

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## CFC honors St. Francis for resettling 16 Cubans

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Catholic parishes and other faith communities and organizations have helped to resettle one or two refugee families each over the last decade in Monroe County, according to Jim Delaney, Refugee Program manager at Catholic Family Center.

But not many have gone to the lengths that St. Francis of Assisi, a primarily Hispanic parish in Rochester, has, he said. Since last August, the parish at 77 Whitney St. has helped to resettle in the Rochester area four Cuban families with a total of 16 members.

Parishioners have transported the Cubans to appointments, helped them get jobs, and taken them to English courses, he said. Two of the families are already off public assistance, and the other two are moving toward full financial independence, he added.

"It's one of the poorest parishes I've ever seen, and they've done a lot with very little," Delaney said of St. Francis. "And, they've done it well."

The Catholic Family Center recognized those efforts when it named St. Francis of Assisi its "Parish of the Year" at the CFC's annual meeting June 26. With the help of parishes like St. Francis and other groups, CFC resettles about 200 refugees in the Monroe County area each year, Delaney said.

At St. Francis, about 20 parishioners out of a total of 200 have pitched in to

help resettle the four families, according to Brunilda Martinez, coordinator of religious education and Spanish apostolate.

One parishioner, Antonio Rivera, has transported members of the families on a regular basis to various appointments, she said. Another parishioner, Martinez's sister, Ana Maria Rivera, persuaded her employer, The Rental Superstore in Rochester, to donate appliances and mattresses to the families, Martinez said.

Several of the Cubans said they were grateful to the parish. They spoke in Spanish, and Martinez translated for them.

"The church has been materially and spiritually helpful," said Elda Morales, who immigrated here with her two sons.

"The help has been incredible from the church," commented Margarita Garcia, who came to the United States with her 8-year-old son, Roday, and her mother, Araminta Hernandez.

The parish has housed all the Cubans at its rectory. Some have stayed for as little as two weeks, whereas others have stayed as long as 2½ months, according to Carlos Vargas, a permanent deacon at St. Francis.

Martinez added that the parish has put no time limit on any of the families.

"If they don't find a place, fine, they can stay here as long as they want," she said.

All the family members assisted through St. Francis said they generally liked it here in the United States.

Garcia summed up their reasons for leaving Cuba in two words: "Fidel Castro."



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer  
Margarita Garcia, far right, who left Cuba with her 8-year-old son Roday, far left, praises St. Francis of Assisi Parish for its support. The Rochester parish is helping to resettle in the Rochester area four Cuban families who arrived this past year. Also pictured in the church's rectory, from left, are Ricardo Ruiz, Ricardo Hernandez (leaning forward), and Araminta Hernandez.

"Believe me, that says a lot," Martinez said, noting the disenchantment the Cubans had with their nation's leadership and Communist system. When pressed for details, however, the Cubans were reticent about commenting further on their homeland.

"They're kind of afraid to say anything," Martinez said.

"Maybe if you ask them two years from now, it'll be a different story," she added.

They are grateful for being allowed to come to the United States. But the Cubans have also found that life in their new country doesn't always live up to the rosy picture painted by Cubans in their old country.

"When they came from there, they pictured the 'American dream,'" Martinez said. She added that the church's welcome was crucial to helping the refugees deal with adjusting to the economic real-

ities of life in the United States.

The Cubans have also energized the parish with a new sense of mission, Deacon Vargas said. He noted that St. Francis has undergone several organizational changes in the past few years, forming and then dissolving a cluster with St. Peter and Paul Parish, with whom it now shares a common pastor, Father Paul Tomasso. These changes spent a lot of the parishioners' energies on organizational questions, he said, but helping the Cubans allowed the parish to regain its pastoral purpose.

"This has helped us to focus away from those problems and concentrate on the good we can do," Deacon Vargas said.

EDITORS' NOTE: To learn how your parish or organization can help resettle a refugee family, call Jim Delaney at 716/262-7074.

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## The Monthly Prayer Request For Priests

Will you pray for a priest each day?

### LORD OF THE HARVEST

Loving and Gracious God you are the giver of all good gifts to us below. We ask you to look upon us in your kindness and mercy and grant more laborers to your vineyard. We especially ask you to send more worthy Priests, Brothers and Sisters into Your Holy Church. You are attentive to those who ask, seek and knock. Behold your faithful servants who ask, seek and

knock for the building up of your household of Faith, which cannot be done without the aid of good Shepherds. Through the intercession of St. Patrick, St. Columba, St. Brigid and that of the Blessed and Ever-Virgin Mother of your Son, we beseech you and ask you Hear us O Lord. Amen.

## August, 1996

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Look for the September MPRP Calendar in the August 29th Catholic Courier			Reverend Fathers	1 Thomas Miller, CSB	2 Bruce F. Ammering	3 Michael J. Bausch
4 David L. Bonin	5 John A. Firpo	6 J. Walter Garron	7 James B. Callan	8 Frederick F. Eisemann	9 Stephen R. Kraus	10 John A. Reddington
11 Anthony Gampietro CSB	12 Marcellus Earl, OCSO	13 Herman Siebert, OFM Conv.	14 Msgr. Joseph A. Cimiccone PhB	15 Paul J. Freemesser	16 B. Thomas Celso	17 Thomas D. Hoctor
18 Mark A. Miller	19 John E. Roach	20 John J. Quinn	21 Ralph J. Fraats	22 Albert J. Shamon	23 Norman C. Tanck, CSB	24 Louis A. Vasile
25 Arthur Wendell, CSsR	26 James T. Wolfe	27 Walter Plominski	28 William B. Leone	29 Michael C. Hogan	30 Lee P. Chase	31 Lance M. Goryo

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## AUGUST BINGO CALENDAR

SPECIAL PAID ADVERTISEMENT ■ CALL FOR HOLIDAY CANCELLATIONS

# BINGO

<b>SUNDAY</b>	
2:00 pm St. Margaret Mary Church	401 Rogers Parkway, Rochester (716) 324-2100
6:15 pm St. Stanislaus Church	1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951
7:30 pm Holy Family Church	1099 Jay St., Door M, Rochester 716-328-3110
7:30 pm St. Boniface Church	15 Whalin St., Rochester 716-271-1468
7:30 pm St. Rita Church	New Location: Knights of Columbus, Barrett Dr., Webster 716-671-1100
<b>TUESDAY</b>	
10:00 am Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church	Bingo Palace, Rochester 716-467-2725
7:30 pm St. Stanislaus Church	1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951
7:30 pm St. Helens Church	Gates Center Bingo, Westmar Plaza 716-235-1210
7:30 pm St. Francis Xavier	316 Bay St. (School Hall) (716) 268-9700 or 482-3211
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	
7:30 pm Holy Family Home School Assoc.	1099 Jay St., Door M, Rochester 716-328-3110
<b>THURSDAY</b>	
7:30 pm St. Stanislaus Church	1150 Hudson Ave., Rochester 716-544-9951
<b>SATURDAY</b>	
12:30 pm Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church	Bingo Palace, Rochester 716-467-2725
7:30 pm Good Shepherd Church	3288 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester 716-334-3518
8:00 pm St. Thomas the Apostle Church	41 Colebrook Dr., Rochester 716-342-2223

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