

Politician advises activists to refine methods

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Pro-life activists have to learn the finer points of speaking and politicking if they want to persuade the nation to restrict abortion.

That was the essence of Democratic Congressman John LaFalce's message to the 28 members of Common Ground of Upstate New York at the organization's annual meeting Saturday morning, Sept. 22, at the Nineteenth Ward Community Association Building.

"We ought not to try to alienate in-

dividuals with our language," LaFalce said. "It doesn't help us to refer to abortion as murder. Murder is what the law says is murder ... What is murder in the state of New York is not necessarily murder in Pennsylvania.

"What we should use is the the word killing ...," he continued. "Let's say that in our judgment (abortion) is killing — the cessation of life."

LaFalce, a noted anti-abortion liberal, was chosen to speak to the group because his voting record epitomizes the "consistent life ethic" or "seamless garment

ethic" espoused by Common Ground. Two years ago, LaFalce affirmed his support of various legislation focusing on "life issues" listed in a questionnaire distributed to political candidates by Common Ground.

The questionnaire cited anti-poverty programs, proposed pro-life legislation, cuts in defense spending, and anti-death penalty measures as key actions Common Ground wanted legislators to support.

LaFalce reiterated his support of the seamless garment ethic as outlined by Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago in the

early 1980s. Over the years, the cardinal has tied together such seemingly unrelated issues as the nuclear arms race, capital punishment, euthanasia, poverty and abortion, and emphasized the importance of recognizing each issue as a threat to human life.

Nonetheless, LaFalce stressed that in today's political climate, abortion is the most pressing and difficult issue. He also told his listeners that as a liberal congressman, he has been often criticized for being odd-man-out among his left-leaning colleagues who support legalized abortion.

"Today, it seems so difficult to be liberal and opposed to abortion," he said. "Our friends write us off as being a little irregular and somewhat impure."

But nothing is more consistent than being liberal and being anti-abortion, LaFalce argued, noting that liberals have traditionally protected society's most vulnerable citizens — in this case, the unborn.

"If you've been arrested at Seneca (Army Depot, where nuclear weapons are allegedly stored), and you've been arrested in other places, then it's perfectly consistent that you've been arrested at Operation Rescue," he said.

Getting across the logic of that consistency will be difficult as long as pro-lifers allow the pro-choice movement to dictate the language of the debate, he commented.

"No one likes to be against 'choice,'" he said. "It sounds almost communist or totalitarian." Instead, LaFalce asserted that pro-lifers must continually ask their opponents, "What is the choice? You're saying everyone must have a choice to take

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Director to take part in national panel

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Judy Kollar, the diocesan director of the Department of Continuing Education, will be among six panelists addressing questions concerning the future of the priesthood in the United States during an October 4 video conference entitled "Tomorrow's Priesthood: By Design or Default?"

The panel discussion, which will be broadcast on the Catholic Telecommunications Network of America from 3-4:30 p.m., will focus on future directions of the priesthood in the United States.

The broadcast can be seen at two locations in the diocese: the Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, and St. Mary's Church, 34 E. Morris St., Bath.

Produced by the New York-based National Pastoral Life Center as part of its Church '90 series, the broadcast will include not only presentations and discussion by panel members, but also a phone-in segment in which callers from across the United States may pose questions or present differing views about the issue.

Kollar said the conference will deal with three basic questions: what does the American Catholic Church need most from its priests in the coming years?; what changes — if any — will be needed to meet that need?; and what will happen if changes are not made?

In preparation for the teleconference, Kollar, a member of the board of directors of the National Organization for the Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy, posed those questions to fellow board members and several local priests.

"I think that their comments give me the gamut of what priests themselves are thinking and hoping," she said.



Judy Kollar, diocesan director of continuing education, will be one of six panelists for a national teleconference on the priesthood.

Kollar pointed out that priests have an active interest in what their future roles will be because — in light of their decreasing numbers — they will become "sacramental machines."

"They want to be servants of the community," she said. "They don't want to be just a dispenser of mystery."

The teleconference coincides with the U.S. bishops' synod in Rome, which will focus on the formation of priests.

"One of the critiques that a number of people have made about the synod is that priests were consulted on the future of the priesthood, but not a lot of laity were consulted," Kollar said. "The teleconference is a way for people who were not consulted

to have their say about the future of the priesthood."

According to Father James Gardiner, SA, a staff member at the National Pastoral Life Center, panel members were selected to provide a diverse mix of opinions and perspectives concerning the future of the priesthood.

"The people from around the country are grappling with the same kinds of issues, but sometimes dealing with them in different and interesting ways," Father Gardiner said.

Joining Kollar on the panel will be Monsignor Arturo Banuelas, pastor of St. Pius X Church in El Paso, Texas; Anthony Cerna, Ph.D., president of Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Conn.; Father Edmund Hussey, pastor of St. Paul Church in Yellow Springs, Ohio; Father Richard Martini, of Queen of Angels Seminary, in Mission Hills, Calif.; and Father Paul Philbert, provincial of the Southern Dominican Province, from New Orleans, La.

Diocesan report finds 'positive' response to parish-based study

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

GATES — The diocese has released a report on the Commitment to Ministry process, indicating that most of the participating parishes found the process to be a "positive" experience, although many parishes were disappointed at attendance at their parish reflection teams' programs.

The report was presented by Father Paul Tomasso, secretary to Bishop Matthew H. Clark, during an all-day meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council on Saturday, Sept. 22, at the Pastoral Center on Buffalo Road.

Entitled "A Look at Parish Reports," the 21-page document consisted of a data summary and a collection of conclusions drawn from individual reflection-team reports presented to the bishop last spring.

When the Commitment to Ministry Process was started two years ago, it was centered on eight goals, one of which was the stating of a parish's needs. The parishes' responses to this goal formed the basis of the report's section on long- and short-range goals.

Out of the 161 diocesan parishes, six-

ty did not complete the commitment process, according to a one-page summary Father Tomasso presented at a prior DPC meeting. More than 900 people served on parish reflection teams. In part, the report indicated the following conclusions expressed in terms of 12 parish goals.

- Almost all the parishes — 96.2 percent — cited responding to demographic changes as a long-range goal for their parishes, and 79 percent also saw demographic changes as a short-range concern.

- More than three-quarters of the parishes — 79.6 percent — cited fiscal stability, stewardship and administration as short-range goals, and 42.9 percent listed them as long-range goals.

- More than two-thirds of the parishes — 65.3 percent — stated that parish/community outreach is a long-range goal, and 44.4 percent noted it as a short-range goal as well.

- Low on the list of future priorities for parishes were staffing, youth and young-adult ministries, liturgy and sacraments and facility upkeep. Each of these

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