

# Second round begins in Synod discussions

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Rochester diocese's seventh synod continued last week with the second round of discussions at 170 parishes and communities.

These discussions, which will lead to 11 Regional Synods on May 22, will culminate with the General Synod from October 1-3 and coincide with the diocese's 125th anniversary.

The General Synod will result in recommendations to guide the diocese in the years to come, according to Father Joseph Hart, Synod director.

Father Hart reported that he had not yet received the reports from the most recent discussions. But, he said, phone conversations with individuals around the 12-county diocese indicated that participation was down slightly compared to the fall sessions. An estimated 30,000 people took part in the discussions last fall.

"But one pastor said while the numbers are down, the quality of the input is up," Father Hart told the *Catholic Courier*.

James Delia, however, reported a large and enthusiastic turnout for discussions at St. Patrick Church in Seneca Falls.

Delia estimated that approximately 45 people gathered for the March 2 discussion on the theme, "How can the church meet the special needs of youth and young adults, and well as the elderly and those who care for them?"

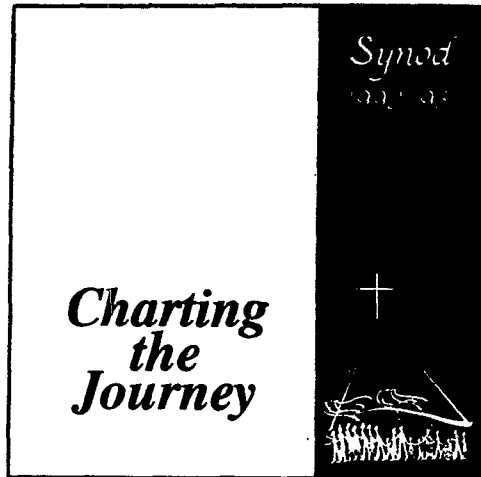
The turnout was comparable to the numbers at the fall sessions, he said.

His parish is already beginning to experience the effects of the first round of discussions, Delia noted.

"Some of the items that don't make it to the regional are in fact going to the parish council," he explained. "We could see some things we could make a change about right in our parish."

The Seneca Falls church, for example, has added a Sunday nursery and a "retirement" group based on suggestions made last fall, Delia said.

Meanwhile, Auburn's St. Alphonsus Church held four sessions during the week, according to Marie Venaglia, religious education director. She reported



ed that numbers were about the same as those in the fall — 79 people took part in discussions last week.

Venaglia added that early participation was already up for the second week of discussions, which began March 7. Those discussions focus on the theme, "How can we improve our efforts in faith development and in inviting others to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ?"

Venaglia suggested that active promotion of the Synod may be part of the reason for its support in Auburn.

She noted, for example, that one parishioner had written an article on the synod in *The Citizen*, Auburn's local newspaper. In addition, members of the parish synod committee have written articles for the parish bulletin and spoken at Sunday liturgies.

Further, St. Alphonsus joined other parishes and communities in Cayuga County in purchasing a full-page advertisement in *The Citizen* to announce times and places for synod sessions.

Venaglia said parishioners "are extremely receptive, excited, encouraging about the process. The whole process of participation makes people — whatever group we're talking about — feel a part of the community."

Father Hart said results from parish discussions will form the basis of recommendations that will be brought to the General Synod in October. Those recommendations will help establish priorities for the diocese.

"The resulting plan will affect church programs and budget for many years to come," Father Hart concluded.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark welcomes Jeremy Sloan of St. Mary Church in Auburn during the Celebration of Election at Geneva's St. Francis De Sales Church March 3.

## Hundreds attend services

This March 3 gathering in Geneva was one of four Rite of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion services held in the Rochester diocese. The other three meetings took place at Sacred Heart Cathedral on March 1-2, and at Watkins Glen's St. Mary of the Lake Parish Feb. 28.

According to Barbara Carroll, diocesan coordinator of sacramental life, about 670 people — the most ever in the diocese — attended the services. The gatherings marked the candidates' entry into a period of spiritual preparation for the Easter Vigil, when they will be received into the Catholic Church.

## CFC unveils social action agenda; proclaims tax code effort success

ROCHESTER — In addition to releasing its 1993 social action agenda, Catholic Family Center, 25 Franklin St., has announced the results of an effort supporting tax code changes in New York state.

The agenda, scheduled for release March 10, supports universal health care and civilian review of police, and offers qualified support for a needle-exchange program in Rochester. The program should provide a bridge to treatment for substance abusers to help control the spread of AIDS, the agency said.

Through the agenda, CFC officials also pledged to research the issues of hunger, homelessness and joblessness, and to develop actions to address these issues. The agency's social ministry office will also seek adequate funding for social programs, and call for reform

of the state tax code system.

The tax code issue was the target of a letter-writing campaign that resulted in 200 letters to state lawmakers, according to a press release from CFC. Known as the "Five Letters for Fairness Campaign," the effort advocates that wealthier individuals pay more taxes to help narrow New York state's budget deficit.

The letters were presented to legislators or their representatives during a legislative forum held Thursday, Feb. 25, at the First Universalist Church, 150 S. Clinton Ave.

According to Brian Kane, director of CFC's Office of Social Policy, New York State Assembly Speaker Saul Weprin (D-Queens) is soon expected to announce his support of a plan that would raise taxes on wealthy individuals as the agency has advocated.

## Mass to precede St. Patrick's Day celebrations

ROCHESTER — Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate the annual St. Patrick's Day Mass at St. Mary Church, 15 St. Mary's Place, this Saturday, March 13, at 9:30 a.m.

The Mass begins a day of celebrations, which will include the 10K "Run for the Shamrocks," scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. For information, call 716/987-RACE.

An Irish flag will be raised at City Hall, 30 Church St., at 10:30 a.m. The ceremony will be accompanied by Irish music and dancing at 11 a.m. Loretta Cisterna Doyle will be accompanied by the Blackthorn Ceilidh Band.

The annual St. Patrick's Day Parade will begin at 12:30 p.m., proceeding down Main Street and passing in front of the reviewing stand near First Federal Plaza.

The United Irish Societies will hold its annual dinner dance at the Mapledale Party House at 7:30 p.m. Tickets may be obtained by calling Mary LaBarr at 544-7088.

For information on any of these events, call Michelle McGuigan at 428-3405 or Ann Marie Cook at 427-9904.

St. Mary's Hospital Chapel, 89 Genesee St., will host its annual St. Patrick's Day Mass on Saturday, March 20, at 4 p.m. Doyle, who will serve as cantor/soloist, will be accompanied by Denize Hueser.

Father P. Frederick Helfrich, hospital chaplain, will celebrate the Mass and deliver the homily. Patricia Arcuri will serve as lector. Doyle's husband, Andy, will join in the celebration by reciting the Lord's Prayer in Gaelic.

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