DIOCESAN NEWS

Bishops offer support for migrant labor laws

Trangers in our

By Rob Cullivan Staff writer

Sylvia Davis, a migrant ministry worker from Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

Mary Parish in Brockport, solicits clothing donations for workers from her fellow parishioners, visits workers in the farm camps, and, in general, advocates for these people who live and work far from their homes in Latin America.

"I think that they're human beings, and that they deserve a life," Davis said, noting that she herself grew up in a migrant family from Texas.

The advocacy practiced by Davis and other diocesan migrant ministry workers has taken on new meaning. This year, at the behest of farmworker advocates from both the religious and secular worlds, the New York State Catholic Conference, the lobbying arm of the state's bishops, decided to make farmworker rights a legislative priority in 1996.

"Migrant and seasonal farmworkers are not protected by labor legislation that benefits other workers in New York State," a conference document released this fall stated. "Pending legislation would guarantee: inspection of farm and food processing labor camps for safe and

sanitary conditions; access to toilets and drinking water in the fields; disability insurance and unemployment insurance according to the same criteria for other workers; and collective bargaining

rights."
Two bills, one that would allow farmworkers to collectively bargain and another mandating field toilets on farms

with more than five

workers, passed the state

assembly this year.

However, farmworker advocates noted that they don't want to pursue these measures in

the state senate until the bills garner more support from the state's voters and its farm-owners, who have traditionally opposed such measures for economic reasons.

"In talking to a lot of the farmers, I've found they're not completely hostile to all of these measures," explained Jorge Vidro, legislative counsel to N.Y. Sen. Olga Mendez, a Democrat from Manhattan who has spearheaded the legislative fight for farmworker rights.

To a certain degree, David Fellows, associate director for policy research and analysis at the New York Farm Bureau, agrees with Vidro.

"It's not that farmers don't want to provide ... a lot of the things that labor advocates would like to see. It's a question of ability," said Fellows, whose lobbying



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographe

DINNER THEATER FETED — Shelia Rankin (left) and Beryl Wilson rehearse for the play, 'Steal Away,' at Immaculate Conception Church. Immaculate Conception, St. Bridget's Church, and the Office of Black Ministries will present the two-act comedy Dec. 1-2 at Immaculate Conception school hall. For information or tickets contact Jacquelyn Dobson at 328-3210.

organization in Albany represents 25,000 N.Y. farm-owners.

The organization opposes collective bargaining on the part of farmworkers for fear that strikes could cripple an industry that depends on timely harvesting from year to year, he said. Instead of pointing the finger at financially pressed farm-owners, legislators should concentrate on supporting such measures as a state bill passed this year that extended low-interest loans to farmers seeking to upgrade their workers' housing, he said.

In addition to supporting farmworkers' collective bargaining rights, farmworker advocates hope to push through nine other measures that would put farmworker rights on the same level as non-farm worker rights. Pending bills would guarantee such rights as a day of

rest and overtime pay for farmworkers, among other things, Vidro noted.

If such measures passed — with the support of farm-owners — the agricultural industry's fears of a hostile unionized work force cutting into their profits might not realized, he said.

"We wouldn't need collective bargaining if these measures were passed," Vidro concluded.

EDITORS' NOTE: Spanish-speaking Catholics interested in volunteering for diocesan migrant ministry should call, in Wayne County – Jerry Skerrett at 315/524-7421; Yates County – Father Peter Deckman at 315/524-7421; in Geneva – Sister Genoveva Morales at 315/789-3263; and in western Monroe County/Orleans County – Sister Mary Jane Mitchell at 716/637-3714.

Diocese seeks members for resurrected Women's Commission

By Lee Strong Associate editor

The Diocese of Rochester is looking for a few good women — and men.

Specifically, the diocese is seeking nominees for the soon-to-be resurrected diocesan Women's Commission.

Nominations — which may be submitted by the individuals themselves, or by officials of parishes or Catholic organizations — are due by Dec. 1.

The commission will advise Bishop Matthew H. Clark. It will also assist the coordinator for Women in Church and Society, a new position intended to promote Synod Goal 3: to "recognize and value the dignity of women in church and society."

Individuals nominated for the Women's Commission — and who wish to

be considered for it — will submit applications. The applications will be evaluated by the Synod Goal 3 Implementation Team, which also will interview candidates. Then nominees will be recommended to Bishop Matthew H. Clark for appointment to the commission. The commission will have a maximum of 16 members.

In addition, diocesan officials plan to create four subcommittees to work with the commission. Members of these may include people nominated but not appointed to the Women's Commission. The committees will target spirituality, inclusive language, women in leadership, and violence and poverty.

The Women's Commission will have a new mission statement, developed by the Synod Goal 3 cross-ministry team. Intended to help promote communication

about Goal 3 among separate ministry areas, that team consists of Mary Britton (catechetical consultant, Faith Development Ministry), Barbara Pedeville (coordinator of Parish Personnel Services, Human Resources), Joan Workmaster (director of the Office of Liturgy, Parish Support Ministries) and Carolyn Portanova (president of the Catholic Family Center, Catholic Charities).

The coordinator and the Women's Commission are expected to be in place by January of 1996, according to Mary Kessler, director of the diocesan Human Resources department and administrator of Synod Goal 3.

Kessler noted that the Women's Commission existed before the Synod, which, in 1993, set priorities for the diocese. One of those priorities focused on women in church and society. In a Dec.

16, 1994 letter, Bishop Clark announced that he was disbanding the Women's Commission, but planned to create a new commission in light of the Synod's goals.

Now that the synod goals are in place, the commission has a clear sense of its tasks, Kessler observed. "Those (tasks) will probably change as parishes ask for services and as the committee sees the need for new tasks," she added.

The current direction was very much set by the parishes, Kessler noted.

"The synod plans came from parishes, especially in terms of Synod Goal 3," Kessler said. Now, she continued, "They are saying, 'Help us. Send us materials."

EDITORS' NOTE: For more information about the Women's Commission, or to nominate a person, write to Mary Kessler, Synod Goal 3 Team Administrator, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

ATTENTION:

Former Parishioners of Holy Redeemer

St. Francis Xavier

Holy Redeemer/St. Francis
Xavier Parish will celebrate
the Feast of St. Francis Xavier
and the Re-opening of
the newly remodeled church on
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd
with a 5 p.m. Bi-lingual Mass.

Refreshments will follow. For more information, call **716-482-3211.**

Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580) Vol. 107 No. 9 November 23, 1995

Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.

Thursday in December.
Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$20.00; Canada and foreign \$20.00 plus postage. Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340. Second-Class postage paid at Rochester. N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.

Expert Automotive Repairs

General Repairs • GM Specialist
Fuel Injection • Electical Systems
Exhaust • Brakes • Carburetion
• Tune-up • Shocks • Struts
N.Y. State Inspection
262-4585

Sam Lo Vetro Automotive

44 Richmond St. • Rochester • 14607 Saint Anne Church 1600 Mt. Hope Avenue Rochester



CHORAL VESPERS and
BENEDICTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT for the

Sunday, November 26 4:00 p.m.

SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING

Music of Rachmaninoff: Triumph! Thanksgiving; Vaughan-Williams: Magnificat; Gregorian Chant: Ave Verum; Vierne: Finale, Symphonie 1.

Thomas G. Donohue, Choirmaster

Brink Bush, Organist