

# Efforts aim to enrich migrants' lives

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ceses of Rochester and Buffalo, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester and parishes in both dioceses.

Such efforts aim at promoting greater understanding of migrants in the communities in which they live and work.

Many migrant camps are geographically isolated from their neighboring communities, offering little chance for contact between the workers and community residents, explained Father Robert Kreckel, pastor of St. Mary of the Lake Church in Ontario.

"I think there's a lot of unawareness of migrants," Father Kreckel observed.

Wayne County has the largest migrant population in the state, Father Kreckel said, estimating that the migrant population peaks at 2,000-3,000 workers during the height of the picking season.

"Our effort this year is in visiting the camps and to find out the best way we can serve them," noted Father Kreckel, a member of the Farmworkers Support Group.

Although social, medical and educational services are available for migrant workers, the group discovered last year that a lack of transportation often prevents the workers from using these services. The group purchased a van — with St. Mary's contributing a sizable portion of the cost.

But while migrants' social-service needs are being addressed, their pastoral needs frequently are neglected, observers said. Hispanic farm workers often do not attend Mass regularly because few Masses in Spanish are available. They also face a lack of religious-education programs geared to their needs, and a dearth of sacramental-preparation programs.

One of the problems, Father Kreckel acknowledged, is that the diocese lacks personnel who can speak Spanish or the other languages that the migrants speak, such as Creole French.

Sodus, for example, is the only regular site in Wayne County for the celebration of Spanish-language Masses. On alternate weekends, priests celebrate Mass in Spanish at only two of the more than 200 migrant camps.

And in western Monroe County, one weekly Mass in Spanish at Nativity in Brockport must serve the needs of an estimated 4,000-5,000 Hispanic farm workers in Monroe, Orleans and Niagara counties.

Attempts to minister to migrants are further complicated by diversity within the migrant population itself. Workers in Wayne County are predominantly Hai-

tians, Southern blacks and Puerto Ricans. Because these workers often travel to work sites without their families, their needs revolve around their separation from loved ones and their need for social activities.

The migrant population in western Monroe County, on the other hand, hails mainly from Texas and Mexico, and consists largely of complete families. This population needs sacramental-preparation programs for their children, marriage preparation for their young adults, and religious education for children and adults.

Nevertheless, Alconero said, some parishes show little interest in migrants' needs.

"One could say the interest about migrant farm workers in parishes in the diocese is low," Alconero said. "It's a population that is isolated, that is strange, that is not living year-round in the area."

He noted that some parishes feel no responsibility to minister to migrants because they do not live in the parishes year-round.

"One of the things we're trying to say to parishioners is when migrant farm workers come into a parish area, it's the responsibility of the parish to take care of their needs," Alconero said.

Diocesan officials encourage parish involvement in providing pastoral services to migrant workers within their boundaries, Alconero noted, adding that a number of parishes in Wayne, Ontario and Livingston counties support his work.

Alconero said current efforts focus on surveying the migrants to determine what parishes can offer to address the workers' needs.

A group in Marion has already undertaken efforts to address some needs. In addition to distributing signs in Spanish to area stores, the group has also sponsored town meetings to provide education about migrants.

The most recent session on June 20 featured Father Laurence Tracy, pastoral assistant for the Rochester area for the diocesan Office of the Spanish Apostolate. The group also plans a "welcome back" fiesta for the migrants this Sunday, July 21.

Yet, parishes and local groups cannot take care of all of the migrants' needs, Father Kreckel cautioned.

"It's something I don't think most parishes can do it by themselves," Father Kreckel said. "We need someone out there to delve more deeply into the needs."

Trying harder to meet the needs of the migrants led to the launching of the joint project with the Buffalo diocese, Sister Baker said.

"We felt very strongly that the lack of pastoral ministry had to be addressed, either through the parishes or the diocese, that there was an extensive population that was not receiving adequate services," Sister Baker said.

"One of the goals of the project is to provide pastoral/sacramental ministry for migrants in the language that's needed that's not available in the local churches," Father Tracey said.

Sister Mitchell noted that the ministry involves more than just providing sacraments and catechesis. The migrant workers are seeking personal contact with the local community.

"The people are really interested that someone cares to come to their houses," Sister Mitchell. "Part of what I'm striving to do is foster a sense of community."

The joint project continues a program the Sisters of St. Joseph started in January, when Sister Mitchell — then working part-time — began conducting a census of the migrants who chose to remain in the Brockport area over the winter.

In April, a grant enabled Sister Mitchell to begin working at the ministry full-time. The joint effort will enable her to work for a full year in what Sister Baker described as "a pilot project."

"We're hoping that we may be able during this year to build on the inter-parochial aspect," Sister Barker observed. Cooperation among the parishes of both dioceses will help to provide the financial support and the pool of volunteers needed to sustain the ministry, she added.

Project organizers are also hoping to develop leadership skills among the migrants, Sister Mitchell said. Thus, as she surveys the migrants for needs, she will also be looking for leaders she can train.

In addition, Sister Mitchell said, her job will also include "educating the parishes regarding the needs of migrant parishioners in the parish boundaries."

Sister Mitchell said one of her hopes is to develop a sense of community among the migrants and between the migrants and parishioners.

But Sister Baker has worked to create such a sense of community for 18 years, and she acknowledged that such efforts are difficult. Still, bringing the migrants and community residents together for such events as the annual welcoming Mass helps to break down some barriers.



Graciella lives in an Orleans County migrant camp with her parents.

"I think sharing with people, sharing cultural and social events, while it will not help immediately, it will work slowly, a bit at a time," Sister Baker said.

While ministry to migrants is witnessing some growth, however, it is also facing some potential problems.

Sister Mitchell's mandate ends in one year, when the grant money runs out. At that point the two dioceses will decide whether to continue funding for the project.

Budget cuts already have forced the Diocese of Rochester to cut back one facet of ministry to migrants. Alconero's part-time position at the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry is scheduled to end in January, 1992. Diocesan officials say they are searching for alternative funding, but at this point they have been unsuccessful.

If the diocese fails to find funding for Alconero's position, Father Kreckel said, "I personally believe ministry to migrants in Wayne County is going to suffer a great deal."

Parishes in his region are already too understaffed to minister to the migrants, Father Kreckel noted. "There's got to be somebody who goes into the camps," he said.

## Obituary

### Sister Catherine Fitzsimons, OCD, at 73; 'lived the life of Carmelite to perfection'

Bishop Matthew H. Clark was the main celebrant during a Solemn Mass of the Resurrection for Sister Catherine Fitzsimons, OCD, at the Discalced Carmelites' Monastery of Our Lady and St. Joseph on Friday, June 7, 1991 — the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

Sister Catherine died on Wednesday, June 5, 1991, at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester after a short illness. She was 73-years-old.

Born in Burlington, Vt. on Aug. 21, 1917, Sister Catherine was the youngest of four children.

"Her death was so sudden," said Sister Magdalene Praetz, OCD. "We feel her loss very much."

Sister Praetz said Sister Catherine "lived the Carmelite life to perfection." She took care of the liturgy celebrations at the monastery, according to Sister Praetz.

"She felt her one duty was to pray for the Rochester diocese," Sister Praetz recalled. "She always prayed for the (diocesan) priests."

Sister Catherine is survived by a brother, Monsignor Edward Fitzsimons; and two sisters, Sister Mary Mildred Fitzsimons, RSM, and Margaret Fitzsimons Raymond, all of Burlington, Vt.

Donations in memory of Sister Catherine Fitzsimons, OCD, may be made to the Discalced Carmelites, 1931 W. Jefferson Road, Pittsford, N.Y., 14534.

## 61st ANNUAL SOLEMN NOVENA TO SAINT ANNE

July 18 to 26, 1991 — Nightly at 7:30 p.m.

1991 Theme: In Hope of God's Glory  
Guest Preacher: Fr. David P. Reid, SS.CC.

- Thursday, July 18 "The grace in which you stand"  
*Romans 5:1-11*
- Friday, July 19 "This is my son, my chosen, listen to him"  
*Luke 9:28-36*
- Saturday, July 20 "Our Lord is above all gods"  
*Psalms 135*
- Sunday, July 21 *Rosary Tableau: special rendition of the fifteen mysteries*
- Monday, July 22 "Anointed... to bring good news"  
*Luke 4:16-20*
- Tuesday, July 23 "My blood poured out for many"  
*Mark 14:21-31*
- Wednesday, July 24 "Blessed is she who believed..."  
*Acts 1:12-24; Luke 1:45-55*
- Thursday, July 25 "From one degree of glory to another"  
*2 Cor 3:4-18*
- Friday, July 26 "Blessed are your eyes and ears"  
*Sirach 44:1,10-15; Matt 13:16-17*



Saint Anne.

### SAINT ANNE CHURCH

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