

Columnist: Don't be afraid to be 'anti-choice'

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Dr. Sidney Callahan emphatically believes that pro-life activists should make no bones about being "anti-choice."

"Everybody is anti-choice when they think the choice is harmful," she said in a June 12 interview, hours before she spoke to an audience at Colgate Rochester Divinity School during which the Women's Scholarship Committee of St. Bernard's Institute honored eight diocesan women for their outstanding achievements.

She spoke the day before at Grinnell's Restaurant in Brighton, where the Western New York Chapter of Feminists for Life had gathered for a dinner meeting.

Diocesan office will have a new home on July 1

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

GATES — Diocesan Catholic Charities' Community and Residential Services is planning to move into new headquarters July 1.

The office will move from the Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road, to 1945 Ridge Road E., Irondequoit.

The move will affect 26 diocesan employees, including residential, community and AIDS services administrative staff. The office's nine residences in Monroe, Wayne and Livingston counties will not be affected by this move.

According to Paul Pickering, executive director of Community and Residential Services, the diocesan office had been contemplating such a move for several years but it had difficulty finding a suitable building.

The new headquarters, he said, will allow easier transportation access for clients and residential staff because of its location near an exit off the I-590 expressway. In addition, the location of the new headquarters is on a main bus route using handicapped-accessible buses. In contrast, the Pastoral Center is located on a bus line that runs rather infrequently.

The new offices will also be more handicapped-accessible for clients with disabilities, whereas current offices are located on the Pastoral Center's third floor — the top floor — and the building does not have an elevator. This situation has discouraged some clients from coming to the offices in the past, Pickering explained.

Diocesan officials had looked into making the Pastoral Center more handicapped-accessible, he said, but "I think the reality of this has been that it would be very difficult for the diocese to change the building to meet our needs."

Moreover, because the new site will feature better accessibility to clients, Community and Residential Services will be able to "expand the number of clients we deal with," Pickering said.

Furthermore, moving to a more accessible site, the office's executive director remarked, will "set a good example to the rest of the community."

He noted that the new site will also offer free parking — something a downtown-Rochester venue would not have offered. Pickering added that the Ridge Road offices will also be perceived as safer than a downtown location.

"It will be safe for both our clients and our employees," he said. "Clients are important, and because they are fragile by nature, we didn't want them to feel afraid to come."

Noting that no one is allowed to choose murder or rape in society, Callahan dismissed the argument that to support choice on abortion is a neutral stance.

"If you really think (abortion is) wrong, then you're going to be anti-choice about it," she added.

Callahan is one of the nation's most well-known and outspoken pro-life feminists. A Catholic who disagrees with the church on such issues as artificial contraception and women's ordination, she nonetheless falls squarely on the church's side when it comes to abortion and a number of other consistent-life issues.

A regular contributor to *Commonweal*, a lay Catholic magazine, Callahan is a tenured professor of psychology at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

Author of eight books and numerous essays and articles, Callahan's most recent work is titled "Parents Forever: You and Your Adult Children." In addition to abortion, she has also written on such subjects as sexuality, medical ethics, marriage, and capital punishment.

Callahan noted that she is a firm believer in and supporter of the consistent-life ethic, which decries such phenomena as war, abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment as attacks against human life's sacredness.

When it comes to abortion, she argues that Catholic pro-life supporters should face their opponents honestly and without reservation about the stance pro-life supporters have taken today.

In particular, she emphasized that

Catholics against abortion should not fall prey to the charge that they are imposing their religious values on others.

"That's too easy," she said of such arguments. "Today, there's a new realization that almost every reform in American life ... was fueled by religion."

To illustrate her point, she noted that the civil rights movement was led by such religious men as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

She added that pro-choice proponents are just as influenced by their religious and family upbringing as pro-life supporters, and that everyone brings their values to bear in any debate on a public issue.

Pro-life feminists should be equally unafraid to claim their right to support feminism without compromising their support for the unborn, she added. Indeed, Callahan maintained that legalized abortion has enabled the nation to ignore many of women's legitimate demands.

"Choice removes responsibility from men, society and employers to support women when they're pregnant," she asserted.

In fact, legalized abortion has turned societal assumptions about pregnancy on their head, she explained, pointing out that today pregnancy carries as many negative connotations as it once carried positive ones.

Legalized abortion has also fostered the idea that people are only responsible for moral obligations they select, she claimed. Yet, in general, most people believe they are responsible for their relatives, their neighbors and their community, all of whom come into their lives regardless of their consent, she said.

While she attacks abortion, Callahan does not assume that those who support "family values" are her best allies in the fight to save the unborn. She noted that she worked in a crisis pregnancy center in the past, and that some of the young women who came to the center experienced pressure from their own parents to have an abortion because their parents believed that an unplanned pregnancy would ruin their daughter's future.

"We used to say 'Oh, that damn white picket fence,'" she said, alluding to the symbol of the successful suburban family home. "I think more abortions have been done for the ideal of the family than anything else."

Flag feting



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Students and teachers at Nazareth Hall Elementary School, 180 Raines Park, celebrated Flag Day, June 14, with the dedication of a new flag and pole. The flag which had flown over the U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C. now occupies the new pole donated by VFW Keith Miller Post 6595. (Above) Fourth-grade student Kenan Kuses (left) helps unfurl the new flag, while Donald Fay (right) hoists it onto the new pole.

Obituary

Fr. Placid Cormey, OSB; monastery co-founder

PINE CITY — Father Placid Cormey, OSB, was a person who remained true to his first name throughout his lengthy tenure as a Benedictine priest.

"Because of his quiet, self-effacing manner, it is only as people tell us about how how he was influential in their lives that any of us know how extensive his friendships and concerns were," said Father Martin Boler, OSB, prior of Mount Saviour Monastery. "He endured the the shipwreck of old age and loss of sight and hearing over these past three-and-a-half years with a graciousness of the early martyrs."

Father Cormey, a co-founder of Mount Saviour in Chemung County, died at the monastery June 11, 1995. He was 91.

A native of Waltham, Mass., Father Cormey was born John Everett Cormey. He graduated from Boston College in 1925 and was ordained a priest in 1937.



On March 29, 1951, he took up permanent residence as a monk at the fledgling Mount Saviour Monastery.

He held a number of positions there, serving as guest master while also overseeing farm and garden activities, an orchard, a yogurt enterprise and an extensive home canning operation.

Father Cormey also loved music and continued to play the cello even after suffering a stroke in 1981.

In a recent conversation with Father Boler, about his years in the monastery, Father Cormey stated, "I have a deep feeling of gratitude. I am grateful to

God for everything that I have, especially for the precious gift of faith."

A Mass of Christian Burial for Father Cormey was celebrated June 14, 1995, at Mount Saviour Monastery. Interment was at Mount Saviour Cemetery.

Father Cormey is survived by his fellow Benedictine brothers who reside at the monastery. Donations in his name may be made to Mount Saviour Monastery, 231 Monastery Road, Pine City, N.Y., 14871-9770.

— Mike Latona

Correction

Last week's page 3 story on the June 11 robbery and shooting at Holy Family Church in Rochester contained an error.

The robbery occurred in the Ames Street church's auditorium.

We regret any confusion this error may have caused.

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