

Pastoral Office houses 'servants of the servants'

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

When talking of the United States, people rarely collectively refer to the nation as just "Washington."

It is equally inaccurate when talking about the Diocese of Rochester to refer to the Pastoral Office as the "diocese."

"The diocese is the Church of Rochester," observed Father John M. Mulligan, moderator of the Pastoral Office, 1150 Buffalo Road. "We are all the diocese."

Thus, Father Mulligan noted, the diocese comprises 180 faith communities and 125,000 families, not just Bishop Matthew H. Clark, his staff, and the 70 to 80 people who work at the Pastoral Office (also often referred to as the Pastoral Center or "Buffalo Road").

Yet just as Washington serves as an administrative hub for the nation as a whole, the Pastoral Office serves as a coordinating body for the diocese, serving both Bishop Clark and the diocese's communities and lay people.

"We see ourselves as gathered around the bishop to fulfill the mission and the goals of the bishop and the Church of Rochester," Father Mulligan remarked. "We're really here to serve the churches, to help the local church be church."

That philosophy was enunciated in 1991 in the "Pastoral Center Mission and Purpose" statement.

"Committed to excellence, we provide professional support and development and technical services for the diocesan community in compliance with canon law," the statement reads.

The areas of that support are explained in the diocese's statement of "Mission and Goals," which was approved in 1991, but is currently being revised in light of the recommendations approved at the diocese's General Synod last October.

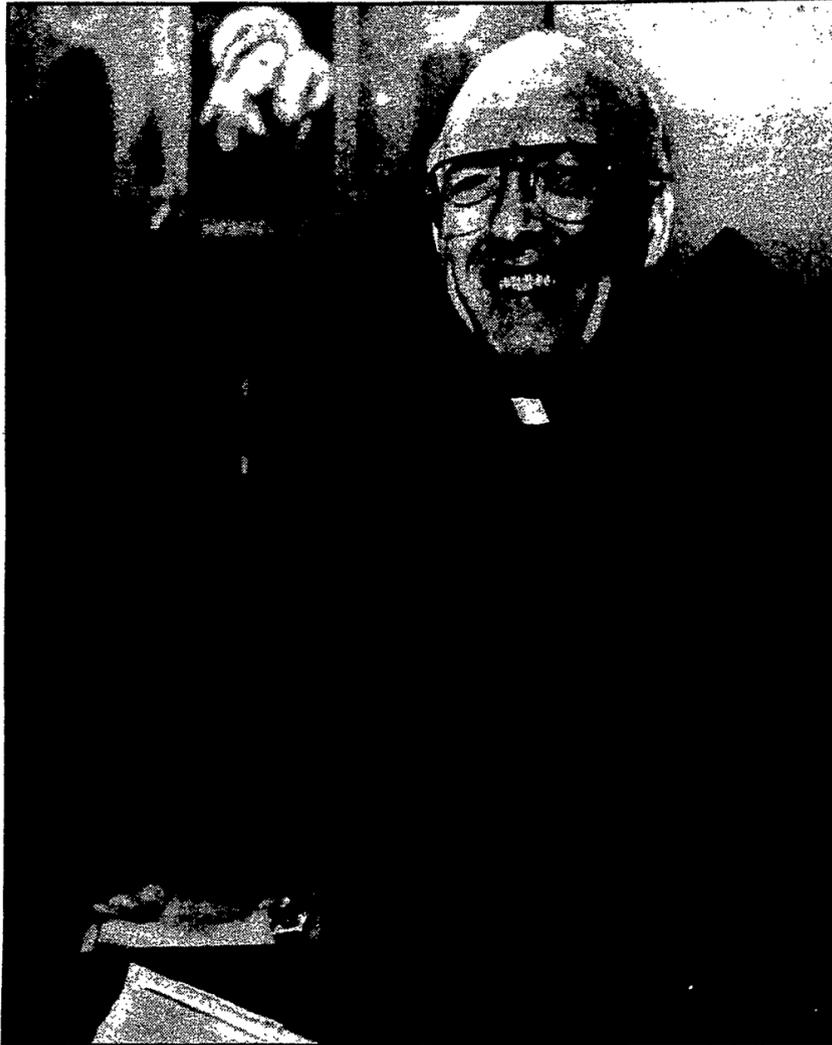
Those areas include faith development, human care service and providing well-qualified ministers for parishes. Thus the Pastoral Office is organized into appropriate "ministry areas."

External Ministries, which more directly work with parishes and communities in the diocese, are: Parish Support Ministries; Human Resources; Faith Development Ministry; and Social Ministry (which is soon to be renamed Catholic Charities).

Internal Support Services — which serve both the Pastoral Office and other diocesan communities — include Financial Services, Development Services, Legal Services and Information Services.

