

DIOCESAN NEWS

Grotto to memorialize those lost to abortions

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — The Finger Lakes Chapter of the Knights of Columbus will build a memorial to the victims of abortion on the grounds of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, 4536 St. Paul Blvd.

The memorial is to be dedicated in May 1997, according to George Wiedemer, a Republican Monroe County legislator and a parishioner from St. Joseph's in Penfield who also belongs to the Knights.

Wiedemer announced the Knights' plan to build the memorial at a noontime press conference outside the St. Thomas rectory Sept. 9.

"Our goal is to never forget the voices of the victims of abortion, whether that be a person who has contemplated the heartbreaking decision or an unborn child," Wiedemer said.

Designed by Rochester-area architect John Toft, the memorial will be a stone, marble and brick grotto with a statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague. Art Harris, chairman of the Finger Lakes Chapter, said the Knights will be selling memorial bricks for \$50 each to donors. The bricks will be used on a "Walkway of Life" that will lead up to the memorial, he said.

The memorial will be located on the grounds outside the parish's offices, and beside the parish's perpetual adoration chapel, according to Father Robert C. Bradler, St. Thomas' pastor.

"This will be a reminder to pray for the countless children who never had a chance at life," Father Bradler said.

In attendance to show support for the Knights' plan were Suzanne Schnittman, diocesan consistent life ethic coordinator; three Monroe County legislators: Wiede-

mer, Sean Hanna, a Webster Republican and a member of the Knights of Columbus at Holy Trinity Church in Webster, and Tracy Logel, a Republican from Chili; and John Hayes, a St. Thomas parishioner and candidate for the New York State Senate on the Right to Life and Conservative party lines.

Writing on behalf of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, Father John M. Mulligan, diocesan vicar general, recently sent a letter of support for the memorial to pastoral leaders throughout the diocese.

"I have assured Mr. Harris that he or his Knight representative will be graciously received by our parishes," Father Mulligan wrote, referring to fundraising visits.

Wiedemer noted that the conference was timed to coincide with a vote tentatively slated for sometime next week by the U.S. Congress to overturn President Bill Clinton's veto of a bill passed earlier this year that banned partial-birth abortions. Partial-birth abortions generally take place in the third trimester when the physician brings the child into the birth canal and removes the contents of the baby's skull.

Wiedemer credited the U.S. bishops for raising the public's awareness of the partial-birth abortion issue. Catholic News Service has reported that the U.S. bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities will hold an ecumenical prayer vigil calling for the overturn of Clinton's veto, at the U.S. Capitol at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 12.

Here in the Rochester diocese, the Knights will sponsor a 6 p.m. Mass the same day at St. Jude the Apostle Church, 4100 Lyell Road, in Gates. The Mass will be celebrated for the intention of the defense of life and in reparation for the sin of abortion, according to a Knights' state-



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

One year later ...

Protesters gathered Sept. 6 at Liberty Pole Way, Rochester, to mark the one-year anniversary of the reinstatement of the death penalty in New York state. Above left, Sister Margie Henninger, SSJ, reads a letter written by the mother of a murder victim condemning the death penalty.

ment. The Mass will be celebrated by Father Norman U. Weslin, founder of the Lambs of Christ, a pro-life activist group.

In addition to these activities, two high school students at Aquinas Institute in Rochester want to start a pro-life student group at the school. Lauren Farrell and Julie Khuns, both seniors, were present at the Knights' press conference and said they wanted to raise awareness among their peers about the abortion issue.

"I feel that too many people pass it by if it doesn't affect them," Khuns said of abortion. "They've got to think and feel for the unborn."

EDITORS' NOTE: To donate to the construction of the Knights' memorial for the unborn, send contributions to: Knights of Columbus Memorial Fund, 102 Juliane Drive, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. You can also contact Harris at 716/594-2133.

Obituary

Father Daniel J. O'Shea, former St. Joseph's House director; at 47

Father Daniel J. O'Shea Jr., who directed St. Joseph's House of Hospitality in Rochester through a time when it was in danger of closing, died Sept. 1, 1996, at St. Vincent's Hospital, New York City, of lung cancer. He was 47.

Born Feb. 5, 1949, in Brockton, Mass., to Anne Sheehan O'Shea and the late Daniel O'Shea Sr., Father O'Shea attended Boston State College, and then Our Lady of Providence Seminary in Warwick, R.I. He earned a master of divinity degree from St. Bernard's Seminary in 1976, and a doctor of ministry degree from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in 1985.

After being incardinated from the Diocese of Providence Sept. 15, 1978, Father O'Shea was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Rochester Oct. 20, 1978, at St. Boniface Church by former Bishop of Rochester Joseph L. Hogan.

Long involved with the United Farmworker and Catholic Worker movements, Father O'Shea served as director of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality from 1978 to 1980. According to Pat Mannix, who met Father O'Shea while volunteering at the house, the priest helped to save St. Joseph's. "It was practically destitute," recalled Mannix, who now serves on St. Joseph's board of directors. "The place was almost taken over by the (City of Rochester). He stabilized it."

Father O'Shea also helped to foster an

atmosphere of caring at the house, Mannix continued.

"The thing I was most impressed with about him was his equal treatment of everyone," Mannix recalled. "Dan always made everyone feel at home and welcome."

In particular, she recalled one Saturday when Father O'Shea celebrated the weekly Mass at the Catholic Worker House. A man whose girlfriend had been murdered just a few days before came to the Mass. While Father O'Shea was preaching the homily, the man began to sob, approached the priest, then held onto his legs while crying.

"Dan bent down and put his arms around the grieving man and just held him like a mother would hold a child," Mannix recalled.

Father O'Shea left St. Joseph's House in 1980 to become pastor of St. Bridget's Church, Rochester. Concurrent with his du-

ties there, he began serving as chaplain at the State School at Industry in 1982. In 1983, he left St. Bridget's, but continued to serve as the state school's chaplain.

In 1986, Father O'Shea was given a temporary leave to the Abbey of the Genesee, concurrent with duties as chaplain at the Livingston County Jail, later as part-time chaplain at Groveland Correctional Facility. He became a "family brother" of the abbey Oct. 24, 1986.

Father O'Shea moved to New York City in 1993 to become assistant director of programs and pastoral care coordinator at Bailey House, a facility for homeless people with AIDS. He remained involved with the house until his death.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark was the principal celebrant at the funeral Mass for Father O'Shea Sept. 5 at St. Paul's Church, Cranston, R.I.

The Rochester Catholic Worker community will hold a memorial service at a date yet to be determined.

In addition to his mother, Father O'Shea is survived by three sisters: Sister Anne Marie O'Shea of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth in Warwick; Margaret Hughes of Cranston; and Maureen Pearlman of Warwick.

— Lee Strong

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