

Fingerprinting

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clients did not mind being fingerprinted, and it recommended the statewide establishment of fingerprint imaging, citing the savings realized from case closings in the pilot programs.

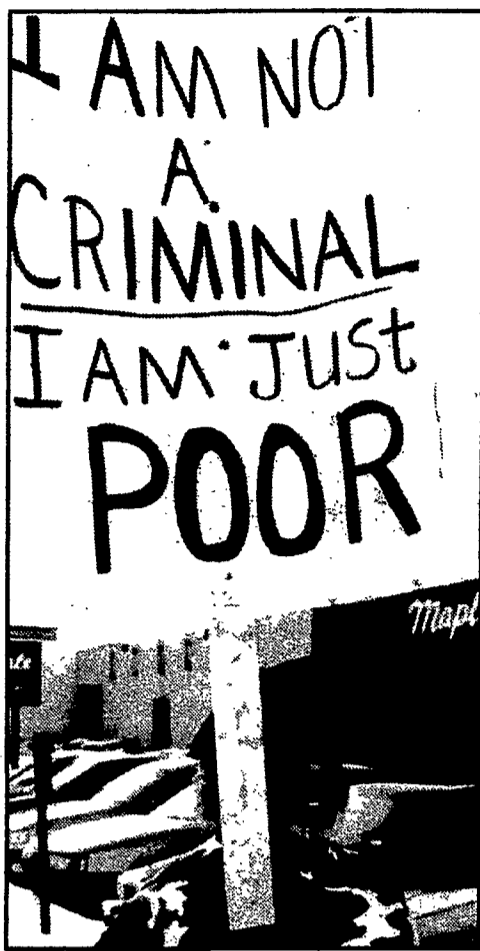
Of 495 clients in Onondaga and Rockland whose cases were closed following institution of fingerprinting, 330 were closed for such "routine reasons" as unreported income or unknown whereabouts.

The remaining 143 people refused to continue to receive benefits apparently because of an unwillingness to be fingerprinted, the report said. However, it added that "we are unable to conclusively state that these clients would have been ineligible had they submitted to the finger imaging."

Despite the heat the issue has generated in this diocese, in other dioceses in New York, and in Los Angeles, Calif., the Catholic leadership's reaction to fingerprint-imaging has been a mixed bag.

A diocesan spokesman for the Los Angeles archdiocese stated that the church has neither opposed nor supported a program that has required welfare recipients in Los Angeles county to be fingerprinted since June, 1991.

"I don't recall us taking a stand," said Father Gregory Corio, director of pub-



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
The Rev. Frank Peace of the Congress of African American Unity protests outside a March 3 meeting of Republicans in Rochester.

lic affairs, in a phone interview.

John Kal, director of communications for the Diocese of Rockville Centre, which includes Suffolk County, said Bishop John R. McGann is not opposed to fingerprinting. He said the bishop added that he himself had been fingerprinted when he had served as a prison chaplain.

Keith Ackerman, director of communications for the Syracuse diocese, reported that his diocese did not take a stand for or against a pilot fingerprint program instituted by the state in Onondaga County.

Rockland County is part of the New York archdiocese, and an employee there told the *Catholic Courier* that the archdiocese has not taken an official stand on the issue.

During the conference's legislative day in Albany on Feb. 15, however, Kathy Gallagher, associate legislative director of the New York State Catholic Conference, said Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York stated his opposition to welfare recipient fingerprinting. The conference president's stand was echoed by Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, Gallagher added.

The conference opposed a 1992 statewide fingerprinting proposal, stating that research on its cost-effectiveness was not adequate. The conference also said that fingerprinting "conveys a negative message regarding the poor, most of whom are elderly and children."

Workshop to address arts as paths to divine

ROCHESTER — Wellspring's Lay School of Theology and Ministry has scheduled an all-day workshop, "The Arts: Pathway to the Human and Divine," on Saturday, March 19. The workshop will begin at 9 a.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 25 Westminster Road.

