

Diocese will study options to fight clinic

ALBANY — Despite testimony from opponents — including a representative of Bishop Matthew H. Clark — the State Project Review Committee granted contingent approval July 22 for Planned Parenthood to open an abortion clinic at its Rochester headquarters, 114 University Ave.

On Aug. 6, the project will go before the State Hospital Review and Planning Council for a vote, then to William J. Gormley, department director of the Division of Health Facility Planning, for final approval.

Diocesan officials, however, are still weighing options — including possible legal action — to oppose the clinic, noted Father George Norton, diocesan public information officer.

The review committee gave approval for the clinic following a hearing at the Empire State Plaza.

Speaking on behalf of the bishop and Diocese of Rochester, Father Paul J. Tomasso argued that the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency had granted regional approval for the clinic this spring without holding a public hearing, conducting a study to assess the need for such a clinic, or addressing alternative approaches to care.

"Our interest in this issue stems from the Catholic Church's long-standing commitment and service to pregnant women and their children — both born and unborn," said Father Tomasso, who serves as priest-secretary to Bishop Clark.

"We strongly believe that the health care delivery system in our state should be offering women options and alternatives to the tragic decision of abortion, rather than increased availability of abortion," the priest said.

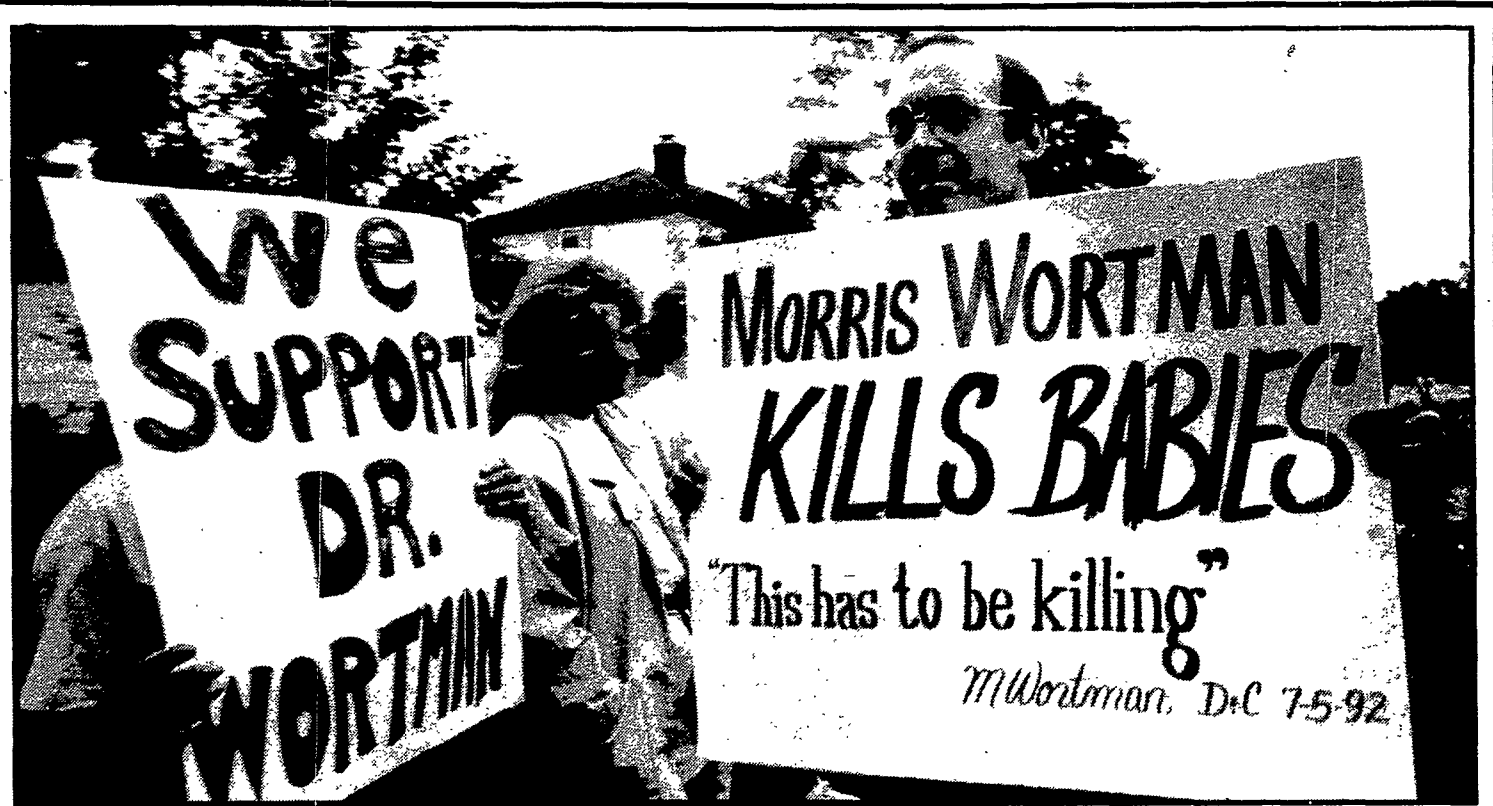
Despite such testimony, Kathleen Gallagher of the New York State Catholic Conference predicted — based on the results of previous cases — that the clinic doubtless will be approved.

But Gallagher emphasized that clinic opponents still can write to Mark Classen, state health commissioner, "to keep on the pressure."

She also noted that in 1984, following state approval of an Albany abortion clinic, the Albany diocese sued the state to prevent establishment of the clinic.

