



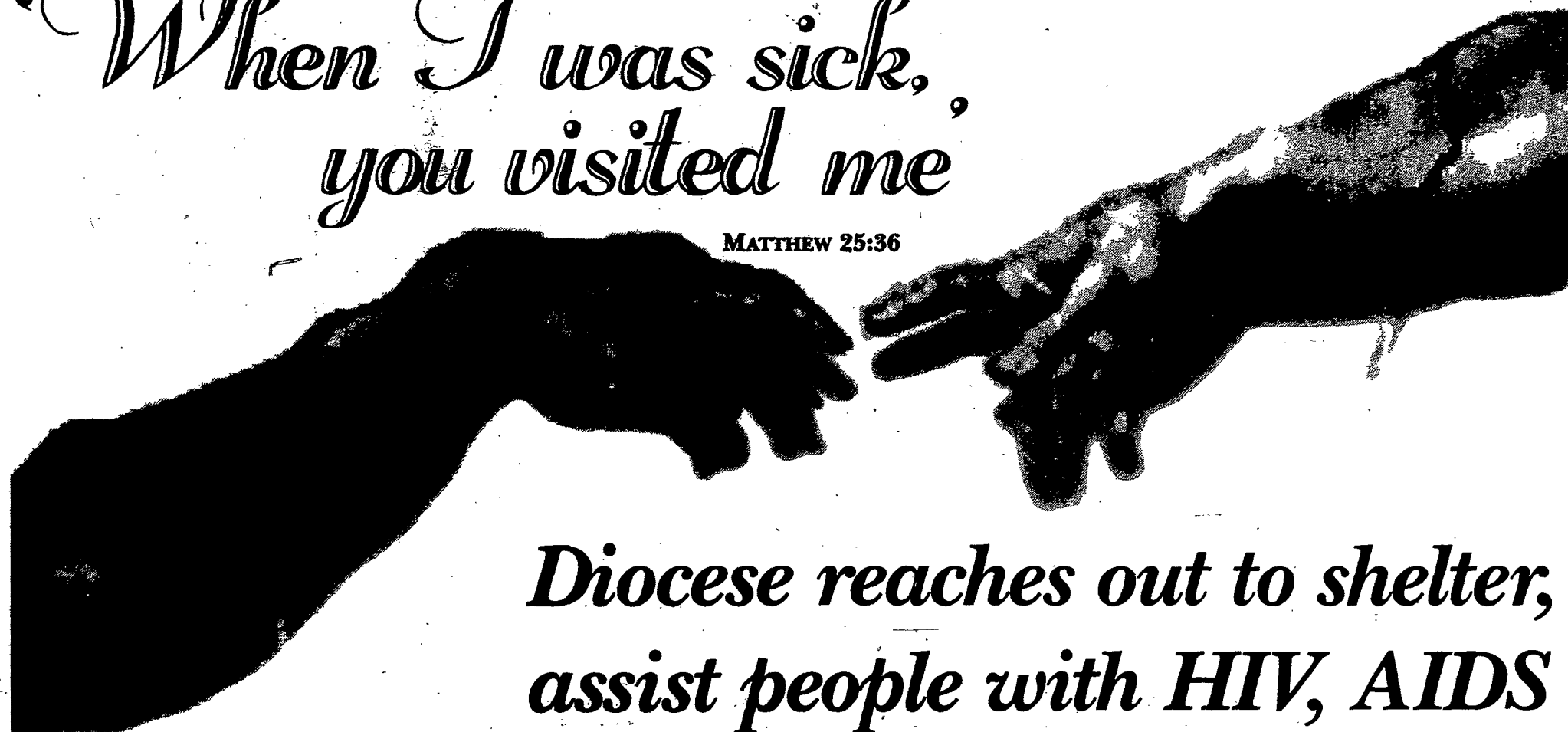
# Catholic Courier

Class of '95  
The Catholic  
Courier's yearly  
graduation sec-  
tion begins  
after page  
10.

DIocese OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 106 NO. 36 ■ THURSDAY, June 8, 1995 ■ 75¢ ■ 28 PAGES/ 2 sections

*When I was sick,  
you visited me*

MATTHEW 25:36



## Diocese reaches out to shelter, assist people with HIV, AIDS

BY ROB CULLIVAN, STAFF WRITER

**T**hey came from all walks of life to walk for all those whose lives have been touched by AIDS.

Black and white, Asian and Hispanic, straight and gay, male and female — their diversity illustrating the understanding that AIDS has long since lost its distinction as a disease afflicting merely gay white males, but has since become an indiscriminate killer.

Organizers said 850 people walked the 10-kilometer course through Rochester's streets on Sunday, June 4, to raise funds for AIDS Rochester, an organization providing a variety of services to those who are HIV-positive or who have AIDS. The agency is also involved in education, legislative advocacy and coalition-building.

Jeff Kost, public relations director for AIDS Rochester, estimated that the organization raised about \$85,000 from those who sponsored the walkers.

Ten percent of the raised funds will be split evenly among three agencies: diocesan Catholic Charities, the Mary Cathia Center, and the Community Health Network.

Among the people who walked June 4 was Paul Pickering, executive director of Catholic Charities' Community Residential Services, which oversees diocesan AIDS Services. He saw the walk as an opportunity to publicize diocesan efforts in the AIDS area.

"Outside the AIDS community, we're not known as a provider of AIDS services," he said of the diocese.

