

Lay Hispanics challenged to act

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — Lay Hispanics need to become more actively involved in a Catholic Church that must let them know how they can do so.

This was one of the key assertions made by Father Feliciano Rodriguez as he spoke during the annual Hispanic *Mision*, held Aug. 22-26 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 1089 Joseph Ave.

"I'm trying to focus on the participation of lay people in the church as the core of the new evangelism," noted Father Rodriguez, director of vocations for the Diocese of Caguas, Puerto Rico, in an Aug. 26 interview. "I'm emphasizing participation, motivation, the need to put our charisms to work for the whole community — and not to depend on the priests and nuns."

During the mission Father Rodriguez preached about evangelization, while addressing the issues of family, God's love, salvation and the church. The mission featured evening sessions from 7-9 p.m. which drew approximately 400 people nightly. It also included daily afternoon sessions for teenagers.

The Puerto Rican priest said events such as last week's mission appeal to Hispanics who "like huge gatherings, it's something of our culture," and that such gatherings provide a way to counter inroads made by other churches that are luring Hispanic Catholics.

"If we do these things more often, we will stop (Hispanic) people going to other churches," Father Rodriguez said.

The priest noted that he spoke with a number of enthusiastic people during the mission. He suggested the Rochester diocese consider sponsoring more such events — above and beyond the already scheduled events — for Hispanic Catholics in the near future.

In addition, Father Rodriguez noted that numerous people approached him



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Music filled the air Aug. 23 during the annual Hispanic *Mision*, held Aug. 22-26 at Rochester's Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

during the mission to ask how they might become more involved in church ministry. After referring them to their home parishes, he also recommended diocesan officials provide brochures or information booklets at such gatherings to let Hispanics know about opportunities to serve the church.

Father Rodriguez praised the enthusiasm among the teens who attended the afternoon sessions, even though the time of the sessions (3 p.m.) was apparently inconvenient and prevented some from attending.

During the afternoon sessions, Father Rodriguez spoke about such topics as family and self esteem and offered opportunities for confession. He noted that many Hispanic teens in Rochester are facing problems due to broken families and lack of support from their extended families — a situation not as common in Puerto Rico.

"I think the family bonds are stronger in Puerto Rico than here," the priest observed. If, for example, a Puerto Rican youth is getting into trouble or is proving difficult to handle,

he or she would be sent to stay with relative such as grandparents.

"There's a lot more support," he said.

Father Rodriguez is also hoping to establish a relationship between the Caguas and Rochester dioceses so that an exchange program can bring teens from his home diocese here and vice versa for "mission summers." He noted that his own diocese sends youths for summer mission visits throughout Latin America, and that Rochester teenagers could possibly become part of that program.

Father Rodriguez said he sensed that both the diocese and the parishes he visited are working to help make Hispanics feel welcomed in the church. He praised the *Instituto*, which the diocese sponsors to help train lay leaders in the Hispanic community, and even the creation of clusters of city parishes.

"I think that (clustering) would be a good model for other dioceses," Father Rodriguez observed. "If you have a priest who speaks Spanish, you can move him around to each of the parishes."

Bishop Clark to appear at school's re-opening ceremony on Tuesday

CORNING — Bishop Matthew H. Clark is scheduled to celebrate the re-opening of the former St. Patrick's School building this coming Tuesday, Sept. 6, at 7:30 p.m.

Located at 274 Denison Parkway E., the facility is now called All Saints Academy at Denison Parkway. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will attend the school this year; students in grades 1-8 will attend All Saints Academy at State Street (formerly St. Mary's School).

All Saints Academy's projected overall enrollment for 1994-95 is 384 students.

Actress set to attend Oct. 7 benefit dinner

ROCHESTER — Famed actress Cicely Tyson will serve as the keynote speaker for a 15th-anniversary gala commemorating the Alternatives for Battered Women shelter.

The banquet will take Friday, Oct. 7, at 5:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 125 E. Main St. Proceeds will benefit the children's program at Alternatives for Battered Women, which provides shelter, counseling and advocacy services for abused women and their children.

For details on this event, call Pam Wehle at 716/232-7353.

