

Bishop Clark issues letter on Middle East

ROCHESTER — Bishop Matthew H. Clark issued a letter this week outlining suggested actions for Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester in response to tensions in the Middle East.

"It is evident that lasting peace continues to be an elusive reality," Bishop Clark said in the letter, which was dated August 27. The improved relations with the Soviet Union and developments in Eastern Europe, encouraged a belief that the world was entering an era of peace, he said, "But the current situation in the Middle East challenges us with a different reality."

In the letter — which will be distributed to all priests and lay people throughout the diocese — Bishop Clark cited the 1983 pastoral letter of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*.

"Peacemaking is not an optional commitment," Bishop Clark quoted from the pastoral. "It is a requirement of our faith. We are called to be peacemakers, not by some movement of the moment, but by our Lord Jesus. The content and context of our peacemaking is set; not by some political agenda or ideological program, but by the teaching of his Church."

In light of the pastoral letter, Bishop

Clark wrote in his letter on the Middle East crisis, "As Christians, we are bound to bring a peaceful end to this situation."

The bishop noted that the 1983 pastoral letter called for prayer and sacrifice as ways in which people could become peacemakers. He then asked the people of the diocese to: consider fast and abstinence on Fridays as an active contribution to resolving the crisis; include prayers for peace in all liturgical celebrations; seek out and offer prayer and support to families who are in one way or another affected by the crisis in the Middle East; and include in prayers of petition the names of all parishioners whose lives are at risk in the Middle East.

Father John A. Firpo, director of the diocesan Division of Social Ministry, said that peace is both a divine gift and a human work.

"As church, we need to continually pray for (peace) and to continually work for it," the priest said.

Members of the diocesan Office of Social Ministry will continue to monitor the situation in the Middle East, Father Firpo said, and will respond as developments warrant.

— Lee Strong

Project Support will help disabled live on their own

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Like millions of people living on their own, John Belanger is faced with such daily problems as cooking his own meals and paying his monthly bills.

But Belanger, 35, has been a quadriplegic since he was 19 because of a fall he took while hunting. And, as he'll point out, household tasks can be quite challenging for disabled people, many of whom don't have the knowledge Belanger possesses to locate social service programs that assist those who are disabled and want to live independently.



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Lucy Dechaine, left, director of the Catholic Family Center's Department of Disabled Services, discusses Project Support with Richard Miller. Despite having cerebral palsy, the Rochester man has lived independently for 15 years.

Currently pursuing a master's degree in social work, Belanger is well-equipped to deal with the "red tape" confronting any handicapped person attempting to work with the social service system.

"There's things out there, and they're just not taken advantage of," Belanger said, pointing out that he was able to secure

a handicapped-accessible van through a Social Security program.

The fact that Belanger can even live on his own and drive a van puts his achievement level above that of many disabled people who often live with families who provide for their every need.

"Many (disabled) people at this point have been isolated most of their lives and don't know basic skills," Belanger said, noting that he has lived independently in an apartment on South Avenue for five years.

Starting Oct. 1, the Catholic Family Center plans to offer Project Support to assist developmentally disabled adults who — as Belanger did — want to move out on their own.

Utilizing a \$90,000 federal grant administered by the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, the new program will aid disabled adults moving into their own apartments and learning independent living skills.

