

N.Y.C. protest planned against GOP contract

ROCHESTER — Local activists protesting the Republicans' "Contract With America" are hoping to send at least one bus and maybe more to New York City for a May 6 protest of the GOP's legislative agenda.

According to Sister Grace Miller, RSM, of Rochester's House of Mercy, the national day of protest in Times Square is intended to "stop the war against this country's poor." Sister Miller added that the GOP's plan to change the welfare system and cut taxes will benefit the wealthy at the expense of the poor.

Buses will leave Rochester at 5:30 a.m. Friday night, May 5, from the parking lot of Corpus Christi Church, 864 Main St. E. The demonstration and rally in New York City begins at 1 p.m. Local activists will depart New York City at 6 p.m. Saturday, arriving at 1 a.m. Sunday morning.

The deadline to register for space on the bus is May 4. The cost is \$40. Call 716/232-9050 or 586-2580.

D&C columnist slated to serve as auctioneer

NEWARK — Democrat and Chronicle columnist Carol Ritter is scheduled to serve as a guest auctioneer at St. Michael's School's silent auction, scheduled for 7:30 p.m. April 29 at the school, 320 S. Main St.

Among items up for bid will be a 1994 New York Islanders hockey stick autographed by team members, weekends for two in Toronto, tickets to Syracuse University basketball games and the Sterling Renaissance Fair, and various gift certificates.

In addition, a cocktail party with Ritter has been scheduled to begin at 6:45 p.m. There will be no charge for admission to the auction. Cost for the party is \$10.

Father Brown to mark 40th year as a priest

GREECE — Father Thomas Brown, OMI, will celebrate the 40th anniversary of his ordination on Sunday, April 30, at St. Charles Borromeo Church, 3005 Dewey Ave.

Father Brown is the son of the late Frank and Beatrice Brown. He entered the missionary congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and was ordained at the Crypt of the National Shrine in Washington, D.C. on June 4, 1955. Since 1957, Father Brown has served in the missions of Brazil.

Father Brown will mark his jubilee at St. Charles 11:30 a.m. Mass on April 30. Friends are invited to join him for Mass and coffee hour immediately following.

Mobile medical unit blessed

St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester hosted a ribbon-cutting and blessing April 18 to christen the new St. Mary's Medical Mobile Unit, designed to provide health care to homeless veterans. Each week the new unit will provide primary medical care to an estimated 50 veterans throughout Monroe County. The unit was made possible through a grant from the U.S. Veterans Administration.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

(Above) Father Bob Werth blesses the unit while Dennis Tepper (left), associate medical center director; Patrick Madden, president; and Monroe County Legislator Willie Lightfoot join hands in prayer.

Pastor to face trial for imprisonment claim

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A failed attempt to settle a civil claim of false imprisonment against Father James B. Callan means Corpus Christi's pastor will face a trial by jury in New York State Supreme Court within the next few weeks.

Joseph J. Murray, the plaintiff in the case, is suing Father Callan for \$50,000 over an incident that took place at Corpus Christi Church, 864 E. Main St., more than three years ago. Murray is taking the action after Father Callan refused a number of conditions that, if fulfilled, would have ended Murray's suit.

Those conditions, listed by the pastor in the parish's April 23 bulletin, included ending the parish's ministry to gays and lesbians, terminating the practice of having women on the altar, and discontinuing the offering of Communion to Protestants.

Father Callan contacted the *Catholic Courier* on Monday, April 24, and said he stood by his statements in the April 23 bulletin.

In the bulletin, Father Callan asserted that he had refused to fulfill Murray's conditions to keep the case from coming to trial.

"It is clear to me that this man is using the public forum of the trial to settle an

internal theological dispute he has with me," Callan wrote in the bulletin, adding: "Let me say loud and clear, despite whatever opposition may come our way, that our church will be a house of prayer for ALL the people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender, denomination or any other boundary."

John M. Regan, Murray's attorney, declined to comment on the priest's version of the out-of-court settlement terms, deeming any statements on the issue as "not appropriate."

Murray did not return phone calls made to his home.

Both Father Callan and Regan spoke to the *Courier* last November. In his previous statements, Regan has stressed that his client is not pursuing the suit because of any doctrinal or religious disagreements with Father Callan.

"This case comes about because Joe Murray was held against his will for two or three hours and forced to turn over a tape that he had every right to make," Regan has said.

According to previous statements made by Father Callan, Murray's civil suit stems from an incident at the parish in February, 1992, when Murray showed

up at a public meeting the parish was hosting to inaugurate a new ministry to gays and lesbians. When participants discovered that Murray was audiotaping the meeting, Father Callan asked Murray to stop the taping, and he did so, the pastor said.

Following the meeting, the priest recalled that he told Murray: "You're not leaving until you give me that tape."

The pastor added that when he told Murray "you're not leaving," he meant that, as a good Christian, Murray should have felt duty-bound to leave behind a tape that — as Father Callan perceived it — violated the privacy of those people at the meeting.

Furthermore, Father Callan said he pressed the issue because gays and lesbians are often reluctant to speak out about themselves in the church for fear of the consequences.


After the meeting, the two men then proceeded to an office where Father Callan claimed they spent several hours talking. Murray eventually turned the tape over to Father Callan, the priest said, adding that at about 3 a.m., he escorted Murray back to his car in the city

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