

WORLD & NATION

Bishops oppose attempts to allow same-sex unions

By Jerry Filteau
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Catholic bishops oppose any "attempts to grant the legal status of marriage to a relationship between persons of the same sex," said a statement issued July 24 by the heads of two bishops' committees.

"The institution of marriage, as the union of one man and one woman, must be preserved, protected and promoted in both private and public realms," they said.

Marriage, they added, "has a very important relationship to the continuation of the human race, to the total development of the human person and to the dignity, stability, peace and prosperity of the family and of society."

Issuing the statement were Bishops Joseph L. Charron of Des Moines, Iowa, chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Marriage and Family, and William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., chairman of the U.S. Catholic Conference Committee on Domestic Policy.

The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a bill July 12 that would define marriage for federal purposes as a "legal union between one man

and one woman." It was awaiting consideration in the Senate when the bishops prepared their statement.

Called the Defense of Marriage Act, the bill would bar partners in same-sex unions from receiving federal benefits available to spouses because of their marital status, such as spousal Social Security benefits.

Prompting the proposed federal bill were efforts in several states to give same-sex unions the same legal status as marriages, and especially a case before the Hawaii Supreme Court asking it to overturn that state's law against such marriages.

The bill does not ban gay marriages or forbid states from allowing them, but it says states are not required to recognize same-sex marriages performed in another state.

As of July 23 legislatures in 15 states had voted not to recognize any same-sex marriage performed in other states, according to the Human Rights Campaign, a national homosexual political organization.

The bishops' statement said that the "lifelong union between one man and one woman, joined as husband and wife in an intimate partnership of life and love ... was established by God with its own proper laws."

They said the legal status of marriage



CNS/Reuters

Two young woman mourn the loss of four friends who were members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Montoursville, Pa. The parish held a memorial service July 21 for victims of the mid-air explosion of TWA Flight 800.

merits protection and promotion "because the marital relationship offers benefits, unlike any other, to persons, to society and to the church."

"The principled defense of marriage is an urgent necessity for the well-being of children and families and for the common good of society," they said.

"Our opposition to 'same-sex marriage' is not an instance of unjust discrimination or animosity toward homosexual persons," they added. "In fact, the Catholic Church teaches emphatically that individuals and society must respect the basic human dignity of all persons, including those with a

homosexual orientation. Homosexual persons have a right to and deserve our respect, compassion, understanding and defense against bigotry, attacks and abuse."

The Canadian bishops have spoken out against proposals in their country to give same-sex unions the legal status of marriage.

Pope John Paul II has also condemned such efforts. When the European Parliament passed a resolution in 1994 urging member nations to give homosexual couples the same rights as heterosexual couples, the he criticized the action as an attempt to "legitimize a moral disorder."

CALENDAR

All Dioceses

Religious Activities

■ **FRI, JULY 26** — Registration deadline: for Aug. 7-11 pilgrimage to St. Anne's & St. Joseph's, Our Lady of the Cape Shrine, Quebec, Canada; \$255 per person single occupancy, \$240 per person double or triple; \$50 deposit required; call Terri, 716/663-5918, after 4 p.m. or leave message on machine.

■ **SUN, JULY 28** — Polish Day: at the Shrine of Our Lady of Martyrs, Auriesville; 1:30 p.m. religious devotions at main entrance; Mass at 4 p.m. by a Polish prelate; for more information call 518/853-3033.

■ **TUE, AUG 13** — Registration deadline: for Sept. 22 Wedding Jubilee Mass at St. Michael's Church, Newark; 2 p.m.; Bishop Matthew H. Clark, presider; open to all couples married 25 years or more; to receive invitation, send name and address to Sylvia Mancuso, 1150 Buffalo Rd., Rochester, NY 14624, or call her at 716/328-3210 ext. 295, or 800/388-7177.

Monroe County

Fundraisers

■ **SAT, JULY 27** — "10 Ugly Men Picnic": and contest; sponsored by alumni of Nazareth College to benefit Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program at St. Mary's Hospital; Ellison Park, Blossom Rd., Rochester; 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m.;

features live music, food and outdoor activities; \$20 donation day of event; \$17 advance tickets available from St. Mary's Foundation, Fast Ed-dies, Hot Shots, Milestones, Preps and The Sports Page.

Meetings

■ **FRI, AUG 9** — Meeting: Adoption Network to Gain Equal Love & Support (ANGELS); Seneca United Methodist Church, 121 Scholfield Rd., Rochester; 7-9 p.m.; new group for adoptees, and birth, adoptive and foster parents and others; for more information call Kathleen at 716/234-1864.

Religious Activities

■ **THU, AUG 8** — Meeting: of Centering Prayer group; Guardian Angels Parish, 2061 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester; 7:30 p.m.; also Aug. 22 and Sept. 5.

