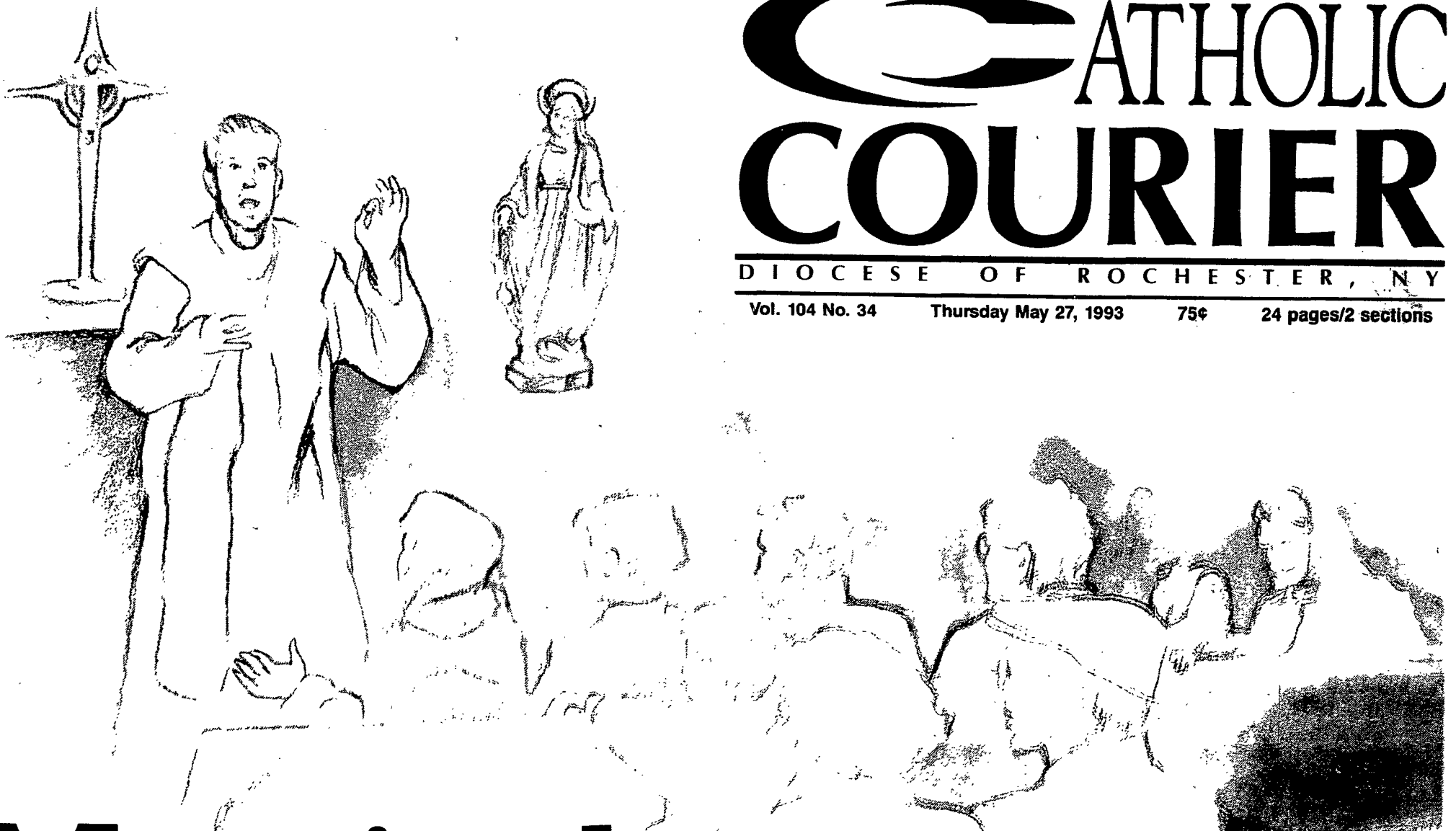


CATHOLIC COURIER

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Vol. 104 No. 34 Thursday May 27, 1993 75¢ 24 pages/2 sections



Marginal Catholics

Support programs seek to eliminate alienation

By Mike Latona, Staff writer

For Tom Donovan, the process of slipping away from his Roman Catholic faith was so smooth that he didn't even realize it was happening.

"You just drift away. It's a slow process, but the farther away you drift, the easier it becomes," the 49-year-old Donovan remarked.

In the mid-1970s, Donovan was a parish-council member at St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 99 Main St., Scottsville, while his wife, Susan, was the religious-education coordinator there.

Then Donovan's new restaurant job began making severe demands on his time, as did his growing family.

"Probably what happened was that we got over-involved at our church," said Donovan. "I wanted to blame those things, but what I should have had were parameters. Balance has to be a total part of your life."

Eventually, Donovan dropped almost right out of parish life.

"I kind of fell by the wayside. I would sit at church with my family, but I wasn't participating," said Donovan, a father of three.

Throughout this five-year period, however, the Scottsville resident received steady encouragement from Monsignor Gerard C. Krieg, then the pastor at St. Mary's.

"In the end, he brought me back," Donovan said of the monsignor who is currently pastor at St. Stephen's Church, 48 Pulleney St., Geneva.

"He never gave up, and that's the key. Christ never gives up either," Donovan added.

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Illustration by Mary Kay Williams



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