Court proceedings delayed the clinic's opening for three years, Gallagher said. "We saved a lot of lives."

Rochester diocesan officials will be weighing legal action — among other options — in the coming week, Father Norton said. — **Lee Strong**



RESCUE ROCHESTER — Pastor Michael Warren (right) was among the 17 pro-life activists who picketed the Brighton home of Dr. Morris Wortman July 25. The protest was organized by Rescue Rochester, a newly formed group led by Gerald Crawford, director of Project Life. Members of Rescue Rochester claimed Dr. Wortman is the "leading" abortionist in the Rochester area. The hour-long pro-life demonstration was greeted by a counter-protest staged by 46 pro-choice activists.

Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

Ministry changes to affect parishes

By **Lee Strong**
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Michael Theisen acknowledges that he has a tough job ahead of him.

Since July 1, the Diocese of Rochester's new coordinator of youth ministry has been handling many of the duties formerly performed by three people whose positions were eliminated after restructuring of the diocese's Faith Development Ministry.

"There's going to be some loss felt," Theisen said. "I'm not two-and-a-half people."

Under the restructuring, Theisen replaces the two full-time and one part-time positions — director, associate director for human sexuality and associate director for training and retreats — that made up the former Department of Youth Ministry.

The restructuring occurred in Faith Development Ministry prior to this spring's reconfiguration of the Pastoral Center due to a projected 1992-93 budget shortfall, acknowledged Maribeth Mancini, director of the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis. Mancini's department includes youth ministry.

Theisen noted that parishes will experience the restructuring's impact because under the previous alignment, "what they were able to do was to put

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the emphasis on individual parishes.

"Basically I see myself as the youth minister to youth ministers," he continued, "working more with groups in the clusters and quadrants."

Theisen will focus on encouraging greater cooperation among youth ministers through workshops and meetings he plans to hold this fall. He also intends to put together a directory of youth ministers after conducting his own survey. The overall goal, he said, is to discourage reliance on the Pastoral Center for advice that can be found among fellow youth ministers.

But at least two youth ministers see some potential problems with Theisen's plan.

The parishes that have youth ministry will continue to function well, predicted Nora Bradbury-Haehl, youth minister at St. Joseph's Church in Penfield and Church of the Resurrection in Fairport. "It's the parishes that don't have youth ministry that relied on the Pastoral Center more," she said.

"The reality is that we've existed with a parish model for a long time, and it's going to take a long time to break down that model," said Patrick

Fox, former director of the Department of Youth Ministry and currently the director of religious education and youth minister at Rochester's St. John the Evangelist Parish on Humboldt Street.

A participant in the planning process that led to Faith Development Ministry's restructuring, Fox noted that networking among youth ministers has been going on for a long time.

"But sometimes the needs go beyond what they are capable of," he said. "The needs of the local parishes are not going to be met."

Theisen acknowledged that parishes may have some difficulties adjusting to this new model.

"In some ways this is going to be a year of transition as we look at some of the areas that need to be addressed," Theisen said.

Furthermore, Mancini observed that some services provided through the former Department of Youth Ministry have been lost.

The diocese had planned to create a position known as the coordinator for young adult, adult and family life that would, among other duties, provide sex education. But that position was eliminated after the Pastoral Center's reconfiguration.

In addition, the Christian Youth Leadership Institute will not be held this year. The institute's future has not been determined, Mancini said.

'St. Jude' chain letter circulates throughout Pastoral Center, diocese

ROCHESTER — Several people in the Rochester diocese have recently reported receiving chain letters in which "St. Jude" claims that "you will receive good luck within four days ... provided you in turn send it on."

According to the letter, those who refuse to heed its pleas "within 96 hours" will face all kinds of misfortune.

"With Love All Things Are Possible," reads the beginning of a chain letter sent by "St. Jude" to a number of people in the diocese in the last few weeks.

All the office mailboxes at the Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, were filled with the copies of the letter last week. In addition, a photo intern at the *Catholic Courier* received two versions

of the letter within the last several weeks.

The message begins by stating that it has been sent to its recipient "for good luck" and that the "chain comes from Venezuela and was written by St. Anthony De Group, a missionary from South America." The letter goes on to say that the recipient must send 20 copies to other people so good fortune will allegedly follow.

"An R.A.F. officer received \$470,000," and after "Constantine Dias received the chain," his secretary sent it out and "a few days later he won the lottery of 2 million dollars."

According to the letter, however, people who decided to ignore the letter were allegedly punished.

"Dalan Fairchild received the letter

and not believing, threw the letter away." "Nine days later," the author writes, "he died."

The letter mentions other misfortunes such as job losses, car damage and other plagues for those who don't follow through with its demands.

Concerned recipients should not fret over the consequences of refusing to send out copies of the letter since its author knows little about St. Jude or prayer, according to Nancy Giordano, pastoral assistant at St. Ambrose Parish, 25 Empire Blvd.

Giordano mentioned the chain letter during weekend Masses at the parish July 25-26, after a parishioner approached her and told her that she had received one.

"I said that this is not prayer," Giordano

told the *Catholic Courier*. "Prayer is not some kind of magical divine power that we can tap into. Prayer is intimacy with God, a relationship with God."

Such letters, since they ask for no money, are perfectly legal under postal regulations, according to Laurie Ellis, inspection service technician with the postmaster's office in Rochester. Letters asking for money violate federal lottery laws, she said, but letters only wishing their recipients good or bad luck do not.

"They are annoying letters and we do encourage people to throw them out," she said.

— **Rob Cullivan**