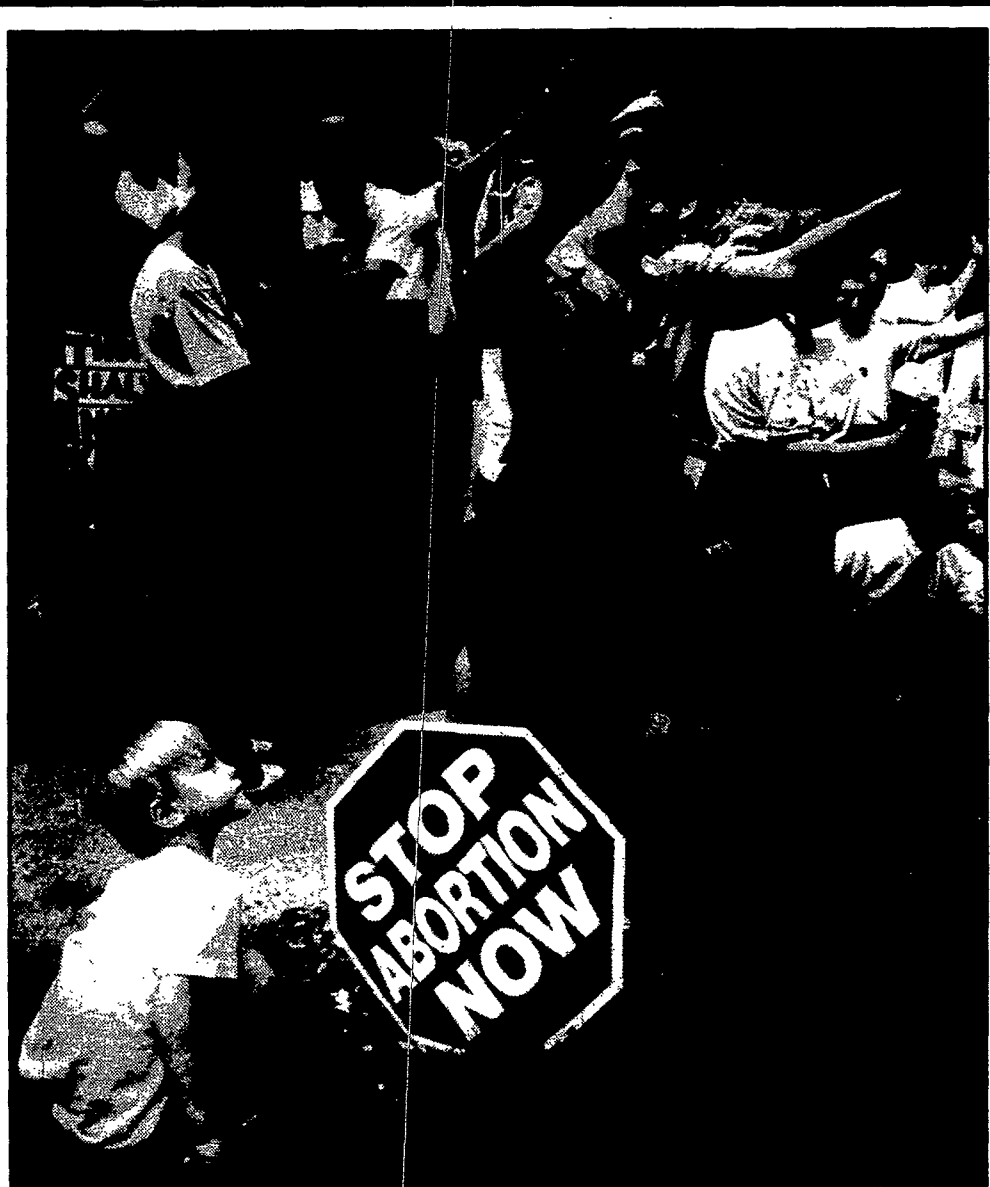
Potential clientele include people with such disabilities as blindness, cerebral palsy, deafness, mental retardation, muscular dystrophy, spinabifida and spinal cord injury. Project Support will help such clients locate accessible, affordable housing; assist them in moving and obtaining furniture; instruct them in such skills as budgeting and cooking; and help them navigate through a sea of available social service programs.

Lucy Dechaine, director of the CFC's Department of Disabled Services, said the agency will hire a full-time housing specialist, a full-time case manager, and a part-time independent living skills teacher to eventually serve 20 clients.

The housing specialist will contact landlords and apartment managers on behalf of clients and learn how accessible buildings are to the handicapped. The specialist will also research such transportation possibilities for clients as bus lines near their apartments, Dechaine said.

Assisting clients in establishing their new homes will occupy the case manager's day. The manager will help clients get donations of household goods, deal with the phone and utility companies, and aid them in adjusting the allotment of such items as

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Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
OPERATION HOUSE CALL — Approximately 20 members of Project Life of Rochester left their Saturday morning vigil in front of Genesee Hospital on August 25, to picket the Pittsford home of Dr. Ruth Schwartz, a gynecologist who performs abortions. Above, Trevor Daniel Hyland (left) takes a break from digging in the dirt to watch Wendy Hays (right) pray along with other members of the pro-life group.

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580) Vol. 102 No. 33 August 30, 1990
Published weekly except week after July 4 and Christmas.
Subscription rates: single copy, 50¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$15; Canada and foreign \$15 plus postage.
Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340.
Second-class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

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