

# Calendars promote daily prayers for priests

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Mary Reilich may soon become a familiar face at her local post office.

After all, the St. Anne's parishioner is starting to mail a volume of material that is rapidly rivaling that of some small businesses.

And all indications show that the material she's mailing is likely to continue growing.

Reilich is the local distributor of the Monthly Prayer Requests for Priests calendar, a ministry begun in April by a woman in Maine. The program has now spread to seven dioceses or archdioceses.

The calendars — a different schedule is produced for each see — list on each day the name of one priest in the particular diocese or archdiocese. People are requested to offer up one of a number of suggested prayer options — among them the Mass, Holy Hour or rosary — for the priest whose name appears that day.

Since Reilich began distributing the bimonthly calendars in the Rochester diocese in July, the number of requests has grown from 1,000 to 3,000.

All of which is fine with Reilich.

"I think we're hearing so much adverse criticism about priests," she observed, "that the Blessed Mother in so many of her recent apparitions is asking us to pray for priests."

Reilich learned of the ministry earlier this summer when she called Yvonne Roux of Lewiston, Maine, on an unrelated matter. According to Reilich, Roux said, "I have a new ministry." After hearing a few details about the program, the Rochester woman readily agreed to become involved in the endeavor.

Roux, a member of the Portland diocese, said she thought of the idea for the calendar early this year after she experienced a growing concern over the pressures and problems facing priests today.

"I was burdened by the problems of priests all over the place," Roux recalled in an interview with the *Catholic Courier*. "There's just so much they have to cope with exteriorly and interiorly."

Then while praying one day, she received a sudden inspiration to create the daily prayer calendar.

"Our priests need the support of the people," Roux said. "It's a hard job."

Armed with that inspiration, Roux sat down at her typewriter with a list of priests



Bebette G. Augustin/Staff photographer  
Mary Reilich, a parishioner at St. Anne's, Rochester, prepares to mail out 3,000 Monthly Prayer for Priests Calendars to individuals, groups and parishes in the diocese.

in her diocese and turned out calendars for the months of April and May.

Now just six months later, Roux has received so many requests for the calendar in Maine that she had to turn out approximately 5,000 copies of the October/November version.

In addition, in the past few weeks she has produced approximately 10,000 copies of individualized versions of the calendar for the other five dioceses and archdioceses involved to this point. She uses the *Official Catholic Directory* — which lists every priest in the United States — to put together individual calendars for each diocese.

But Roux is not satisfied with reaching just seven sees.

"I would like to see the calendar spread to every diocese in the country," Roux said.

Thus far, the calendar has spread largely through word of mouth. A woman from the Orlando diocese, for example, first saw the calendar when a friend visiting from Maine brought one down. After calling Roux, the Orlando woman agreed to distribute the calendars there.

In addition to Rochester, Portland and Orlando, calendars are also distributed in the archdioceses of Cincinnati and Boston, and the dioceses of Manchester, New Hampshire, and Steubenville, Ohio.

So far, people have responded enthusiastically to the idea of the calendars, Roux said.

"The priests I've all contacted have shown a great deal of interest," Roux said. "They all feel they need the prayer and support of the people."

Reilich has also found support for both the calendar and her efforts.

Fellow St. Anne's parishioners who gather for the rosary after morning Mass all use the calendar now, Reilich said. In addition, a group of people who were planning to leave for Medjugorje at the end of September had kept calling her to find out if the October/November edition of the calendar had been printed. Members of the group didn't want to miss a day of prayer for local priests, Reilich explained.

Currently, the calendar is being distributed in at least 25 parishes in the Rochester diocese, she estimated.

Meanwhile, a number of people now take multiple copies of the calendar to distribute on their own.

In addition, Reilich is doing her own part to help spread the word about the calendar. She was in Buffalo for a meeting Sept. 15 and showed a copy of the calendar to a woman there. The woman expressed an interest in distributing a similar calendar in the Buffalo diocese, and Reilich gave her Roux's address.

This past August, Reilich wrote to Bishop Matthew H. Clark to tell him about the calendar. She also let him know that his name appeared on Sept. 15. Reilich received a letter from the bishop thanking her for what she is doing.

"For me, it's a clear sign of his approval," she said.

Roux relies on a team of volunteers to help stuff envelopes and mail the calendars to her distributors in the different dioceses. She has received some contributions that help cover postage, but she pays the printing costs herself.

Similarly, Reilich has a number of people

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## OCTOBER

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NY

| SUNDAY                             | MONDAY                       | TUESDAY                       | WEDNESDAY                      | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY                      | SATURDAY                      |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
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