

Sanctuary group to cease activities

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — Members and supporters of the Rochester Sanctuary Committee will gather at Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 23, to remember, celebrate and bring to a formal end the group's activities.

That the committee's dissolution will take place in a church is in keeping with its history. After all, the committee was born out of meetings in area churches in 1983-84 to discuss U.S. policy in El Salvador and the atrocities taking place in that nation, and to offer sanctuary to refugees, legal and illegal.

Moreover, next Thursday marks the 15th anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was killed as he celebrated Mass after beginning to speak out against government oppression in El Salvador.

In the 11 years since the committee began, five congregations — including Rochester's Corpus Christi Church — declared themselves sanctuary churches, directly challenging federal immigration policies and risking arrest and civil penalties; and a number of other congregations and groups came out in support of sanctuary, including the former Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry of the Diocese of Rochester (now Catholic Family Center), the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester, and the St. John the Evangelist (Humboldt) parish council.

Even the Rochester City Council voted May 21, 1986, to declare Rochester a sanctuary city.

The committee's period of greatest visibility came in 1986 when the Gomez family — grandmother, mother, father and four children — lived briefly at Corpus Christi Church, then for nearly two years at Downtown United Presbyterian Church before fleeing to Canada in July of that year to avoid deportation, and — as Sanctuary Committee members claimed — possible death. One of the Gomez's children, Lisseth, will return to Rochester for the March 23 service.

The Gomez years were followed by the harboring of a legal immigrant, Cecilia Moran, by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester; support and assistance — including cross-border escorts — for Salvadorans returning to their nation from refugee camps; and helping the former refugees establish communities.

Throughout its life, the committee also attempted to educate local people about the situation in El Salvador and the U.S. government's role there.

Sister Kathleen Weider, SSJ, director of campus ministry at Nazareth College of Rochester, said the time had come to end the committee because the situation has changed in El Salvador, and people there are not facing the same oppression they did in the 1980s.

"The need is less acute," acknowledged Sister Weider, who was one of the people who helped the Gomez family flee to Canada in 1986. "Many of the people who had been involved became active in responding to other needs."

The need for sanctuary, however, was clear to many of the people who helped launch the movement in Rochester in 1983, Sister Weider noted.

"The war in El Salvador was killing 10,000 people a year, the vast majority (of whom) were civilians," Sister Weider observed. "People were fleeing to the United States because there was persecution going on against church workers, anyone who worked with the poor, anyone who was perceived in any way of being a threat to the established order."

Moreover, people perceived a need to challenge the actions of the U.S. gov-

ernment.

"The U.S. was supporting the government in El Salvador in those years," Sister Weider said. "It was the government attacking civilians, and had links to the death squads that were killing people. Here was the U.S. supporting that government, giving aid to a government that was oppressing people."

But the U.S. government could not acknowledge this, observed Gail Mott of the Downtown United Presbyterian Church. "If they had admitted Salvadoran refugees were fleeing for their lives," she said, "they would have admitted the policy was wrong."

The movement was intended not only to provide sanctuary, but to educate people about the U.S. involvement in the

civil war in El Salvador, and to help change U.S. policies, she said.

"People were very clear about the risks they were running, but in each situation it was faith that motivated people," Sister Weider said. "The greater good clearly was to challenge our (government's) policy, and at the same time to change the policy."

Discussions about creating a sanctuary movement in Rochester began in the summer of 1983 with representatives from various congregations meeting at Corpus Christi Church. In October, 1983, Corpus became the first congregation to declare itself a sanctuary church, followed by Downtown United Presbyterian Church, The House Church,

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Keeping things in focus



Wendy Longlade/Photo Intern

Sun smiles on annual parade

Rochester's annual St. Patrick's Day parade, which runs down East Avenue downtown, brought out a huge crowd of fans who enjoyed the unseasonably warm weather and parade honoring the Irish. (Above) Miles Van Deusen keeps his eye on photo possibilities as the parade passes in front of him.

Aquinas picks president; principal position retained

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — After a controversial selection process that had been tabled last June, Aquinas Institute announced last week that Patrick A. Hanley will become the Catholic school's first-ever president on June 1.

The board of trustees of the school located at 1127 Dewey Ave. made the announcement in a March 7 press release.

Hanley has for the last three years served as vice principal of Nardin Academy, an independent Catholic high school in Buffalo. Prior to his duties at

Nardin, Hanley was executive vice president at Niagara University, a Catholic institution.

In the press release, John P. Bell, chairman of the board of trustees, explained the reasoning behind the board's decision to establish the presidency.

"The growth in enrollment and expansion of the physical plant, coupled with the need for more scholarship dollars and a larger endowment, make it impossible for any one person to maximize all the opportunities before us," Bell stated.

The new president will not replace the role of school principal, according

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Loretta Cisterna Doyle to sing at city hospital

ROCHESTER — Soprano Loretta Cisterna Doyle will be cantor/soloist at the annual St. Patrick's Day Mass this Sunday, March 19, at 11 a.m. in St. Mary's Hospital Chapel, 89 Genesee St.

Accompanied by Bill Fay, Doyle will perform such traditional Irish favorites as "Danny Boy," "A Little Bit of Heaven," and others as a musical prelude to the celebration. Doyle's husband, Andy, will also participate in the Mass by reciting the Lord's Prayer in Gaelic.

The Mass will remember Elizabeth (Kieran) Arcuri and Daniel R. Mooney. The event is free and open to the public, and will be followed by refreshments.

Bereavement conference airs March 30 at school

CORNING — A national teleconference on bereavement will be aired Thursday, March 30, from 1:30 to 4 p.m. in the Triangle Room of Corning Community College's commons building, located on Spencer Hill.

The conference will be presented live via satellite. Titled "Living With Grief: Children Mourning, Mourning Children," the program will deal with various issues surrounding children and death. This event is being sponsored by Southern Tier Hospice and CCC's social science and nurse education divisions.

Registration is \$5 per person. For details, call Pat Wheeler of Southern Tier Hospice at 607/734-1570.

Area colleges sponsor Native American series

ROCHESTER — Nazareth College, the Rochester Institute of Technology and the University of Rochester are co-sponsoring a series of lectures and discussion on "Native Voices."

Topics for the March 22-April 1 series will include current education philosophies and policies affecting Native Americans; native Americans in the professions; Native Americans in urban environments; and a series of examinations of the literature, music and art of Native Americans.

For information contact Yvonne Bilinsky at the University of Rochester at 716/275-3157, or 275-0651.

Agency to honor banker

ROCHESTER — Catholic Family Center will honor R. Carlos Carballada, president of First National Bank of Rochester, at its Spring Charity Gala on Friday, March 24, at 7 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency, 125 E. Main St. During the gala, Carballada will receive the 1995 CFC award for his professional leadership and community commitment.

Carballada, a parishioner at Pittsford's St. Louis Church, is a member of the diocesan Stewardship Council.

The evening will begin with a cocktail reception, followed by dinner and dancing to music by the Don Sherman Group.

The cost of the gala is \$100 per person. Proceeds will benefit Catholic Family Center, which serves more than 48,000 people in Monroe, Livingston and Wayne counties.

For reservations, call 716/262-7172.