Eileen George scheduled to lead Auburn services

AUBURN — Eileen George, a well-known speaker and healer, Sept. 4-7 is scheduled to speak and conduct healing services at St. Alphonsus Church, 95 E. Genesee St. The services will take place at 7 p.m. each evening.

For information, contact the rectory at 315/252-7261.

Rochester cluster establishes administrative corporation

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

The Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward, Inc. is exploring a financial and administrative model that may eventually become the norm for clusters in the Rochester diocese.

On June 24, the cluster, which consists of St. Augustine's, St. Monica's and Our Lady of Good Counsel parishes in Rochester, have created a non-profit umbrella corporation. The parishes, however, are remaining separately incorporated and canonically distinct.

The new corporation will pay the salaries of 12 full- and part-time employees who serve the cluster; funding for such cluster-wide programs as evangelization, religious education and sacramental preparation; and the cost of purchasing equipment that benefits the cluster as a whole, such as computers and the copiers.

The parishes continue to pay the salaries of maintenance workers, secretaries and musicians, along with their own maintenance expenses, noted Father Robert T. Werth, the cluster's pastor.

Each parish is responsible for one third of the cluster's budget, Father Werth explained. Funds raised beyond that commitment are retained by each

parish for its own expenses.

"From a bookkeeping and administrative perspective, it's easier" to have the cluster incorporated, Father Werth observed. Parishioners will not notice any changes in terms of ministry in their parishes, he added.

James M. Rinefierd, chief financial officer for the diocese, said the business arrangement at the 19th Ward community offers some advantages that could benefit other diocesan clusters.

"What it does is provide a legal reality for conducting the business of the cluster," observed Rinefierd, who helped coordinate the development of the 19th Ward community's incorporation plan.

Beyond easing the cluster's financial operation as a whole, Rinefierd observed, the arrangement makes it easier for individuals to donate money directly to the cluster, instead of just one parish; allows greater flexibility in terms of use of employees and in paying their salaries; and is "cleaner" than the standard cluster model in which most of the cluster's money is handled through the bank account of one parish.

"This (form of incorporation) is something we've looked at as a model for other clusters," Rinefierd said. "We would be looking at the 19th Ward model as the model when clusters are forming."

The 19th Ward's approach, however,

is not the only one being considered in the diocese at this time.

The Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community and Elmira's Eastside Catholic Parish have strategic planning committees considering the possibility of incorporating as single entities, rather than as a cluster entity and separate parish corporations as the 19th Ward has done.

Deacon Michael Campanelli of the Eastside Catholic Parish observed that "keeping (the parishes) separate has a tendency to divide people." Thus the Elmira cluster's thinking is that incorporating as a single entity might help to promote greater unity, he suggested.

The deacon noted that officials of the Elmira cluster — consisting of St. Cecilia's, St. John the Baptist and St. Peter and Paul parishes — had initially discussed the possibility of incorporating as a single entity two years ago. But diocesan officials, while not rejecting the idea, said "it had never been done and they weren't sure how it would be done legally" at that time, Deacon Campanelli explained. In addition, he said, some parish council members in the cluster had expressed reservations about the idea "so we put it on the back shelf."

The idea re-surfaced this spring and is being considered as part of an overall strategic plan for the cluster, Deacon

Campanelli said. He acknowledged, however, that the issue is not a priority at this time.

Likewise, Father William V. Spilly, pastor of the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community — consisting of St. Mary's, St. Patrick's and St. Vincent DePaul parishes in Corning, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Painted Post — noted that the idea of incorporating his four parishes into one entity is being considered by a strategic planning group.

As part of its deliberations, the Corning-Painted Post group is looking into the legal and canonical issues involved in incorporating. If the committee makes any recommendation to pursue incorporation, it is not expected to do so until next spring when it submits its overall cluster plan, Father Spilly added.

Rinefierd said diocesan officials are aware of what the two Southern Tier clusters are considering, but are currently focusing on the 19th Ward cluster as the model for other clustered parishes.

When asked about the single corporation model being explored by the Southern Tier clusters, Rinefierd said, "Clearly that is something we would look at as coming from the community rather than as something being imposed on them."