Among the scheduled presenters will be Father Sebastian A. Falcone, professor of Biblical Studies at St. Bernard's Institute, who will talk about "Jesus' Parables as Theopoetic Experience;" Sister Maureen Servas, RSM, who will offer reflections on "Clay and Water and Hands and Breath," and will provide an opportunity for hands on experience with clay; and Sister Estelle Martin, RSM, who will show slides of religious art and architecture.

The day will also include discussions of music from Taiz, St. John of the Cross, poetry, dance and the visual arts.

The reservation deadline is March 15. Cost is \$40 per person.

For information, contact Wellspring at 716/271-7017.

Vatican, S. Africa to swap ambassadors

John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican announced March 5 it was establishing full diplomatic relations with South Africa and said the move was aimed at encouraging the passage from apartheid to democracy.

The exchange of ambassadors will also benefit the minority Catholic Church and its future evangelization efforts in the country, the Vatican said. About 3 million of South Africa's 36 million population are Catholic.

South Africa's establishment of a multiracial Transitional Executive Council and approval of a new constitution confirm "the definitive end of the apartheid system," Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said. The country is scheduled to hold its first free elections in April.

The move to full diplomatic relations

appeared to bolster hopes that Pope John Paul II would make a pastoral visit sometime soon to South Africa. The pope accepted an invitation to visit the country during a meeting last December with President Frederik W. de Klerk. No date was set for the trip.

Navarro-Valls said South Africa appeared well on its way toward construction of a pluralistic society, and that diplomatic recognition was a sign of its deserved readmission into the international community.

The Vatican's upgrading of its diplomatic ties was also aimed at showing appreciation to those who negotiated a peaceful transition to democracy in South Africa, the papal spokesman said.

With full diplomatic ties, the Vatican will name an apostolic nuncio, and South Africa will appoint an ambassador.

As South Africans gear up for their first all-racial elections this April, first-time voters in South Africa need to learn how to vote and how to make informed choices, said Archbishop Lawrence Henry of Cape Town.

"For millions of people, me included, this will be their first experience of a democratic election," Archbishop Hen-

ry said in a letter read in Cape Town parishes Feb. 20.

"Therefore, one of the primary things to be done is to ensure that the new electorate learns how to vote. But that is not enough. People must be encouraged to learn who to vote for and why — to make informed decisions," he said.

For decades, under South Africa's system of apartheid, Archbishop Henry was classified as mixed-race; only whites were allowed to vote. Later, mixed-race and Asian citizens were given their own houses in a tri-cameral parliament. But blacks — 75 percent of the population — still had no voice in government.

Archbishop Henry said South Africa's bishops joyfully welcome the upcoming April 26-28 all-race elections. After the elections, people should become active in political life "to ensure that Christian values are respected and practiced." He said the church expects Catholic voters to challenge candidates on abortion "and other crucial public issues."

Priests must support voter education programs in their parishes, he added.

In a statement issued in Johannesburg, South Africa, Feb. 14, the Panel of Religious Leaders for Electoral Justice said "the process of negotiations poses no threat to the survival of any of the South African peoples."

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Ithaca parish schedules retreat March 20-24

ITHACA — Immaculate Conception Church, 113 N. Geneva St., will host a Lenten retreat from March 20-24.

The retreat is scheduled to include a prayer service and conference beginning at 7 p.m. each evening, as well as Mass and a conference beginning at 9 a.m. on March 21-24 only.

Father Simeon Gallagher, OFM Cap., will make the main presentation, titled "The Theology and Spirituality of Relationships."

All are welcome to attend. For details, call 607/273-6121.

St. Ambrose offers not-for-profit grants

ROCHESTER — St. Ambrose Parish, 25 Empire Blvd., will donate \$11,000 this year to not-for-profit organizations assisting the poor and disadvantaged.

The parish's social ministry committee will evaluate all applications and nominate three-to-five applicants that will be presented to parishioners for their consideration. The parish will vote on which organizations will receive donations the weekend of June 4-5. The parish reserves the right to distribute the money to one or several applicants.

Organizations interested in applying for monies should call the rectory at 716/288-5000 to request an application, which is due at the church by Friday, April 15.

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