Social Activities

■ **FRI, JULY 26** — TGIF: sponsored by St. Louis Church Single Adult Ministry; Hattie's at The Strathallan, 550 East Ave., Rochester; 5-7 p.m.

■ **JULY 26-28** — Camping weekend: with St. Thomas More Singles Club; call Anne, 716/482-5656 for details.

■ **SAT, JULY 27** — Miniature golf: with St. Thomas More Singles Club; Whispering Pines, 4383 Culver Rd., Rochester; 7:30 p.m.

■ **SAT, JULY 27** — Pageant: for Miss Puerto Rico and Miss Teen Puerto Rico of Rochester 1996; Harro East Ballroom, 155 Chestnut St., Rochester; 6 p.m.; featuring Latin recording artist Edwin Rivera and his orchestra, Trio Internacional and DJ Yun Yun Rivera; \$15 advance tickets,

\$20 at door; call 716/234-7660.

■ **SAT, AUG 3** — Dinner: with St. Thomas More Singles Club; Rick's Prime Rib House, 788 Howard Rd., Gates; 6:30 p.m.; call Anne, 716/482-5656 for more information.

■ **SUN, AUG 4** — Cruise: with young adults from St. Mary's, Penfield United Methodist Church, Blessed Sacrament; on the Sam Patch; 6-8 p.m.; \$12.50 per person, cash bar; for more information call Timothy, 716/442-6672 or Mike, 716/271-7240.

■ **TUE, AUG 6** — Meeting: of St. Charles Singles Group, St. Charles Borromeo Church, 3003 Dewey Ave., Rochester; 7:30 p.m. in school hall basement.

■ **AUG 9-11** — German-American Summer Festival: German Cultural Center, Karl Fuchs Drive, Rochester; begins at 5 p.m. Fri., 1 p.m. Sat., Sun.; German Mass at 2 p.m. Sunday; St. Theodore's Church, 168 Spencerport Road, Rochester.

■ **AUG 8-11** — Play: "Baptized in Love"; at Freddie Thomas Foundation, 1180 E. Main St., Rochester; Thurs. dinner and play at 6:30 p.m., Fri. and Sat. play at 7 p.m., Sun. at 5 p.m.; tickets \$10, \$7 for seniors, \$4 children; call Michaelangelo Productions Inc., 716/342-1562.

Sports Benefits

■ **MON, JULY 29** — Golf tournament: for Sisters of St. Joseph Convent Infirmary; Irondequoit County Club, 4045 East Ave., Rochester; 9:30 a.m. registration, 10:30 a.m. shotgun start, 6 p.m. dinner, awards, silent auction; registration limited; call 716/586-1000, ext. 133.

■ **AUG 9-10** — Summer-fest 96: by Webster Knights of Columbus; Webster Columbus Center, 70 Barrett Dr., Webster; Fri. 6 p.m.-1 a.m., Sat. 1 p.m.-1 a.m.; family games, food, music; free admission.

Chemung Schuyler

Religious Activities

■ **MON, JULY 29** — Polish liturgy: at St. Casimir Church, 1004 Davis St., Elmira; 7 p.m.; sacrament of penance beginning at 6:30 p.m.; celebrated by a Salesian priest from Poland.

Fundraiser

■ **AUG 3-4** — Festival: St. Charles Borromeo Church, 132 Oakwood Ave., Elmira Heights; Sat. 5-9 p.m., Sun. noon-8 p.m.

Seneca Cayuga

Fundraisers

■ **JULY 25-27** — Festival: St. Mary's Church, 35 Center St., Waterloo; begins 5 p.m. nightly; food, games and entertainment; rain or shine.

Meeting

■ **TUE, AUG 6** — Meeting: The Wounded Healers' Bereavement Support Group; St. Joseph's School (formerly St. Mary's), 17 Clymer St., Auburn; 7:30-9 p.m.; Frank Ferraraccio, Jr. will talk about

the deaths of his brother and father; for more information, call Jeannette or Chris, 315/252-7661.

Social Activities

■ **FRI, JULY 26** — Picnic: for D/S/B group of Greater Seneca County; Weeping Willow Farm; bring dish to pass and table service; for directions, call Carl & Alma, 315/539-2294.

Steuben County

Social Activity

■ **SAT, AUG 3** — Chicken barbecue: St. Joseph's School, Wayland; 5-7 p.m.; adults \$6, children under 12 \$3; tickets at door.

Yates Ontario Wayne

Fundraiser

■ **SUN, AUG 11** — Poker run: by Chapter B of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association; registration 9 a.m.-noon; event begins at the Port Gibson Fireman's Field; proceeds to various charities; \$8.

Social Activity

■ **JULY 25-28** — Theater: "Murder on the Nile"; Bristol Valley Theater, 151 S. Main St., Naples; Thu.-Sat. 8 p.m., Sun. 2 p.m.; also Aug. 1-4; for information call Barry, 716/374-8113.