

Priest calls for AQ board to resign

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A Basilian priest who teaches at The Aquinas Institute is calling for the resignation of all members of the school's board of trustees and for the formation of a teachers' union.

Claiming that board members reneged on an agreement to table the establishment of a president's post at the school, Father Joseph M. Lanzalaco, CSB, made the calls in an Oct. 7 public letter provided to the *Catholic Courier*. Father Lanzalaco acknowledged to the *Courier* that the letter represented his personal opinion, not an official statement from the Basilian community.

Aquinas is currently led by a principal who belongs to the Basilian order, which has traditionally staffed and overseen the school. The board of trustees announced last spring that it planned to establish a president to serve as the school's chief executive officer.

Partly in response to questions Basilians and school faculty members raised about the administrative scope the president would have, the board announced in a June 10, 1994, letter that it had tabled plans to establish the post for the 1994-95 school year.

The June 10 letter was signed by Frank B. Iacavangelo, a member of the

school's board of trustees, and Father Dennis J. Kauffman, CSB, superior of the Basilians at Aquinas.

But Father Lanzalaco told the *Courier* that the board has been interviewing candidates for the position, and that the board had not conducted any discussions with the Basilians regarding the establishment of the position.

"They have done this against the wishes of the Faculty of Aquinas Institute," Father Lanzalaco's letter claims of the board. "They have operated in secret. They have refused to answer letters of concern from the faculty. They have not lived up to their promise to keep the local Basilian Community informed of their processes and decisions.

"I publically call for the resignation of all the members of the Board of Trustees," the letter states, adding that Father Lanzalaco seeks the support of Basilian priests, faculty, administration, parents, students and Aquinas alumni for his demand.

Father Lanzalaco also urged the school's teachers to organize a union.

"I encourage the faculty, who work long hours for little pay, to consider bringing in a Teacher's Union to protect their jobs if (the trustees') resignations are not forthcoming," he wrote.

"Any group which operates in the manner of the current Board of Trustees is

capable of anything."

When contacted for comment on Monday, Oct. 11, Iacavangelo confirmed that the board had been interviewing candidates for the Aquinas presidency. But he stressed that four Basilian priests sit on the board of trustees and that they are fully aware of the situation.

In addition, Iacavangelo said Father Joseph A. Trovato, CSB, the Basilians' regional representative to the board, has participated in all interviews with potential candidates for the presidency.

"There certainly have been no clandestine meetings," Iacavangelo said.

On Tuesday, Oct. 11, Aquinas sent a statement by fax to the *Courier*, disclaiming Father Lanzalaco's statement.

"Allegations made by Father Lanzalaco were not reviewed, approved or endorsed by any official representatives of the Basilian Fathers," the statement read.

The statement added that the Basilians — along with representatives of students, parents and faculty — are represented on the presidential search committee.

"The Trustees and Basilian Fathers continue to work together to assure a successful future for The Aquinas Institute," the statement said. "This individual effort by Father Lanzalaco is contrary to the best interests of The Aquinas Institute and does not represent any official position of the Basilian Fathers."

Memorial service held by Catholic Daughters

WEBSTER — The diocesan Catholic Daughters of America celebrated their annual Past Regents Memorial Mass on Saturday, Sept. 24, at St. Rita's Church.

The Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark and Father John T. Reif, St. Rita's pastor. This service was followed by a luncheon at the Webster Knights of Columbus hall.

Past officers of the club were recognized: Clyde resident Shirley Schmoltd, president; Clyde's Mary Steve, secretary; and Penn Yan's Marjorie Scheer, treasurer. Newly elected officers are Rochester's Eleanor Cooke, president; Hornell's Dolores Andrus, secretary; Penn Yan's Marion Love, treasurer.

In addition to honoring new and past officers, CDA members presented Bishop Clark with a check for \$2,500 to be used toward vocations for the priesthood.

The program was dedicated in memory of Father Paul J. Cuddy, whose "On the Right Side" column was a popular feature in the *Catholic Courier* from 1967 until his death in 1992.

Fundraiser scheduled for pregnancy center

ROCHESTER — A concert benefiting the Problem Pregnancy Help Center is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 16 at Corpus Christi Church, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Loretta Cisterna Doyle will perform the concert, with Teryle Maar as accompanist. The Dady Brothers are also scheduled to appear.

Freewill offerings will be accepted for the Problem Pregnancy Help Center, 3252 Lake Ave. For concert details, call 716/865-0360.

Volunteers are needed to assist single mothers

OWEGO — Tioga County Rural Ministry needs mentors for its Project Step Ahead program.

This service offers support for single mothers seeking to become self-sufficient. Any interested women or couples should call TCRM at 607/687-3021 or Nancy Thomas at 625-4712.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

A blessed encounter with animals

In honor of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi (Oct. 4), Holy Apostles/St. Anthony of Padua Parish Cluster Oct. 2 held a special outdoor Mass for people to have their pets blessed at Holy Apostles Church, 60 Lorimer St., Rochester. Father David W. Mura, pastor, blessed an assortment of animals with holy water during the service honoring the patron saint of animals. Police dogs with the Rochester Police Department's Canine Unit and Mounted Patrol also received blessings during the Mass. In photo at left, Holy Apostles parishioner Kathy Gentile and her canine companion, 'Ice,' greet Officer Doug Brown's partner, 'General,' at the service's conclusion.

Opening arguments made in Brink's trial of cleric, others

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A Melkite Catholic priest, a former police officer and a former Irish nationalist prisoner are among the four defendants currently on trial for allegedly conspiring in the robbery of a Brink's, Inc., armored depot on Jan. 5, 1993.

On Friday, Oct. 7, federal prosecutors and defense attorneys delivered opening statements to the trial's all-female jury. Three witnesses also testified following the conclusion of opening statements.

The trial, which is taking place at the Kenneth Keating Federal Building, 100 State St., is expected to include testimony from 183 witnesses.

Facing charges of participating in the robbery and conspiracy to receive and possess stolen cash are Thomas F. O'Connor, 55, a retired Rochester police officer and former Brink's employee; Father Patrick Moloney, 62; Samuel Ignatius Millar, 39; and Charles M. McCormick, 30. Millar, McCormick and Father Moloney are all residents of the

New York City area.

Millar has served time in British prisons for various violent acts on behalf of Irish republicanism in Northern Ireland. He has allegedly known O'Connor since 1984, and prosecutors contend the former police officer helped to smuggle Millar into the United States. Millar owns KAC Comics & Collectibles in Queens.

Father Moloney, an immigrant from southern Ireland, runs a youth shelter in Manhattan and counsels illegal immigrants. He knew both Millar and McCormick, a social worker and teacher.

Federal prosecutors allege that O'Connor, who was working at the South Avenue armored-car depot on the night of the robbery, aided the \$7.4 million heist, the fifth largest in U.S. history.

O'Connor, who was abducted and later released during the heist, has pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Prosecutors also allege that O'Connor, Millar and Father Moloney began spending the stolen money — a portion of which was allegedly stored throughout most of 1993 in a New York City apartment leased by McCormick and subletted to Father Moloney.

Like O'Connor, the three New York men have maintained their innocence.

The federal government contends that the four defendants associated with one another through Irish Northern Aid. The group, also known as NORAI, supports families of Irish nationalist prisoners. Over the years, NORAI has denied charges that it funnels funds to the Provisional Irish Republican Army.

In earlier proceedings, U.S. District Judge David Larimer ruled — due to lack of evidence — that prosecutors cannot imply that the defendants' Irish nationalist sympathies were a robbery motive.

The prosecution can, however, mention that the defendants knew each other through NORAI, the judge said.

In his opening statement, U.S. Attorney Christopher A. Buscaglia outlined several coincidences he claimed would point to the defendants' guilt.

For example, Buscaglia said O'Connor would have known that the depot held its largest amount of cash for the week on Tuesday night, the night the depot was robbed, because the depot stored Federal Reserve cash from Buffalo on that night.

According to Buscaglia, O'Connor also was not present in the room where the gunmen came into the depot and robbed two of his fellow employees who were counting cash at the time. O'Connor, who claims he had been abducted by the gunmen, was released later that evening at the Brook House Restaurant in Greece.

Buscaglia said that at 7:30 p.m. that night — 90 minutes after the robbery took place — a collect call was made from a pay phone in Greece to Millar's apartment in New York City.

The U.S. Attorney said that on that same day, Jan. 5, 1993, Millar, using the alias of "Frank Saunders," informed his employer in New York that he was never coming back to work.

Buscaglia also claimed that Millar, O'Connor and Father Moloney each went on spending sprees following the heist, and he outlined other examples of what the government considered questionable behavior by the defendants.

For example, from March to September, 1993, O'Connor spent over \$26,000 in home improvements, the U.S. attorney

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