

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Execution site may be built in Steuben County

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Diocesan opponents of the death penalty welcomed the news that Southport Correctional Facility near Elmira will not be the site for New York state's execution chamber.

However, death-penalty opponents expressed concern that the state continues to seek a location for the state's first lethal injection facility since the death penalty was reinstated last September. The last execution in New York state took place in 1963.

Among the possible sites being considered are a number of municipalities in Steuben County, according to a government official from that region.

"On the one hand, we're happy that that awful thing won't be happening (in Elmira)," commented Kathy Dubel, justice-and-peace coordinator for Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier. "But unfortunately, we know it will be happening somewhere."

Dubel is active in a 12-member ad hoc group called Twin Tiers Community

Against the Death Penalty, which lobbied against locating the execution facility at Southport, a maximum security prison.

Chemung County officials announced that Southport was no longer on the list of possible execution sites at a news conference March 22 in Elmira. Present at the conference were Chemung County Executive G. Thomas Tranter, Republican Assemblyman George H. Winner Jr. of Elmira, and State Sen. John R. Kuhl Jr., a Republican from Hammondsport.

In a telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier*, Kristin Card, Chemung County's director of public information and records, noted that, prior to the news conference, the three officials had discussed the issue with Gov. George Pataki, asking him if the location of the execution site at Southport could be reconsidered. She added that the governor and the county officials eventually agreed it would be cheaper to build an execution facility at a new prison rather than at an existing facility. Card pointed out that the state has proposed building three new prisons.

Card also cited moral opposition to

the death penalty and concerns about its potential economic impact on the region as reasons for Southport's removal from consideration as a site for executing prisoners.

"They did get some community opposition," she said of the county officials. "But it wasn't overwhelming."

One of those opposed to the execution site was Father William Donnelly, pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Elmira, located less than a mile from Southport. Like Dubel, Father Donnelly said he was glad that no executions would be taking place in the area, but he added that some other community in New York will have to wrestle with the issue soon.

"I would certainly support those who felt called to protest (an execution facility) in any other area," Father Donnelly said.

In fact, diocesan Catholics opposed to capital punishment are unlikely to rest easy despite the Chemung County victory. Several municipalities in neighboring Steuben County are planning to vie for one of the state's new prisons, according to Jim Meddleton, a spokesman for Kuhl.

In a telephone interview with the *Courier* from his Albany office, Meddle-

ton noted that one of the state's three proposed prisons will contain an execution facility.

"Certainly there is the possibility that it might go there," he said of Steuben County.

Meanwhile, the diocese is beginning to step up its efforts to publicly oppose the death penalty. On Good Friday, an opinion piece on the death penalty submitted by Bishop Matthew H. Clark to the *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle* was scheduled to be published on the paper's "Speaking Out" page.

"Our Catholic faith calls us always to defend against any willful taking of life, especially by the state, which acts in our name," the bishop states in the piece.

In related news, Suzanne Schnittman, diocesan consistent life ethic coordinator, said death penalty opponents will hold a demonstration against capital punishment on Good Friday at the Liberty Pole in downtown Rochester.

The noon protest is the second in a series of monthly demonstrations held at the Liberty Pole by Reconciliation Network: Do Not Kill in My Name, a recently formed activist group to which the diocese belongs. The first demonstration took place March 1.

## Diocese to develop strategic plan

By Lee Strong  
Associate editor

The Diocese of Rochester has announced it will develop a strategic plan to be released in January 1997.

The plan is intended to help guide parishes as they implement the diocese's Synod Pastoral Plan, released in January 1995.

According to Father John M. Mulligan, moderator of the Pastoral Center, the need for a strategic plan was made clear to diocesan officials by parishes attempting to implement the Synod goals.

"Frankly," Father Mulligan explained, "the parishes came to us and said, 'We would appreciate a little more sense of direction. We'd like to know where the bishop wants us to go.'"

Thus the plan will cover such areas as the staffing and configuring of parishes in light of the priest shortage and greater lay leadership. It is also intended to further the process of changing the Pastoral Center into a "resource" for parish ministers, from a source of ministry.

The plan will also incorporate the four goals of the Synod Pastoral Plan: lifelong faith formation; advocacy of the consistent ethic of life; recognition of the dignity and value of women in church and society; and promotion of the growth of small Christian communities.

In addition, the strategic plan will look at available resources — from computer technology to buildings — that can be used to help implement the Synod Pastoral Plan.

"Our Synod established ministerial priorities for the next several years," observed Bishop Matthew H. Clark. "One thing missing, we have learned in our first year of implementation, was a vision of what we wanted parishes to look like four or five years from now. Not that all parishes would march in lock-step fashion, but that we would have a common vision of goals, and a set of measures to help us measure progress toward them."

Father Mulligan said the diocese hopes to hire a consulting firm by early summer to help develop the plan. A "strategic planning" retreat for a small group of Pastoral Center and parish staff representatives, and Priests' Council and Stewardship Council members will be held in September or October. That retreat will produce a draft plan to be circulated among parishes in November.

Father Mulligan said that developing the strategic plan is simply a step in the process of planning in the diocese that began with the Synod.

"I think it's going to be a big step for us," Father Mulligan said. "I think it goes in the same direction where we've been trying to go as a community."

## Proceedings against priest move to Cohocton Town Court

Father Eugene Emo was scheduled to appear in Cohocton Town Court at 7 p.m. April 2 to enter a plea to a second-degree sexual abuse charge.

The Rochester diocesan priest was arrested Feb. 16 on the misdemeanor charge and has been free since posting \$1,000 bail. He is accused of having sexual contact with a 35-year-old male who is

mentally handicapped. The alleged abuse took place last year at the priest's Cohocton family residence.

Father Emo had been living at Holy Trinity Church, Webster, where he was assisting with liturgies until Jan. 31, when the diocese placed him on administrative leave. He is currently living in a private home.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

## Number crunching

Joshua Steinhilber (left) from Holy Trinity School solves a math problem as Edward Miller from Holy Family School concentrates on the solution during the Diocese of Rochester Math 24 Competition. The April 2 contest held at St. Margaret Mary School included 120 students from 18 diocesan schools and was designed to challenge students in computational skills. The winners were: fourth grade — Danielle James from Nazareth Hall; fifth grade — Paul Vacca from Nazareth Hall; sixth grade — Adia Hinds from Nazareth Hall; seventh grade — Tabitha Gerwitz from St. Charles Borromeo; and eighth grade — Frank Martorella from St. John's in Greece.

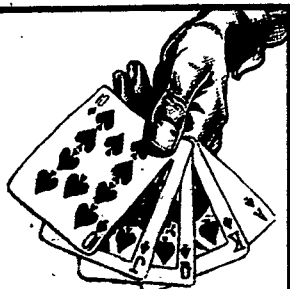
## Volunteers Needed for New Treatment for Age/Liver Spots

Dermatologists are currently seeking adult men and women to participate in a study of an investigational drug to treat age (liver) spots. Volunteers must have at least three spots on their face and five spots on each arm or hand. Spots are brown and smooth, not rough or scaly.

Volunteers must have no history of skin cancer and, if female, be menopausal for at least two years or be surgically sterile. Participants can receive up to \$200 to cover their expenses. Older adults are encouraged to apply.

For further information, call Sophie Worobec, M.D. or Beth Martin at the Dept. of Dermatology, University of Rochester Medical Center, (716) 274-4576

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