Related services are grouped under each of these areas. Thus, for example, Faith Development Ministry oversees a variety of education ministries, including Catholic schools, religious education and professional development. Human Resources, meanwhile, deals with personnel services ranging from priests to parish staff to chaplains.

While some Pastoral Office services directly serve individual Catholics — the diocesan Tribunal, for example, which



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Father John M. Mulligan serves as vicar general and moderator of the Pastoral Office, 1150 Buffalo Road, Gates, which provides support and development services for the Rochester diocese.

evaluates marriage annulment cases — the majority of services are intended to serve church communities and staffs, Father Mulligan explained.

"We support the staff and volunteers," Father Mulligan said. He noted that Pope John Paul II often describes himself as "the servant of the servants of God. In a way, we are the servants of the servants."

Thus the average parishioner might have little direct contact with Pastoral Office employees. But parish staffs would have available the support services of the Pastoral Office to help with finances, censuses, parish council formation, staffing or education and training. Parish volunteers and committee members might also work with Financial or Development Services, Social Ministry (either through the Pastoral Office or through the two regional offices), or offices that serve such minority communities as Hispanics, Blacks and Vietnamese.

To help provide these services, the Pastoral Office staff has been trying to improve communication with diocesan communities. Each week, the Pastoral Office sends out a "Centralized Mail" packet. This packet includes information about programs and workshops, changes in law and diocesan practices that affect communities, news about upcoming events and diocesan initiatives.

"I think this gives a solid impression of what we are doing," Father Mulligan noted.

In addition, the Pastoral Office added a voice-mail system so that even when

staff members are not available, callers can leave messages. The Pastoral Office is also expanding its computer capabilities so that a number of parishes will be able to dial into Pastoral Office computers via modem.

Pastoral Office personnel are also exploring the possibility of uplink capabilities so that key conferences can be carried on simultaneously at the Pastoral Office and at downlink sites around the diocese.

Internally, directors of each of the Pastoral Office ministry areas meet regularly to help coordinate activities and to avoid duplication of services. Pastoral Office employees also hold regular "house meetings" during which they can receive information about services and programs as well as updates on activities and even education sessions about social and church issues.

The Pastoral Office will be undergoing changes in the near future in light of the recommendations of the diocese's seventh Synod. During the General Synod last October, delegates from around the diocese approved five priorities to guide the Church of Rochester in the future.

The Synod Implementation Commission, which is currently developing implementations strategies, is scheduled to release recommendations in the fall.

Those recommendations will help guide future diocesan — and Pastoral Office — priorities and actions, Father Mulligan concluded.

Auburn parish to bring world geography to life

AUBURN — The Adult and Youth committees at Sacred Heart/St. Ann's Parish is sponsoring a family entertainment program titled, *Around the World With Marty Grah*, on April 8 and 9. The program will be presented at 6:30 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. Saturday in the parish center, 90 Melrose Road.

Written and performed by Michael McGuigan of the Bond St. Theatre Coalition of New York City, the one-man show tells the adventures of "famous" explorer Marty Grah. The program combines social studies, geography and folk theater techniques, and includes opportunities for audience participation.

Admission is \$3.

For information, call 315/252-7271 or 253-2712.

Bishop to celebrate annual Chrism Mass

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate the annual Chrism Mass on Tuesday, March 29, at 7:30 p.m. The liturgy will take place at Sacred Heart Cathedral, 296 Flower City Park.

During the Mass, Bishop Clark will bless holy oils to be used during the coming year for baptisms, confirmation, holy orders and for ordaining bishops, and for consecrating churches, chalices, patens, bells and baptismal water.

All priests who wish to celebrate the Mass are asked to meet at the cathedral rectory at 7 p.m., and to bring an alb and white stole.

The Mass is open to the public.

Applications available for 1994 family camps

ITALY VALLEY — Application forms are currently available for the 1994 Family Camps to be held at Kamp Koinonia, located at 1455 Italy Valley Road in Yates County.

Family Camp, in its 26th year, combines a vacation with Christian family renewal. The camp will offer three sessions this summer, on the following dates: July 17-22, July 24-29 and July 31-Aug. 5.

For an application, call Sue and Rich Versluys at 716/352-6826.

Catholic Family Center to host parents' group

ROCHESTER — Catholic Family Center, located on the seventh floor of the Sibley Tower Building, 25 Franklin St., is accepting referrals for a support group for parents of children ages 5 to 10.

Group members will help each other solve child-related problems with appropriate discipline and love. The group is slated to begin in March and will meet for eight Thursdays from 9:45-11:15 a.m.

For information, call 716/262-7108 or 262-7116.

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