

# Funding woes may force Mary's House to close

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Mary's House, the Diocese of Rochester's residential facility for HIV-positive mothers, may be forced to close its doors in 1993 unless diocesan officials can find additional funding to support the program.

According to Sharon Nyquist, project director of the diocese's Maternal and Child AIDS Intervention Program, the house is facing a projected deficit of more than \$13,000 for 1992.

"One of the problems is that we have never been able to achieve a sufficient, ongoing funding stream," noted Paul Pickering, community residence manager for the diocese's community residence program.

"We are looking at the turn of the year as a benchmark for making (the) decision" about closing, Pickering said. "What we're looking for is if we can turn the corner and start making inroads into the debt."

The primary source of income for the house is per diem payments from the Monroe County Department of Social Services, Pickering explained. But because the house is rarely at full occupancy — four women with or child each — the payments have been lower than what was needed to cover expenses, he observed.

"It's very labor-intensive, and the costs don't necessarily decline when you have less people there," Pickering stated.

Meanwhile, although a number of churches, businesses and organizations have contributed to the support of the house, Nyquist noted that those contributions have been insufficient to cover expenses.

Mary's House provides residential support for women who have tested positive for the virus that causes AIDS — and their newborn children. Since opening in a building provided by Corpus Christi Parish, the house has served 12 to 16 women, noted Nyquist, who has been MCAIP's director since



Sharon Nyquist, project director of the diocese's Maternal and Child AIDS Intervention Program, stands in one of the bedrooms at Mary's House. Financial woes may force the house to close next year. Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor

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Many of those women need transitional housing while adjusting to a new baby, finding permanent housing, and obtaining medical and social services, Nyquist noted. Some of the women have been forced to leave their previous homes when it was learned that they are HIV-positive, she said, and some who have just discovered that they have the virus, "need time to figure out their future."

MCAIP also provides case-management services for women — and some men — who are HIV-positive, Nyquist noted. In 1992 alone, approximately 65 people have received support through such services as needs assessments; crisis intervention;

and linkages with medical, legal, housing and social service providers.

The case-management portion of MCAIP is funded by different sources than is Mary's House, Pickering said, and is not feeling the effects of the house's financial problems.

To help clear up the debt and to provide more income, Pickering said he was meeting with officials of diocesan Parish Support Ministries to examine ways of better coordinating and funding ministries. Among other possible income sources for Mary's House are parish social ministry or tithing committees, he said.

In addition, Nyquist said she and her staff are considering such fundraising events as a dinner dance and raf-

fles, and plan to negotiate with county officials to increase the county's per diem payments.

Pickering said he is optimistic about the possibility of additional funding if the people of the diocese realize the need exists.

"My personal feeling is that if people hear about this, then the people of the Diocese of Rochester will respond quite nicely," he said.

EDITORS' NOTE: To obtain information about Mary's House or to contribute to its support, readers may write to MCAIP, c/o Residential Services, Social Ministry of the Diocese of Rochester, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester N.Y., 14624, or call 716/328-3210.

## Area synods furnish flood of proposals

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The three-week series of fall parish/community synods has been completed, and volunteers are now in the process of sorting and collating recommendations made at those sessions.

According to Father Joseph Hart, diocesan director of the Synod, "there are remarkable similarities between what people are recommending."

Although some parishes have not yet submitted all of their recommendations to the diocesan Synod Office, he noted that the office had already received more than 40 separate suggestions about forming support groups in parishes — including ones for single parents and for divorced, separated or widowed people.

Among other suggestions coming forward from a number of parishes are that the diocese form a new Office of Adult and Family Ministry, develop more extensive pre-Cana programs, and establish marriage-enrichment programs.

These and other recommendations

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arose from parish-level discussions conducted during September and October on the first three Synod themes: marriage and family life; worship; and supporting people facing violence, addiction, burdensome pregnancy and terminal illness.

Writing committees are now combining duplicate or related suggestions from the individual parishes into specific recommendations. The committees will submit these combined recommendations to the Synod Agenda Committee by Nov. 10 in preparation for the 11 regional synods to be held Dec. 12, Father Hart reported. The regional synods will then prioritize the recommendations in preparation for the General Synod, scheduled for Oct. 1-3, 1993.

In preparation for the regional synod  
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## Shootings rock Tier village Community holds service for victims

WATKINS GLEN — In a village as tiny and closely knit as Watkins Glen, tragedies are few and far between. But when they come, the entire community is shaken.

Thus it will be quite some time before residents of this 2,500-member village stop reeling from the catastrophic occurrences of Thursday, Oct. 15, when a shooting spree at a county office building left five people dead.

"We're definitely still in the early stages; it's just not possible to get past the denial yet," Father David L. Bonin, pastor at St. Mary's of the Lake Church, Decatur Street, remarked Friday, Oct. 16. "People are still saying, 'This didn't happen; it just doesn't happen in a small community like this.'"

At about 9:30 a.m. last Thursday, 50-year-old John T. Miller wandered into the Schuyler County Social Services Collection Department, 900 N. Franklin St. He opened fire on four departmental workers, killing them all instantly.

Dead are: Phyllis Caslin, 54, Florence A. Pike, 60, and Denise M. Van-

Amburg, 28, all of Watkins Glen; and Nancy J. Wheeler, 48, of nearby Montour Falls.

Minutes after gunning down the office workers, Miller, of North Ridgefield, Ohio, turned his gun on himself as authorities confronted him in a hallway of the building.

Miller was taken to Schuyler Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 10:41 a.m.

A former Schuyler County resident, Miller had reportedly been angry over support payments he has been required to make over several years' time for a child, now 26. Miller had repeatedly claimed he never fathered the child.

Although none of the deceased were parishioners at St. Mary's of the Lake, Father Bonin noted that several parishioners work in the county office building and will be greatly affected by the tragedy.

"I'm sure we all have parts in this," the priest said.

A community service was scheduled to take place Tuesday evening, Oct. 20, at Watkins Glen High School. According to Father Bonin, the service was arranged through the Schuyler County Legislature and the county's council of churches.

— Mike Latona