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Summer softball

On Opening Day for teams in the diocesan softball league, youths from 17 Rochester-area churches discovered that the name of the game is fun. Page 10.



Migrant ministry



Efforts aim to enrich lives of farm workers

In one Wayne County town, a department store's owners reportedly call the police whenever anyone resembling a migrant worker enters the premises.

Rural police forces frequently stop cars driven by Hispanic-looking people to ensure that the occupants are in this country legally.

And migrant workers in western Monroe County are often asked, "Why don't you go back home where you belong?"

Those who work with the migrant community report many similar anecdotes of harassment against migrant workers — harassment they believe is rooted in ignorance, prejudice and fear.

"There are definitely racist attitudes," noted Sister Beverly Baker, SSJ, coordinator of the Brockport Migrant Education Project. "There's automatic stereotyping."

Rodrigo Alconero, migrant farmworker advocate for the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry, likewise observed racism between community residents and the migrant workers, and among the migrants themselves. "It is part of the reason for harassment of farm workers — while they travel, and while they are here," he said.

Signs of change are appearing, however, and the Diocese of Rochester is in the forefront of efforts to foster such change.

When the pastorate at the Church of the Epiphany in



(Top photo) Francisco, a migrant worker in Orleans County, holds his daughter, Nancy. Above, Bishop Matthew H. Clark greets Gloria Tello (left) and Romana Acevedo (center) after the June 30 Mass at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Brockport. More than 400 people attended the Mass welcoming migrant workers back to the community. Bishop Clark and Bishop Rafael Garcia Gonzales of Rochester's Sister Diocese of Tabasco, Mexico, concelebrated the annual service.

Sodus became vacant this year, for example, the diocese stipulated that the new pastor know or be willing to learn Spanish. Appointed to the post this month, Father George Heyman is now studying Spanish at a language institute so he will be able to minister effectively to the Hispanic migrant workers within the parish.

Some parishioners at St. Gregory's Church in Marion now participate in the two-year-old Marion Intercultural Awareness Committee. The ecumenical group promotes greater understanding between migrant workers and community residents.

In 1990, Alconero organized the Migrant Farmworker Support Group. Comprising representatives from parishes and agencies that work with migrants, the group educates people about migrant workers and encourages church members to become involved in migrant issues. Working with the Literacy Coalition of Wayne County, the group is now offering transportation for farm workers who need health care and educational services.

On June 30, meanwhile, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Brockport presented its annual Mass to welcome migrant workers to the community. More than 400 people attended the Mass, which was concelebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark and Bishop Rafael Garcia Gonzalez of Rochester's Sister Diocese of Tabasco, Mexico.

And on June 27, Bishop Clark announced the launch of a project designed to identify and respond to the needs of migrant workers in western New York. Sister Mary Jane Mitchell, SSJ, was named to lead the project, which is a cooperative effort among the di-

Continued on page 2

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