

Expressing views



Karen DeCrow (above), former president of the National Organization of Women, delivers the keynote speech at the Fourth-Annual Women's Equality Day Celebration in Seneca Falls Aug. 29. Ethel Norton (at right) reads a pro-life statement during one of the day's segments.



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

# President Bush may appear at convention

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — President George Bush and wife, Barbara, have responded "with interest" to an invitation to appear at the ninth-annual convention of the New York State Federation of Catholic School Parents, according to Kevin Donoghue, the federation's executive director.

The statewide gathering is scheduled for Oct. 23-25, at the Rochester Hyatt Regency Hotel, 125 Main St.

The president's busy campaign schedule will not permit a definite commitment to be made until about Oct. 15, Donoghue said Aug. 30 during a telephone interview from his office in Manhasset, N.Y.

"The president and Mrs. Bush have responded to our invitation with interest," Donoghue told the *Catholic Courier*. "I think we have a pretty fair chance of getting them."

Republican Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato is another possible participant in the convention. D'Amato, who also is running for re-election this year, has not yet confirmed his attendance either, Donoghue said.

The convention is expected to draw 300 to 500 people, according to Linda

Zaleski, chairwoman of the Rochester diocese's federation chapter, and Laurie Enos, the chapter's director of political action.

Zaleski said federation officials hope the Bushes will attend the convention banquet on Saturday night, Oct. 24.

Noting that the federation represents the parents of more than 350,000 New York Catholic-school students, Donoghue said he believes that figure warrants the attention of a president seeking re-election.

And in his campaign, Bush has stated his support for "choice" in education — a cause near and dear to the hearts of federation members, Donoghue explained. "Choice" is a general term for initiatives that would expand parents' options on their children's schooling, Donoghue added.

Donoghue and Enos pointed out that the Democratic Party — along with Bush's presidential opponent, Bill Clinton — explicitly opposes educational choice for parents.

Bush, on the other hand, has proposed a "G.I. bill" that would give \$1,000 annual scholarships to low- and middle-income children from public and non-public schools, Donoghue noted.

Bush's \$500 million bill recently

drew praise from Sister Lourdes Sheehan, RSM, secretary for education of the United States Catholic Conference.

In a June 29 press release, Sister Sheehan termed the bill "a positive step in keeping the issue of educational choice for low- and middle-income parents in the forefront of the national policy debate."

At the state level, Donoghue pointed out, the parents' federation — along with several other groups, including the New York State Catholic Conference — is working on a potential "choice-voucher" bill.

If introduced in the New York Assembly in 1993, the choice-voucher bill would allow all parents to choose any public or non-public schools in their districts and receive vouchers for tuition payments. The vouchers would go toward tuition at non-public schools, he said.

The bill would gradually phase in a choice-voucher system, Donoghue explained, pointing out that it would target low-income families in the first few years, gradually expanding its scope to include middle-class families.

Along with Frank J. Russo Jr., president of Citizens for Educational Freedom in N.Y. State, Donoghue plans to address the choice-voucher issue from

an economic standpoint during one of the convention workshops.

Donoghue claimed that the state taxpayers would save billions of dollars if New York adopted a choice-voucher plan.

In Manhasset, for example, Donoghue said he pays \$14,000 in property taxes, 60 percent of which goes to support public schooling that his children do not use. Furthermore, it takes \$14,000 worth of taxes to educate one child in a local public school, whereas he pays \$3,000 to send his child to a Catholic school.

Thus, because non-public schools tend to be far leaner in their finances than public ones, he said, fewer children in public schools would mean that less tax revenue would have to be doled out to support children in public schools.

"It not going to cost society any money to give us simple justice and fairness," he said. "It's going to save society money."

In addition to its focus on educational choice, the convention will offer workshops on such issues as raising children, school marketing, gang violence, Montessori schooling, alternatives to abortion, racial harmony and AIDS.

## Vatican upholds bishop's action in removing pastor at Mt. Morris

ROCHESTER — The Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy in Rome has upheld the decision by Bishop Matthew H. Clark to remove Father Norbert Nolan from the pastorate at St. Patrick's Church in Mt. Morris.

The diocese announced the decision in a Sept. 1 press release.

Bishop Clark first asked Father Nolan to resign in March, 1991. According to the diocese, that action stemmed from the pastor's failure to address a number of concerns about his actions.

Father Nolan did not resign, however, and Bishop Clark issued a decree of removal in September of 1991. Father Nolan subsequently appealed the decision to the Congregation for the Clergy.

The Diocese of Rochester consistently has refused to reveal the nature of its concerns about Father Nolan.

At the time of Father Nolan's removal, however, one of his supporters told the *Catholic Courier* that those concerns related to charges of alcohol

abuse by the priest.

When the *Courier* called Father Nolan's current residence at St. Christopher's Church in North Chili Sept. 1, the priest was not available.

In a Sept. 1 interview with the *Courier*, Bishop Clark said the Vatican congregation upheld his decision because the congregation felt the evidence against Father Nolan was verifiable, and because the diocese had followed all the proper procedures necessary for the removal of a pastor.

Father Nolan's removal constitutes the first time Bishop Clark has removed a pastor from office since he became bishop.

"In this case, circumstances warranted steps that I hope I never have to take again," Bishop Clark said.

Father Daniel Condon, administrator of St. Patrick's since September, 1991, has been named pastor of the parish. Father Condon last served at St. Mary's, Scottsville.

— Rob Cullivan

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