

# Meeting covers statewide issues

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

**BUSHNELLS BASIN** — A bill requiring parents to be notified for minors seeking an abortion would pass the state assembly if it could get on the floor, according to Assemblyman Joseph E. Robach, Dem.-134th District.

Robach made his statement following a breakfast meeting between members of the Diocesan Public Policy Committee and state legislators and their aides in the Brookwood Inn, 800 Pittsford-Victor Road, on Friday, Feb. 25. Several issues were raised by both groups in a wide-ranging political discussion.

"It's not a pro-life issue, it's not a pro-choice issue," Robach said of parental notification. "It's about parents. I don't think government should ever do anything to put a wedge between parents and children."

Robach claimed that most assembly members, liberal or conservative, would vote for parental notification if and when the bill got out of the assembly's health committee.

Robach's view on parental notification was echoed in a position paper contained in a folder outlining New York State Catholic Conference stands on various issues. The folder was distributed at the breakfast.

"In New York State, parents are required by law to give permission when their minor child has a tooth drilled or bone x-rayed, but they do not even have to be notified when their daughter is pregnant and considering the invasive surgery of abortion," the NYSCC paper stated. "Surely parents have a right to know of a medical decision that could affect their daughter physically and emotionally for the rest of her life."

Toward the end of the breakfast meeting, Anthony Leavy, legislative counsel to State Sen. Mary Ellen Jones, Dem.-55th District, broached the topic of proposals to fingerprint welfare recipients. Such proposals exist in the Monroe County Legislature and in the state legislature.

Most of the public policy committee members emphasized their opposition to such proposals, which supporters claim are designed to prevent welfare fraud. Some of those present discussed the fact that certain jobs require fingerprinting by applicants, but others contended that such fingerprinting was voluntary — not required by the state.

Carolyn A. Portanova, executive director of Catholic Family Center, said her agency's clients consider fingerprinting dehumanizing — a point echoed by other committee members. Their opposition is shared by the state's bishops, who have opposed welfare recipient fingerprinting since at least 1992, according to information provided to the *Catholic Courier*.

In another development related to fingerprinting welfare recipients, the House of Mercy Organizing Project joined several other groups in Rochester opposed to welfare recipient fingerprinting in a noontime rally at the Monroe County Legislature building on Tuesday, Feb. 22.

Although welfare recipient fingerprinting took up part of the breakfast meeting, the diocese wants the state legislature to take up three other key issues this year in addition to parental notification — universal health care, funding for learning technology in schools, and an earned income tax credit.

Father Michael Bausch, pastor of St. Helen's Parish in Gates, also serves as chairman of the public policy committee. He noted that the public policy committee supported universal access to health care. Bishop Matthew H. Clark said the issue would be the subject of a conference between the U.S. bishops and U.S. congressional members in



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer  
**Carnetta Shanklia of Rochester protests outside the Monroe County Office Building Feb. 22 against proposed fingerprinting of welfare recipients, one of many issues discussed at a Feb. 25 diocesan public policy meeting. Shanklia has a 10-month-old child and has received public assistance for five months.**

Washington, D.C., March 22.

Leavy said there is little interest in the state legislature to pass a health care bill for New York as long as the federal health care reform debate continues.

"I just don't detect a lot of interest in passing a specific bill," he said.

However, Jack Balinsky, diocesan director of social ministry, stressed that even a federal plan will eventually be administered by the states on an individual basis, hence making even the federal health care debate a relevant concern of state legislators.

He and other members of the public policy committee added that the bishops at the state and national level are not as concerned with the particulars of a national and/or state health care plan as they are with the following principles: universal accessibility; moral acceptability to all parties involved; and that any plan restrains growing health care costs.

State funding for learning technology programs that would benefit public and non-public schools is also a diocesan legislative priority. The state Catholic conference paper reiterated the contention of a blue-ribbon panel on Catholic schools headed by former Gov. Hugh Carey which last year called for the state to support such initiatives.

And, finally, Father Bausch said the diocese supports passage of an earned income tax credit which would provide tax refunds to families — depending on size — earning below \$22,350.

"Many families with low wage employment end up owing no income taxes at the end of the year," the state conference paper asserted. "However, those families paid a large percentage of their income through out the year in Social Security tax and sales taxes. The refundable credit provides cash back to these families, thereby acting as an offset to the taxes paid."

On a broader issue, Bishop Clark called attention to the N.Y. bishops' statement on societal violence titled, "Conversion to Peace — Calming our Violent Society."

In its entirety, the document decries abortion, rape, sexual and spousal abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, and murder, and calls for various measures that address the root causes of such phenomena.

In particular, when society responds to crime, Bishop Clark noted that the church continued to oppose such measures as the death penalty and the construction of more jail cells as "emotionally satisfying in the short run."

## 'Mission '94' scheduled at Southern Tier parish

**WATKINS GLEN** — A four-part series entitled "Mission '94" will be presented March 14-17 by the cluster community of St. Mary of the Lake Church in Watkins Glen and St. Benedict Church in Odessa.

All programs will take place from 7-8:30 p.m. at St. Mary of the Lake, 905 N. Decatur St., Watkins Glen. Child care will be provided each evening.

This year's theme is "Isaiah Remembered," with Father Fred Schott and Dorothy Armstrong of Isaiah Ministries serving as principal speakers. Topics are as follows: March 14 — "Remembering Who We Are;" March 15 — "Remembering Mercy;" March 16 — "Remembering Justice;" and March 17 — "Remembering Wholeness."

A concluding celebration to "Mission '94" will take place on Saturday, March 19. Following the 5:30 p.m. Mass, the parish will present a family oriented gathering in the parish center.

For details, call 607/535-2786.

## Bishop Clark to speak at synagogue service

**ROCHESTER** — Bishop Matthew H. Clark is scheduled to speak March 11 about the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel. His presentation will take place during the Sabbath Eve Service at Temple B'rith Kodesh, 2131 Elmwood Avenue.

In addition to being the regular Sabbath Eve service — slated to begin at 8:15 — the event also will celebrate the Vatican's formal recognition of Israel at the end of December, 1993, and the two states' establishment of diplomatic ties.

For more information, call Temple B'rith Kodesh at 716/244-7060.

## Items sought for bazaar to assist Blessed Trinity

**AUBURN** — Organizers of the March 12 bazaar at Blessed Trinity School are seeking items for both a white elephant sale and a small raffle. The bazaar is scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the school gym, 101 E. Genesee St.

White elephant items may be brought to the school basement. Raffle donations can include gift certificates for services, stores and restaurants as well as tickets to sporting events, sports equipment, new dolls and toys.

Money from the bazaar will benefit Blessed Trinity School.

## Parish mission slated

**ROCHESTER** — An Isaiah 43 Team will guide a parish mission at Holy Rosary Church, 414 Lexington Ave., from March 13-16. The mission will begin at 7 p.m. each day. The team comprises Father John Colacino, CPPS, and Rose Marie Lombard.

Deacon Jim Fitch, parish mission coordinator, said the mission will "invite everyone seeking a deeper meaning in their lives to discover or rediscover a personal, living faith."

It is free and open to the public. For information, call Peggy Kelly at 716/458-4422.

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