Pickering noted that between 75 to 80 people regularly use transportation provided by diocesan AIDS Services for such trips as those to medical appointments or supermarkets — a service highly praised by Kost.

In addition to transporting HIV-positive clients to appointments, diocesan AIDS Services provides case management for 53 people, and short-term emergency assistance with such costs as rent, mortgage and utility bills for as many as 40 clients, Pickering said.

He explained that most of AIDS Services' work is funded by federal monies, with a small percentage of the

office's budget coming from the annual diocesan Thanks Giving Appeal. Using a federal housing grant, for example, the diocese is able to maintain subsidized apartments for eight HIV-positive individuals, he reported.

Although such services earned high marks from Kost, he added that the spread of AIDS among the nation's heterosexual population means that the church will be called upon even more now that AIDS has made its mark among heterosexual men, women and children.

"There's no time for making judgments about people," Kost said of the stigma often attached to people with AIDS. "We're dealing with a public health problem, and we have people who need care, support and compassion."

Pickering echoed Kost's remarks, adding that the church has opened itself up more to people who are HIV-positive, or who are suffering from AIDS.

"How and why they got to this point in their life is less critical than how we assist them with their needs," he said.

In the years since Bishop Matthew H. Clark issued his nationally renowned 1988 pastoral instruction on AIDS, "The Lord Himself Taught Me to Have Compassion," the diocese has attempted to put into practice the principles of which Pickering and Kost spoke.

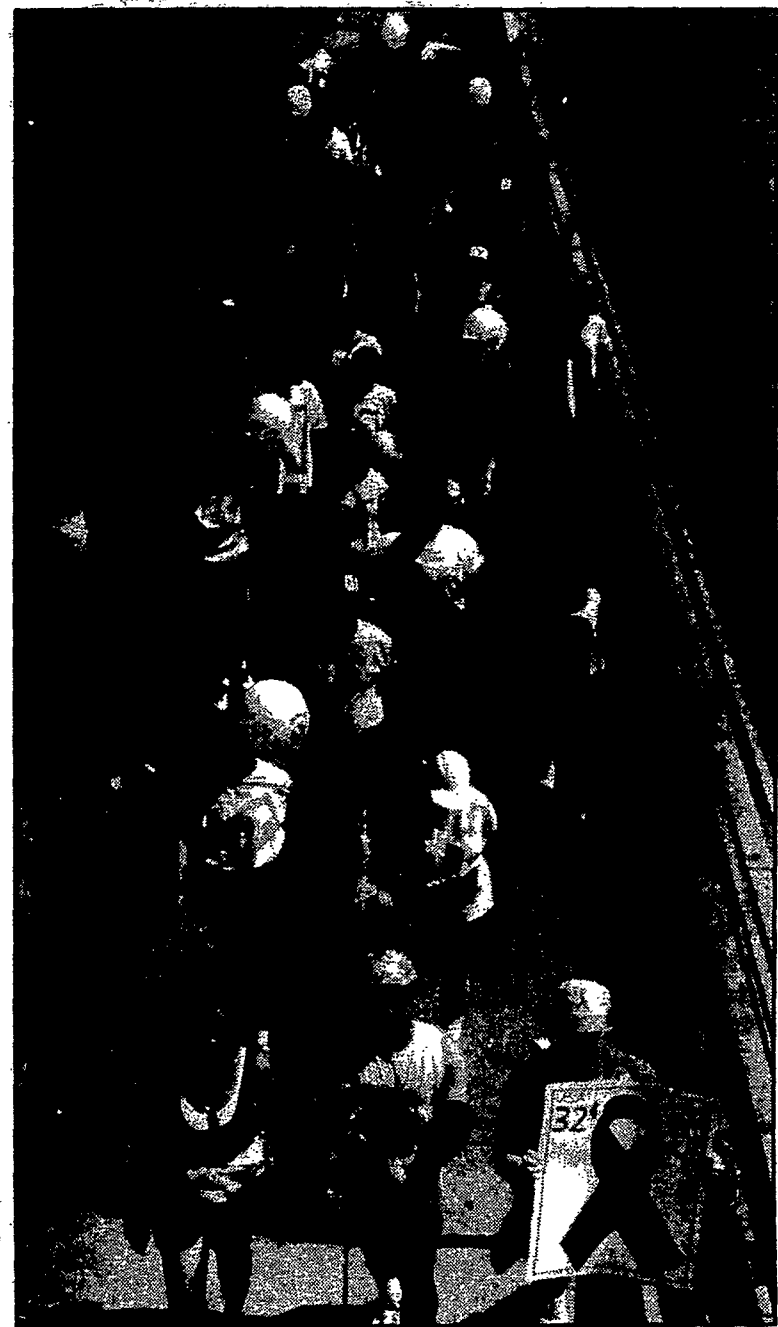
Three diocesan parishes — two in Rochester and one in Clifton Springs — have helped establish homes for the dying that have helped shelter and comfort AIDS patients.

About 25 people with AIDS have lived at Corpus Christi Parish's Isaiah House in Rochester, according to Sister Arlene Helget, SSJ, administrator.

One person with AIDS has resided at the House of John, a home for the dying which operates rent-free in a building owned by St. Francis Parish in Clifton Springs, said Jean Cass, co-director.

And 70 percent of those people who have lived at Elisha House, which oper-

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Participants in the 'AIDS Walk 95' June 4 make their way along Rochester's Winton Road. More than 850 people covered the six-mile walk through Rochester's city streets to raise awareness and funds to fight AIDS.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer