

Parishes assessing damage from ice storm

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Ice Storm of 1991 drove many diocesan pastors and parish staff underground — where they attempted to rescue office files, furniture and other items from flooded rectory, school and church basements.

Parishes whose electric sump pumps failed during the widespread power outage took the brunt of the storm's assault on the northern part of the diocese, according to Ronald Melia, branch manager of Gallagher Bassett, Inc., claims administrator for the Diocese of Rochester's insurance policy.

"It seems that parishes that had offices in basements suffered the most from the loss (of power) in the operation of sump pumps," Melia said.

Many parishes lacked back-up generators to power their sump pumps, he added. With the pumps idle, basements were flooded by ground water that had risen due to the March 3-4 ice storm and additional rainfall in the days preceding it, other observers remarked.

So far, a total of 31 parishes have filed or are in the process of filing claims with Melia. He estimated that eventually his office will process about \$100,000 worth of claims for parish buildings damaged by the storm.

Melia stressed that it may take some time to make a final assessment of the total cost of the damage done to various parishes throughout the diocese. He pointed out that such items as wall-to-wall carpeting and furniture that were submerged in water often need days or weeks to completely dry out.

Until then, his office was urging parish staffs to remove as much of the water in their basements as possible by using dehumidifiers and mops to speed along the drying process, and turning up their heat, if possible.

Cafeteria staff at St. Pius the Tenth School in Chili turned up the heat on students' lunches last Wednesday, March 13, according to Stephen M. Oberst, school principal. Oberst said that students enjoyed their first hot meal that day after flooding had closed the cafeteria the week



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
In the wake of the recent ice storm, Reginald Nowlin of Genesee Building and Waterproofing prepares to remove a tree limb from the roof of Rochester's Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier Church.

maintenance crew to clean the cafeteria, and clean up the other basements on parish grounds, Oberst commented.

Good Shepherd Parish in Henrietta "lost a lot of reference materials" in its flooded rectory basement, according to Margaret Churnetski, parish volunteer. Many of the records and paper supplies were submerged beneath nearly a foot of water after the storm, she noted. Churnetski added that the basement carpeting had dried out since the parish's power was been turned back on Friday, March 8.

Flooding wasn't the only problem for parishes. Many pastors woke up on the morning of March 4 to see tree limbs scattered all about parish grounds, or on top of church buildings.

Father William J. Amann, pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Hamlin, related that in the wake of the storm, a neighbor's tree had fallen on the roof of his split-level rectory.

One of the tree's limbs — about 18 inches long — punctured the roof and drove through a crawl space, making its way down and out of the ceiling of the rectory dining room, he observed.

"Somebody called it a 'house-kebab,'" the pastor joked.

The "house-kebab" left a small hole in the roof, which since has been repaired, Father Amann said, but he noted that the ceiling has yet to be fixed. He added that the roof's gutter pipes came down in the storm, but have since been repaired.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was accorded rather brusque treatment by the ice storm, according to Edward Cala, parish business administrator at Holy Redeemer/St. Francis Xavier in Rochester. Cala explained that one casualty of the storm was a small wooden shrine to Mary that sat beneath a linden tree on parish grounds.

"One of the limbs came off and blew it to smithereens," Cala said of the shrine's fate.

In addition, the church gutter pipes were bent out of shape by the storm, and the church had to hire a local firm to remove tree limbs from the church roof.

While the diocesan insurance policy covers damage from tree limbs, the

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FLOSM attempts to grasp hunger problem in region

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

GENEVA — Robert Norton is all-too familiar with the face of hunger. And these days, the parishioner at St. Alphonsus, Auburn, is seeing that face more and more frequently.

Norton, who coordinates six food pantries in Auburn, said that while food supplies — especially from the federal government — have been drying up, the numbers of people seeking food has increased. Pantries are no longer able to meet the need alone, he said.

As a result, Norton has created a food cooperative to help the poor buy food at discount prices. In operation only two months, the co-op has already attracted 150 participants.

Norton detailed his efforts to meet the needs of Auburn's hungry during the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry's second-annual parish social-ministry day

March 16, in Geneva. The day-long gathering at St. Francis/St. Stephen's School attracted 75 participants.

Those participants not only heard Norton's presentation, but also participated in a variety of workshops on topics ranging from parenting for peace to migrant ministry to remembering Dorothy Day.

"Part of the thinking for having the day was that it was really important to bring people who were doing the work (of social ministry) in the parishes together to see what other people are doing," said Kevin Hennessy, organizer of the event and justice and peace director for FLOSM.

The day also helps people involved in social ministry to see that they are not alone in their experiences, Hennessy added.

"We sometimes feel that what we're doing may not amount to a whole lot," he observed. By meeting together, however,

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Gates priest pleads not guilty in Gates court

GATES — Father Thomas F. Corbett, parochial vicar at St. Theodore's Parish, has pleaded not guilty to misdemeanor charges of third-degree sexual abuse. According to Gates Chief of Police Thomas Roche, the charge involves the touching of another person without that person's consent.

According to his attorney Charles F. Crimi Jr., the priest entered the plea in Gates Town Court Wednesday night, March 13. Father Corbett's trial is scheduled to

take place in the town court on April 22.

Gates police served Father Corbett with an appearance ticket earlier this month after a woman allegedly told her social worker that the priest had made sexual contact with her on two occasions without her consent.

When asked to identify the woman who made the complaint, a court employee said Gates Judge John Rivoli had ordered her to decline such requests.

CENACLE OFFERS SPECIAL EVENTS

April 5-6 **Who Will Roll Away the Stone for Us?**

A weekend retreat focussing on the obstacles and opportunities for women encountering the Risen One. Conducted by Srs. Barbara Regan and Marsha Smith, r.c.

April 11, 18, 25 **"Building Blocks to Self-Esteem:"**

May 2, 9, 16 Shaping my self-image — Discovering the power within — Setting my sights — Affirming my future — Choosing life — Believing in me — Believing in God. Given by Sr. Annette Mattle, r.c.
Thursdays: 7:00-9:00p.m.

April 12-14 **Mid-Life Journey for Women Only**

Designed for women 34-55 years of age, this retreat looks at women during their 'second journey' preparing and seeing ourselves as contemporary women traveling life's way. Women searching for their sense of self journeying with God carrying out their many responsibilities and roles-given by Carolyn Jacobs, Ph.D.

IGNATIAN ANNIVERSARY YEAR

A closer look at Ignatian Spirituality and its impact on contemporary society.

April 16 **Finding God in All Things:**

The world-embracing mysticism of Ignatius of Loyola. Whether you know nothing about Ignatian Spirituality or whether you have experienced Ignatius through his Spiritual Exercises, this evening is intended for ALL. Conducted by Cenacle Sisters. Time: 7:00-9:00p.m.

April 27 **Day of Reflection for Women:**

Living out Our Faith Commitment
A closer look at women's involvement in the life of the Church through Lay Ministry or Religious Life. 10:00a.m.-3:30p.m. Conducted by Mrs. Charlotte Keller, Srs. Barbara Regan and Margie Mayk, r.c.

All events are open to men and women of all faiths

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