

DIOCESAN NEWS

Basilians renew ties, spirits at synod

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

PITTSFORD — Although the average age of the members of the Basilian congregation is 60, the Basilians don't seem all that upset about the aging process.

"I don't think that survival is the main concern because that's in God's hands," said Father Robert Barringer, CSB, superior general of the order headquartered in Toronto.

Father Barringer was one of almost 300 Basilians — out of the international order's total membership of 350 — to attend a synod at St. John Fisher College from July 8 to July 12.

Members of the order came from the United States, France, Colombia, Mexico, Canada and St. Lucia, an island nation in the Caribbean, Basilian officials said. Discussions during each session were simultaneously translated from English into French and Spanish.

The synod was held in preparation for next year's general chapter, a more formal congregation-wide event held every four years. The Basilians concentrated on discussing the order's vision of itself as expressed through its members' chaplaincy work, high school and college teaching and parish ministry, officials said.

Topics on their agenda included the future of the order's educational mission; the order's communal life; the spiritual formation of Basilians; the establishment of new governance structures; the renewal of the priesthood in the order; and the stewardship of human, financial and institutional resources.

"I think the main goal is that we discern where we're supposed to be," Father Barringer said.

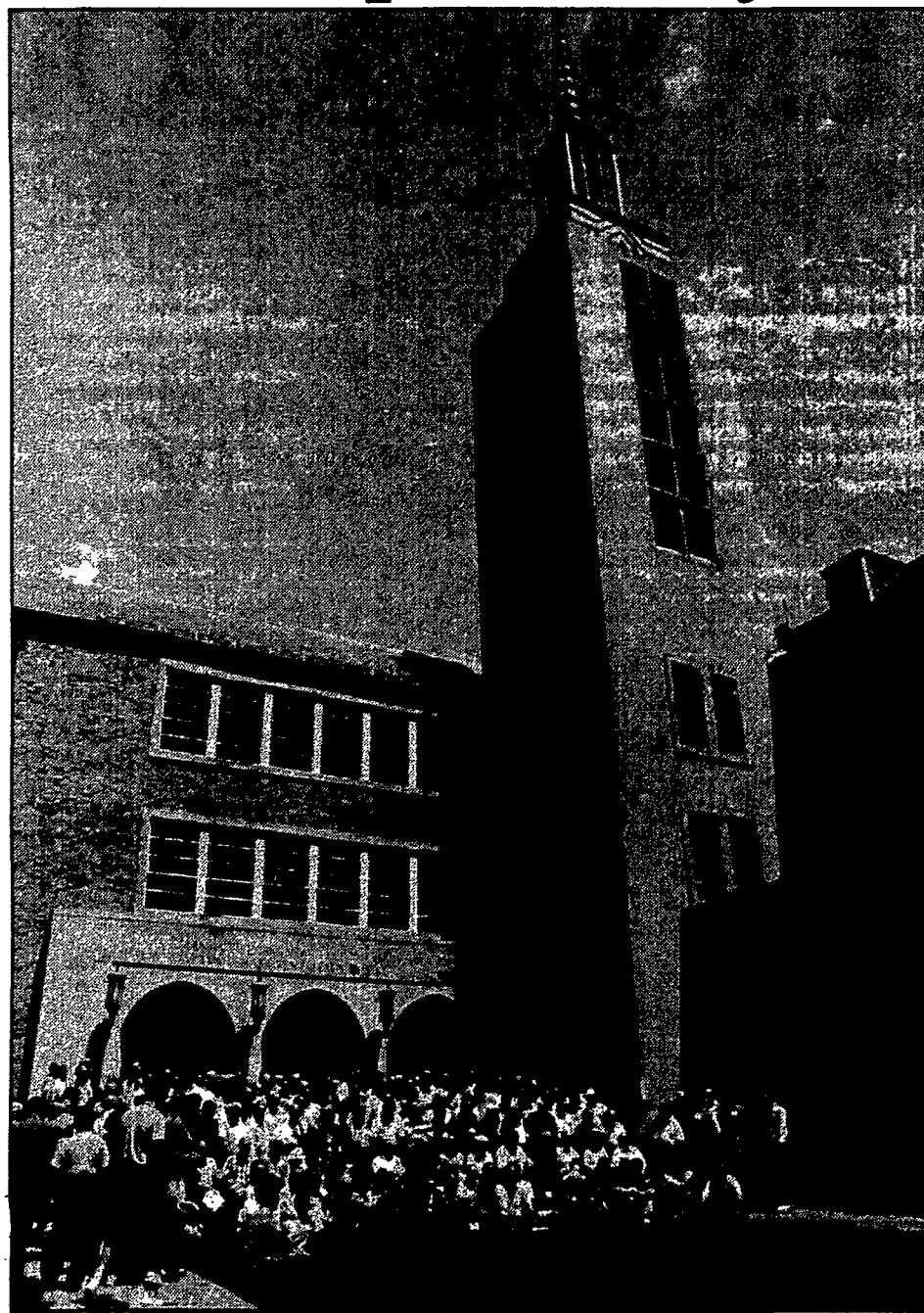
Father John Cavanaugh, CSB, professor emeritus at Fisher, agreed that the "gray hair" among the order's members was a concern at the synod, but he and other Basilians noted that fretting about a lack of younger priests was not high on their list of priorities.

