

Local delegation joins Albany lobbying effort

ROCHESTER — Abortion, the death penalty and health care as well as aid for poor families and children were among the issues stressed Feb. 2 during the New York State Catholic Conference's annual Public Policy Forum Day in Albany.

About 70 representatives from the Rochester diocese joined nearly 500 people from around the state in Albany, where activists lobbied legislators on nine targeted issues, according to Jack Balinsky, director of diocesan Social Ministry.

In addition to representatives from social ministry offices around the diocese, the Rochester delegation included officials from the House of Mercy, Catholic schools and urban services.

"One of my consistent themes is that carrying on the social ministry of the church is the work of the whole church, and not just the people in the office of social ministry," Balinsky said. "I am so delighted with the responsiveness and interest of people."

Balinsky said the annual policy day serves many purposes, including garnering publicity for Catholic lobbying

efforts and attention to issues concerning the church; showing that the state Catholic Conference's staff in Albany has support statewide; and following up diocesan efforts with legislators.

As part of the Diocese of Rochester's local efforts, Balinsky noted that Bishop Matthew H. Clark has invited state legislators in the diocese to a luncheon at the Sheraton Canandaigua Inn on Friday, Feb. 26.

Balinsky pointed out that issues targeted in Albany this year "are ones that are on the front burner."

The state Catholic conference's public policy committee, which includes Balinsky and Tim Dwyer, superintendent of diocesan schools, is charged with targeting issues for the forum.

Among other issues lobbyists discussed with state legislators were expansion of the Child Assistance Program; informed consent for abortion; prohibition of Medicaid funding for abortions; increased textbook aid for public and non-public schools; and opposition to an attempt to pass a constitutional amendment permitting the death penalty.

— Lee Strong



Babette G. Augustin/Photo editor
Willie C. White (foreground) and fellow representatives from Rochester's House of Mercy were slated to travel to Albany Feb. 2 for the New York State Catholic Conference's annual Public Policy Forum Day.

Dispute persists over salt mine proposal

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

YORK — About 80 people filled York Town Hall last week to ask questions about a controversial proposal to use part of the Retsof Salt Mine for storing hardened incinerator ash.

During the Jan. 28 forum, participants heard presentations from both the company making the proposal, AKZO Salt, and Protect A Clean Environment, an area group with concerns about the proposal.

"It was a mild debate," reported Chris Arringenna, the York Town Clerk. "The town board acted as judge and referee."

The towns of York, Genesee and Leicester have formed a joint committee to consider arguments on both sides, Arringenna noted. She said the committee planned to hire an environmental attorney to consider any plan AKZO put forward.

The company has not yet submitted any formal plan, Arringenna added. The town board has not indicated its position on the proposal, she said.

The controversy began in March of 1992 when the company announced that it was exploring the possibility of putting between two and eight tons of incinerator ash in the mine every day.

The ash would be transported by train to AKZO facilities in Retsf, where it would be converted into a cement-like compound and pumped into unused portions of the mine 1,000 feet below the ground.

Company officials claim that once the material hardens it will strengthen the mine, which spans beneath the three towns an area about the size of Manhattan.

In addition to PACE, the Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard is one of the groups voicing its opposition to the plan. These groups are concerned about accidents occurring while the material is being transported, and with the potential danger posed by toxic metals contained in the ash, noted Barbara Joshi, a PACE member.

Joshi said that because the company has not submitted a formal proposal, "It's very difficult to pin them down."

Dennis O'Connor, a researcher with AKZO, said that the company has more studies to complete before a proposal can be made.

"We are not at that point yet because the research is not completed yet," he said.

The next step on the company's agenda is a demonstration project to test the process and to show area residents the procedure for converting the ash into a cement-like slurry.

O'Connor said the demonstration project would most likely start within the next four to six months.

In addition, the company would continue to hold informational sessions — he estimated that about 45 forums have taken place to date — to answer people's questions about the proposal. At many of the sessions

already held, O'Connor noted, "What we have found, quite honestly, are the same questions from the same people. In other words, critics of the proposal, people who have judged it already."

Joshi suggested that the company might try to sidestep the approval process by filing for a "beneficial use designation" with the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Such a designation would remove the classification of the incinerator ash as waste, and subsequently cut down on the environmental hurdles the company would face in getting the project approved.

But O'Connor stated that he did not know how the DEC would react to such a proposal.

"I don't know whether the DEC is at a point to comment on that because they do not have a formal application," he said.

Catholic schools schedule events

The following Catholic schools in the diocese have provided the *Catholic Courier* with information regarding upcoming programs. Some of these events are taking place in conjunction with Catholic Schools Week, which runs through Feb. 5.

Dwyer to visit Waterloo

Timothy W. Dwyer, superintendent of diocesan schools, will visit St. Mary's School, 29 Center St., Waterloo, on Thursday, Feb. 4 to help mark Catholic Schools Week.

Other scheduled events for the week include:

- open house at the school during school hours and from 7-8:30 p.m. Feb. 4, in conjunction with an ice cream social;
- volleyball game between eighth-graders and a faculty/staff team on Feb. 5;
- family Mass at 10 a.m. Feb. 7, with music by the school chorus. In addition, Sister Joseph Gilmery, SSJ,

diocesan assistant superintendent for personnel, will serve as guest speaker.

For information about any of these events, or about the school, call 315/539-3772 during school hours.

St. Michael slates events

As part of its Catholic Schools Week activities, St. Michael's School, 320 S. Main St., Newark, has scheduled a number of events — including a shared supper Feb. 4 and a dance for grades 5-8 on Feb. 5.

Other events on Feb. 5 include a first Friday Mass at 10:45 in the school gym, and a school band concert in the afternoon.

Nazareth plans events

The Nazareth Schools are holding registration for the 1993-94 school year on Tuesday, Feb. 9, from 4 to 7 p.m.

Nazareth Hall is a coeducational school for grades preschool through 8. The preschool to grade-5 boys and

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Fr. Curran slated to speak at Fisher

ROCHESTER — Father Charles Curran will address the issue of withholding or withdrawing life-support treatment for acutely ill patients this Friday, Feb. 5.

The lecture is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. in St. Basil Auditorium at St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Ave.

Father Curran is a professor of human values at Southern Methodist University. In 1986, the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith notified the moral theologian that he was no longer deemed suitable or eligible to teach Catholic theology because of his dissenting views in the area of sexual ethics.

His upcoming lecture at St. John Fisher College is free and open to the public.

For information, call Luke Miller at 716/385-8104.

Chastity program offers abortion, AIDS insights

WEBSTER — Holy Trinity Church, 1456 Ridge Road, will present a program titled "The Abortion & AIDS Problem — the Chastity Solution" in the parish hall on Wednesday, Feb. 10, at 7:30 p.m.

The program will feature two 30-minute films: *No Second Chance*, a movie about acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and *Molly Kelly, Let's Talk to Teens About Chastity*.

Patricia Amato and Patricia Bologna, who serve as director and counselor at the Problem Pregnancy Help Center, respectively, will be available for a short discussion after the films.

Parents, young adults, teenagers and grandparents are welcome. The program is sponsored by the Holy Trinity Pro-Life Group. Donations will be accepted.