



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer. Anna Freund, right, was among approximately 26 pro-choice demonstrators who marched July 24 in front of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester.

Pro-life network meeting draws pro-choice activist

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Rachel Studer, chairwoman of Greater Rochester Catholics for Choice, wanted to attend a pro-life network meeting last week, and Kathleen Machi, chairwoman of the Catholic Family Center's Task Force on Abortion, decided to comply.

"I have a personal bias toward wanting to pull people together around the issue of what can we do to help pregnant women in need," Machi said, explaining her decision to invite Studer.

The pro-choice activist had asked Machi if she could attend the meeting Tuesday, July 24, at Sacred Heart Cathedral of more than 50 parish pro-life representatives from Monroe and Livingston counties.

"I was very grateful that I was invited," Studer said, asserting that there is a large "middle ground" of Catholics who are neither strongly pro-choice nor strongly pro-life.

Studer said she attended the pro-life meeting to see if she could find a way "to communicate to the people in the parishes," and noted she is considering asking Bishop Matthew H. Clark to engage in a dialogue on abortion with diocesan Catholics.

As a model for such a discussion, she pointed to the recently concluded series of "listening sessions" on abortion between Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland of Milwaukee and Catholic women.

While Studer listened to the pro-lifers

participating in the meeting, about 26 pro-choice protesters demonstrated in front of the church. As the pro-life representatives arrived in groups of two and threes, they were greeted by the sight of demonstrators carrying signs with such slogans as "A 4-celled embryo is not a baby, nor is it a fetus," and "Bishop Clark is wrong in supporting blocking health care."

The pro-choice demonstrators were met after a while with a counter-protest from a pro-life couple carrying a sign reading "Abortion kills a baby every 20 seconds" on one side, and "The ultimate child abuse is abortion" on the other side.

Pointing to the pro-choice demonstrators, Ramon Sanchez of Greece said he and his wife, Mary Ellen, were "not so much here to counter-protest them, but to let the Catholic community know as a ... member of the greater Rochester Christian community, we're here to encourage them on their stance for the unborn."

Sanchez said he was a member of the congregation of New Testament Christian Church.

The pro-choice contingent said no single group was the official sponsor of their demonstration, but some of the demonstrators said that they were affiliated with such groups as Metro-Act, the National Organization for Women, Catholics for Free Choice and the Pro-Choice Action Committee.

"We strongly support a woman's right
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Benefactor pays off priest's fine

BRIGHTON — Father Anthony Mugavero returned to Brighton Town Court on Monday evening, July 30, determined not to pay a statutory surcharge on his last harassment conviction, but somebody paid the surcharge for him anyway.

Judge James E. Morris told the parochial vicar of St. Theodore's in Gates and his lawyer, John J. LaDuca, that somebody had sent the court a check for \$27, the sum of the surcharge.

The signature on the check was illegible, but it listed an East Main Street address in Rochester, and the check was issued from Anchor Savings Bank in Rochester.

Father Mugavero had refused to pay the surcharge because he has maintained his innocence of the charges for which he was convicted. The priest served 10 days in county jail for harassing a Monroe County jail inmate and her counselor who were going to a local doctor's office last January, where the inmate was scheduled for an

abortion.

Father Mugavero has stated that he was only speaking to the inmate in an attempt to dissuade her from having the abortion — a statement she corroborated at the priest's April trial. However, the counselor testified that the priest had verbally and physically harassed her and the inmate.

LaDuca has filed a motion to vacate the conviction, maintaining that the inmate was not properly subpoenaed to the trial, but was brought there illegally by Brighton police. The attorney also said that the prosecution never informed him that the inmate didn't want to testify against Father Mugavero.

According to LaDuca, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that should the prosecution discover information that would be beneficial to a defendant's case, the prosecution must disclose the information to the defendant.

But Steve Wickmark, the district at-
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Diocesan grant to pay grad school tuition

ROCHESTER — More than two years ago, Bishop Matthew H. Clark told participants at Diocesan Ministry Day that "we must explore the needs of our individual faith communities and prepare for addressing those needs with competent and compassionate leaders."

Two years later, the diocese plans to follow through on that exploration by providing tuition assistance to such non-ordained parish ministers as religious-education coordinators and youth ministers pursuing graduate studies.

According to guidelines issued earlier this month, the diocese would ideally provide 25 percent of a graduate student's tuition, with the remaining 75 percent divided equally between the student, his or her parish and the graduate institution.

The guidelines note, however, that the diocese might provide as much as one-third of a student's tuition, adding that the percentage would change depending on the number of grants made in a particular year.

The guidelines give diocesan officials discretion in granting awards because some parishes are subsidized by the diocese and

may be unable to provide 25 percent of an applicant's tuition, noted Judith Ann Kollar, chairwoman of the tuition assistance committee and director of the diocesan Office of Continuing Education.

The tuition assistance guidelines stipulate the following requirements for tuition-assistance applicants:

- Applicants must maintain "B" or 3.0 averages in their courses.
- Applicants must show evidence of "financial need" for the assistance, including a copy of their previous year's tax forms.
- Applicants must be recommended by parish staff members, religious superiors, institutional representatives or "other persons."
- Applicants must show how their courses or programs relate to their present or future ministries.
- Applicants who receive assistance for an entire degree or certificate program are expected to minister within the diocese for at least three years following completion of their studies.

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