

Need information on domestic violence and spousal abuse?

The following is a list of
addresses and phone num-
bers compiled for each
diocesan county by

Diocesan Social Ministry.

Cayuga
Community Action Agency, 87
North St., Auburn, N.Y. 13021.
Call 315/255-1703, or 252-0018.

Chemung and Schuyler
Men's Support Group, 425
Pennsylvania Ave., Elmira, N.Y.
14901. Call 607/737-2077.

Neighborhood Justice Project,
325 Lake St., Elmira, N.Y. 14901.
Call 607/737-2077.

Crisis Program. Call 607/734-
3338.

Monroe and Livingston
Catholic Family Center, 25
Franklin St., 7th Floor, Rochester,
N.Y. 14604. Call 716/262-7118,
or 262-7115.

Ontario, Seneca and Yates
Family Counseling of the Finger
Lakes, 671 East Exchange St.,
Geneva, N.Y., 14456. Call
315/789-2613, or 789-2686.

Steuben
Neighborhood Justice Project,
147 East 2nd St., Corning, N.Y.
14830. Call 607/936-8807.

Tioga
Victims Assistance Center, P.O.
Box 509, Owego, N.Y. 13827. Call
607/687-6866.

Tompkins
Task Force for Battered
Women, P.O. Box 164, Ithaca,
N.Y. 14851. Call 607/277-5300.

Wayne
Victims Resource Center, 165
East Union St., Newark, N.Y.
14513. Call 315/331-1171.

Josh McCrossen at 315/331-
4867.
To obtain a copy of the 1992
U.S. bishops' pastoral on domes-
tic violence, *When I Cry For Help*,
please write to: Judy Taylor,
Diocesan Social Ministry, 1150
Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y.
14624, or call 716/328-3210.

- Rob Cullivan



AP/Wide World Photos

In this photo taken last October, O.J. Simpson and the late Nicole Brown Simpson attended the opening of the Harley Davidson Cafe in New York City. O.J. Simpson has been ordered to stand trial in the slayings of his ex-wife and her friend Ronald Goldman.

New law

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In her testimony, Gallagher pointed out that as far back as 1971, Pope Paul VI condemned the widespread abuse of women by their mates.

"Legislation should be directed to protecting women, recognizing their independence as persons, and their equal rights to participate in cultural, social and political life," the pope wrote in *Octogesima Adversus*.

Pope John Paul II has made similar statements, Gallagher continued, adding that the U.S. bishops issued a pastoral letter on domestic violence in 1992.

Titled *When I Call For Help*, the bishops' letter states that "abuse, assault, or murder are not less serious because they occur within the family ... Violence, whether committed against family members or strangers, is antithetical to the Judeo-Christian message of love and respect for the human person."

The bishops' statement also offered several suggestions on what parishes can do to become more involved.

They include making the parish a safe place where abused women and men who batter can come for help; learning about domestic violence and being alert for signs of abuse; making sure that homilies address domestic violence; asking direct questions if you suspect abuse; keeping a list of resources for abused

women in your area and having an action plan in place if an abused woman calls you for help.

The notion that such a phone call could come from the wife of a popular folk hero like O.J. Simpson may have seemed incredible before the domestic disputes that occurred between him and his wife became known to the public. However, the kind of violent disputes that apparently took place between the couple are unfortunately far from uncommon in the United States.

According to several sources, some three million to four million American women are battered each year by their husbands or partners.

Statistics also show that in the United States, a woman is more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped or killed by a male partner than by any other assailant.

And an estimated 2,000 to 4,000 women are beaten to death each year.

The response in the Catholic Church to the problem of domestic violence has been full of good will, but the specific assistance that battered women need has sometimes been lacking.

For example, a survey of pastors in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis by the archdiocesan Task Force on Domestic Violence showed that most of the priests had never preached about the evil of abuse in the home, and that only one in four parish religious education programs had treated the subject.

