

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Assembly leaders hinder abortion-related measures

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

An old saying goes: "This, too, shall pass."

But whether that's applicable to two pieces of pro-life legislation pending in New York state is another matter.

Last July, the state Senate passed a bill mandating parental notification of minors seeking abortions.

And on April 30, the Senate passed a bill to ban what is known as the partial-birth abortion method in New York.

Yet both bills may languish for awhile in the state Assembly where they are blocked from coming to the floor by Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, a Manhattan Democrat and a longtime pro-choice supporter.

Partial-birth abortions take place late in a pregnancy, and involve removing the unborn child until only its head is left inside the woman's body. The physician then either crushes the infant's skull, or sucks out its brain before the head can be brought through the birth canal.

On the same day the state Senate voted to ban the procedure, hundreds of pro-life lobbyists were in Albany buttonholing legislators on parental notification and the partial-birth abortion ban.

A delegation of lobbyists from the Diocese of Rochester attended the lobbying day, including Suzanne Schnittman, diocesan consistent life ethic coordinator, Father Tony Mugavero, pastor of St. Bridget's Parish in Rochester and Robert Dorschied, a pro-life activist from Holy Spirit Church in Penfield.

Both pro-life bills have been supported by the New York State Catholic Conference, according to Kathleen M. Gallagher, conference spokeswoman. She noted that a partial-birth abortion ban is

gaining favor in the state, even among pro-choice legislators, five of whom broke ranks with their abortion rights colleagues in the Senate to vote for the ban, she said.

"If either of those bills were brought to the Assembly floor, we feel that either of them would pass by a wide majority," she said. "We do know that there are members who are traditionally pro-choice who are coming out in favor of this (partial-birth abortion) ban."

But both bills probably won't make it to the floor of the state Assembly, according to pro-life lobbyists, including Schnittman.

"I'm looking at that so cynically," Schnittman said of Senate support for the partial birth abortion ban. She noted that voting for it cost the senators little politically since they knew neither bill will go before the Assembly anytime soon.

Robert Burns, chief of staff for Assemblyman Joseph Robach, a Democrat from Greece, said the partial-birth abortion ban — and parental notification — have majority support in the Assembly. However, he echoed Schnittman's sentiments about the bills' chances of getting out of the Assembly health committee, which he said is dominated by pro-choice legislators.

"I don't feel the Assembly health committee is representative of the Assembly as a whole," Burns said, adding that Silver opposes the pro-life measures, too.

The *Catholic Courier* contacted Silver's Albany office for comment, but did not receive any return phone calls by deadline.

Despite the opposition to such pro-life measures from a powerful politician like Silver, Gallagher remained optimistic that the Assembly would someday get a chance to vote on parental notification

and the partial-birth abortion ban.

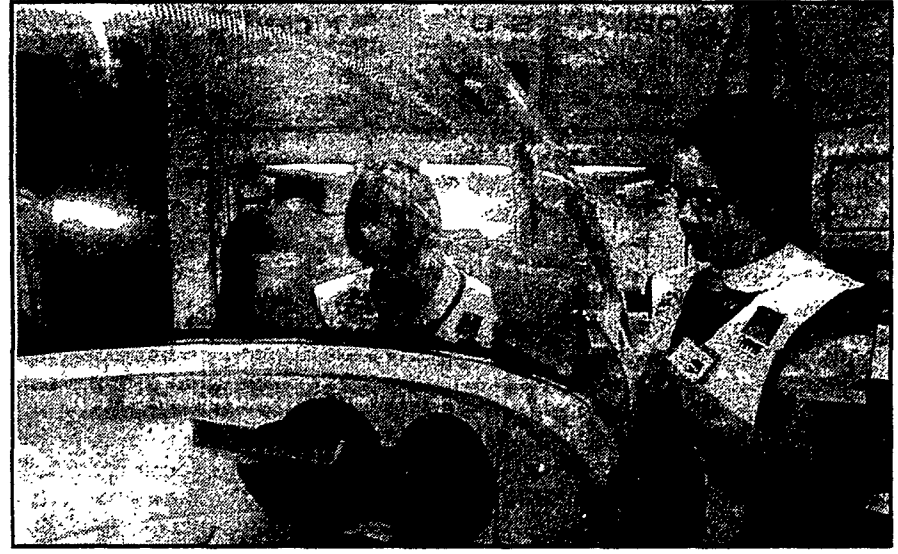
"Our strategy is to talk to as many Democrats as we can," Gallagher said. "We have to get as many Democrats in the Assembly as we can to go to Mr. Silver and say 'We want this bill.'"

She concluded by noting that the tide is turning against partial-birth abortion supporters, who are beginning to lose even the support of such pro-choice stalwarts as New York's U.S. Sen. Daniel P.

Moynihan, a Democrat.

As reported in the May 3 *New York Post*, Moynihan has announced that he will vote to overturn President Bill Clinton's recent veto of a congressional measure banning partial-birth abortions.

"I think this is just too close to infanticide," the *Post* quoted Moynihan as saying. "A child has been born and it has exited the uterus and what on earth is this procedure?"



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

## Mission to the moon

Fifth- and sixth-grade students from St. Boniface School in Rochester visited the Challenger Learning Center at the RIT City Center May 6. The center includes a "spacecraft" and a "mission control" designed to provide hands-on activities that build teamwork, problem solving, and communication skills. Above, remote team members Hal Rosensteel and Emma Yatteau analyze lunar soil and rock samples. Right, Amanda Knight communicates with Mission Control.



## Obituaries

### Father Fosselman; served in Elmira

Father Fidelis Fosselman, OCD, pastor of St. Peter and Paul Church in Elmira from 1981 to 1989, died March 14, 1996, while visiting his sister in California. He was 71.

At the time of his death, he was serving as pastor of St. Mary of the Hill Parish in Holy Hill, Wis.

Father Fosselman was born Edward Fosselman in Stormy Lake, Iowa. He made his profession as a member of the Order of Discalced Carmelites in 1949, and was ordained a priest in 1955.

Much of Father Fosselman's life was devoted to military duty. As a member of the U.S. Army's 103rd Infantry Division, he fought in the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Later, as a Carmelite priest, he logged three tours of duty in

the Vietnam War and completed several stateside assignments as well.

Father Fosselman was pastor of St. Mary of the Hill Parish from 1963 to 1966, 1972 to 1978, and 1991 until his death. He was also a teacher of canon law and director of students at the College of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Washington, D.C.; and provincial councilor and superior of the Carmelite monastic community at Holy Hill.

Father Fosselman spent eight years in the Diocese of Rochester, all as pastor of St. Peter and Paul Church in Elmira. He is remembered fondly at the parish for his love of children, and was also noted for his carpentry skills.

The funeral Mass for Father Fosselman was held March 21 at St. Mary of the Hill Church. Interment was in the Holy Hill Carmelite Cemetery. In addition, a memorial Mass was conducted March 23 at St. Peter and Paul in Elmira.

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