"If we do what we're supposed to be doing, probably we'll attract more vocations," Father Cavanaugh said.

As if to prove the priest's point without him knowing it, David Savage, a 27-year-old novice from Detroit, Mich., said he was attracted to the Basilians by the example set for him at Catholic Central High School in the Motor City.

"I saw them on a daily basis," Savage said. "I liked what I saw — their community, their love for each other and their daily work. As soon as I got out of high school, I joined the Basilians."

Community and friendship, the Basilians said, are what they treasure. Many spoke of their amazement that so many



Nearly 300 members of the Basilian order from six countries gathered at St. John Fisher College for a synod July 8-12.

of the order's members, including several lay associates, showed up for the synod.

"It's been wonderful meeting with 300 fellow Basilians," said Father David Heath, CSB, 70, a past president of Assumption University in Windsor, Ontario, and a former treasurer general of the Basilians.

"The organizers were hoping for 150," said Father Barringer. "Most of the people who aren't here are sick, so it's very encouraging."

Father Bob Seguin, CSB, oversees three Basilian novices in Medellin, Colombia, and noted that he valued the chance to rub shoulders with dozens of his congregation's members.

"Where I am in South America, we're really set apart," he said, pointing out

that there are only four Basilian priests, including himself, in Colombia. "This gives an opportunity to be in touch with the whole community."

He added that the synod helped to revitalize the vocations of the order's members.

"I would hope to see the community get a second wind to find a new pastoral mission for the next millennium," Father Seguin said.

Funds to help bury Irish boy

The Irish Children's Program of Rochester has established a "Paul Harmon Memorial Fund" in response to the tragic drowning of an Irish youth in Keuka Lake June 30.

The program arranged for Harmon's visit along with other Catholics and Protestants from Belfast.

Harmon drowned while on an outing with his sponsoring family. He was returned to Northern Ireland last week, after a private memorial service at a funeral home and a public memorial service July 6 at St. Michael's Church, Penn Yan.

The fund is only to help with expenses including non-covered emergency medical costs, local funeral home services, returning the body home, travel costs of a teacher/chaperone accompanying the body, funeral services in Belfast, burial, and a grave marker.

According to the program's Rochester board president, Wayne Cannon, any money over those costs are to go to the boy's mother, Anne Harmon and his only sibling, Sean, 14. None are to go to the program, a not-for-profit charity run by volunteers. The program has sponsored summer visits of 350 Catholic and Protestant children from Belfast for 15 years.

Money, cards or other expressions of sympathy may be directed to The Paul Harmon Memorial Fund, c/o the Irish Children's Program of Rochester, Inc., P.O. Box 22983, Rochester, NY 14692. Cannon may be reached at night at 716/671-2483.

Kearney High ensemble wins world crown again

Bishop Kearney High School Color Guard and Dance Ensemble successfully defended its world title at the 1996 Winter Guard International Championships held this past spring at the University of Dayton, Ohio.

The all-female ensemble's performance featured painter Jason Pollock's rendition of "The Streets of New York." The show contained a flurry of tossing rifles, flags, sabers, and dance — and even painting, as the squad actually painted Pollock's "New York" on the black canvas floor as part of the show.

Elmira students excel in national competition

A team of second-grade students from Elmira's Holy Family Primary School placed third in a national science competition this spring.

The Holy Family contingent earned its high finish in the General Science category for the National Science Olympiad. This competition, held April 21-May 2, involved hundreds of schools from across the United States. Testing was based on students' factual

knowledge as well as understanding of the scientific process.

Team members included Ellen Brabham; Jesse Ladoue; Joshua Kessler; Alexander Mekos; Michael Hurley; Patrick Thatcher; Colin Yaniga; Matthew Goodrich; Maxwell Wallace; and Julie Graham.

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