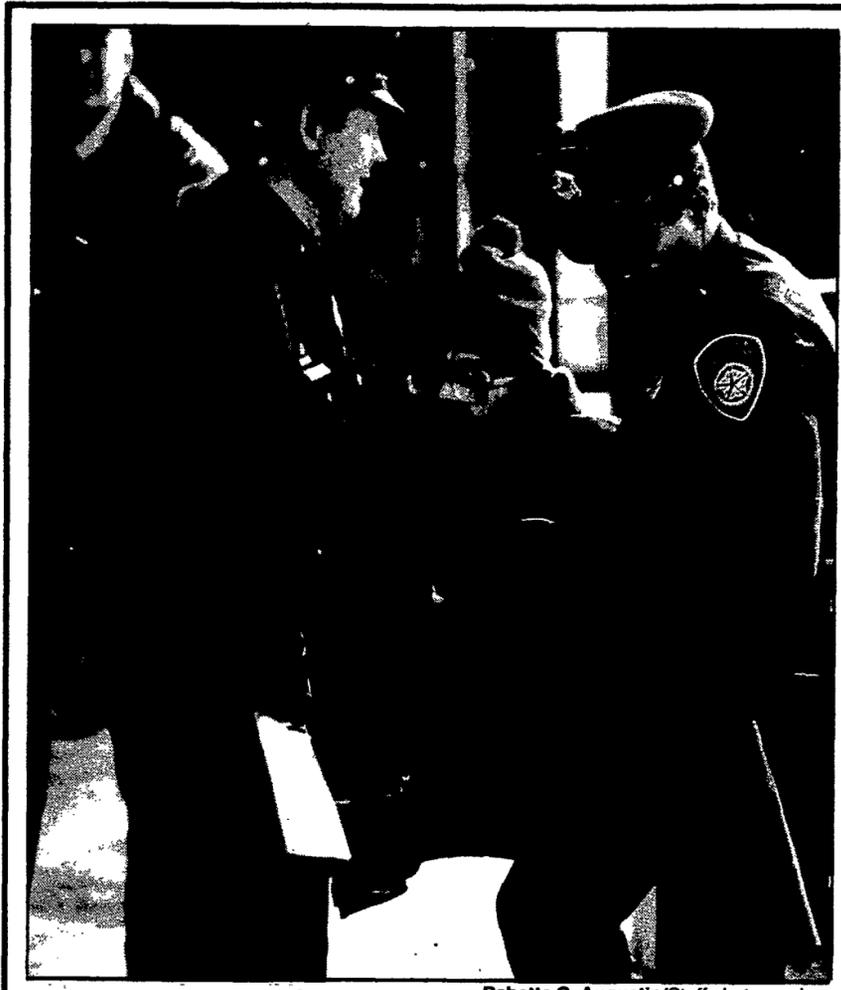
More clerics should lead against abortion

To the editor:

I applaud your daring in printing Father David Mura's letter in your Jan. 25, 1990, issue. I feel the time has come to hear from the clerical leadership within our communities on the issue of Abortion. The Catholic theological understanding on abortion would be a good starting point and from there expand upon the theological pastoral ramifications as they affect the Catholic population. It seems to me that the clerical leadership has for the most part, been silent on this issue. ...

I hope it will not be necessary to wait until 24,000,000 more infants are killed before we free ourselves from our intellectual, theological and spiritual pusillanimity regarding abortion and its effects upon society and the church.

Daniel Slattery
Wayland



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Rochester police carry Father Anthony Mugavero away from an abortion protest last December at the offices of Dr. David Gandell.

Rescues gain attention, not lives

To the editor:

I would like to respond to your March 1 story on Operation Rescue tactics.

Judge John Manning Regan compared "rescuers" with civil rights activists. The analogy is questionable. Civil rights activists didn't block anyone from health care. Just the opposite, they peacefully protested the fact that blacks were being denied access to services (as well as voting booths) from people who had very strong convictions about blacks.

Father Mugavero made an analogy to civil rights activist Rosa Parks riding on a bus. Ms. Parks asserted her denied rights. She didn't obstruct anyone from seeking health care or anything else.

Carol Crossed gets to the bottom of it. "If people aren't angry, then what you are doing doesn't really matter." Operation Rescue has been a great success because it's got a lot of people very angry. Getting people angry, clogging up courts, and getting media attention are what these "rescues" are all about.

"Saving lives" has a lot of appeal, but it is a lie. Abortions are voluntary or occasionally medically necessary. No one is forced to have one. "Rescues" don't prevent any abortions, they just delay them. After all the rescues in Monroe County and

in the United States there are no fewer abortions. Maybe a few anecdotes.

Let's say, if after many "rescues," one out of 1,000 women was not to have an abortion. Let's look at the consequences: 999 women would have delayed, more dangerous abortions. If 100 had significant complications such as bleeding, uterus perforation or infection, are those inconveniences? If 1,000 other women who were not seeking abortions were inadvertently denied access to health care and five had undetected ectopic pregnancies that went on to rupture, five had serious infections that went on to abscesses, etc., are those inconveniences?

Ms. Crossed is seriously misinformed when she compares the consequences of women blocked from health care with administrators blocked from their desks at nuclear power stations. In the latter case, administrators can take the day off.

It's time to stop, listen, and dialogue.

Dr. Eric Schaff
Crossman Terrace
Rochester

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Schaff is a pro-choice activist taking part in a dialogue with diocesan officials regarding anti-abortion rescue missions.

What used to be soft porn has become sports

To the editor:

Our community is always outraged when we hear about women being attacked and raped. It is one of the fastest growing crimes in America today. However, we seem so lax and passive when it comes to allowing material that encourages such deviant behavior. It has become acceptable, for instance, for an 11- or 12-year-old boy to purchase the new *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue that portrays women more as sex objects and meat products than athletes and human beings. Some may disagree, claiming violation of their First Amendment rights, but these same individuals would hardly consider letting their mother, wife or daughter live near one of our adult bookstores.

A generation ago, we might have referred to these so-called swimsuits as "soft pornography," but today it's "sports." A

generation ago, what many would have called adultery and fornication are today "safe sex." And finally, what used to be called abortion is now called "choice." It's certainly important today to keep our water and air pure and clean: However, let's not forget about the pollution and filth that immorality increasingly dumps into the minds and souls of our young people via magazines, television, videos and movies. The above may sound somewhat old-fashioned and outdated, but who would have thought 20 years ago that in 1990 we would have an epidemic of incurable, sexually transmitted diseases, 2,000 rapes a day, 180 abortions an hour, etc. Perhaps in another 20 years, if our morals continue to deteriorate, we ourselves will become an endangered species. God forgive us!

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