"About half the priests who responded to our task force's questionnaire said they hadn't experienced the problem of domestic violence in their parishes, and we know that's not the case from statistics about the prevalence of abuse in the general population," said Phyllis Willerscheidt, executive coordinator of the archdiocesan Commission on Women.

Factors that keep domestic abuse from the eyes of parish priests include the following:

- Some women don't acknowledge that they are being abused.
- Some don't want others to know if they do acknowledge it.
- And some do not see their parish as a place to turn for help in an abusive situation.

Why do women stay in abusive situations?

"Often you'll hear them say, 'I love him,'" said Richard J. Ievoli, senior psychologist for Intake and Family Counseling Services in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

"There is often a very strong, emotional connection and a feeling of responsibility for the behavior of the abuser," he added. "Often an abuser will blame the victim for provoking the violence. If you're cast in that role and if your self-esteem is low, you tend to believe that over the years.

"We take the opposite tack - that the

abuser, no matter what the provocation, no matter what he thinks is justification - nothing justifies that violent act," Ievoli said. "Unless a person is defending his life, his home or his family, violence is not appropriate behavior. We have to hold the abuser responsible for his own violent behavior."

Fear of further abuse or of being alone are other reasons that women stay in relationships, Ievoli said.

"Their self-esteem is just in the mud," he said. "They don't leave because they think they're going to die if they leave. They don't think they're going to be able to support themselves. There is also very often a fear that their lives will be in jeopardy from the abuser."

But for those who do leave, life sometimes confirms the fears of life without the economic anchor even an abusive male can provide his family.

Domestic violence is "the major cause of homelessness among women and children in this country," according to an October, 1993, report by the Catholic-affiliated Women and Housing Task Force. The report estimates that half of all homeless women and children are fleeing domestic violence.

There are far too few shelters to house the battered women and children who need them, the report said, noting there are "nearly three times as many animal shelters in the United States as there are battered women's shelters."

Yet, in the end, shelters to house women and children and punitive laws designed to punish the men who abuse them only serve as bandages on the wound of abuse. How can that wound be healed?

In Philadelphia, Project RAP - Reduce Abuse Program - is an outpatient group treatment and rehabilitation program for adult men who abuse their partners.

The program only accepts men who acknowledge some problem with partner abuse. The majority of men in the program are in their late 20s to early 30s, but there are also participants as young as 19 and as old as their late 50s. They discuss "issues of ethics, fairness, morality and the will to be a better person," said Paul Bukovec, a clinical social worker and Project RAP director.

The initial rehabilitation program consists of 12 weeks of psycho-educational treatment, followed by 24 weeks of therapy. Men may continue treatment in an advanced group.

Abuse is often a learned behavior, Bukovec said. "The tendency to carry on what happened to you - to act it out rather than to act it 'in' - is common in males, but not in all males," he said. "We don't know exactly why some males don't (abuse) and some males do."

The end of the line is often what brings the men to the program. "Most of them come because they've lost something or are about to lose something - their wives or access to their homes. Many of the men have been hit in the face by a harsh reality."

The recovery rate of the RAP program is promising. Bukovec said approximately 70 percent of the men who complete the program stop abusing entirely, and a significant number dramatically decrease their physical abuse.

Humility is the first step to recovery, Bukovec said. "You have to be humble. A humble stance before God, before fellow family members, is crucial to real spiritual growth. You can't be a dominant, domineering, cocky person and really fit through the doorway to heaven."

"We joke around here about the fact that the doorway to this place is low - you have to bow a little bit to get in," he added. "You can do these things if you can tolerate humbling yourself rather than being humiliated by life."

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This article contains reporting by staff writer Rob Cullivan.

ANNOUNCING THE 1994-95 DIOCESAN DIRECTORY OF THE ROCHESTER CATHOLIC DIOCESE

This September, the Catholic Courier will publish *The 1994-95 Official Directory of the Catholic Diocese of Rochester*. The 150-page Directory is a comprehensive guide to every parish, office, institution and organization in the 12-county Diocese. It also contains telephone listings for all priests and key parish staff members.

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